

Eagles overpower DMACC for league title

Written by Jim Ecker

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The Kirkwood Eagles hosted DMACC in a showdown for the conference softball title Monday, but the Eagles had different ideas.

It wasn't a showdown. It was a showcase.

The Eagles belted eight home runs and drubbed DMACC in a doubleheader, 9-1 and 12-2, on a wet, blustery day at the Kirkwood diamond to grab the league title with overwhelming power.

"They were ready," said Kirkwood Coach Joe Yegge, who claimed his sixth conference title in eight years at the school. "They've been talking about these games for the last week."

Kirkwood is ranked No. 10 in the Division II ranks of junior college softball and DMACC is ranked fifth, but this was a mismatch of major dimensions. Both games ended early due to the eight-run mercy rule as the Eagles showed no mercy all day.

The teams began the day in a flat-footed tie for first place, but Kirkwood grabbed the outright crown with a 23-1 final record and DMACC settled for second at 21-3.



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"It's a great feeling knowing we're conference champions," said Brooke Prior, one of many stars for the Eagles. "We'll keep going from here."

Kirkwood (38-8 overall) will host a regional tournament this Saturday and Sunday. If Kirkwood wins the regional title, it will host a district tournament next week with the winner qualifying for nationals.

The Eagles won both games in walk-off style. Alicia Crivaro did the honors in Game 1 with an RBI double in the bottom of the fifth, then Riley Ogden took care of things in Game 2 with a three-run homer in the bottom of the sixth.

Kirkwood has socked 101 home runs this season, a figure that easily leads the nation. The Eagles also feature solid pitching and good defense.

"I'm ecstatic, I'm proud of them," said Yegge. "I didn't know what we had coming in this year, but they got better and better every day and we started playing our best ball when we needed to.

"They proved it today."

Lexie Biehl, Prior and Erin Weno knocked balls over the fence in the first game to support Nicky Simpson, who pitched all five innings in the 9-1 victory.

As it turned out, the Eagles were just getting warmed up.

Biehl, Prior, Tara Walls, Crivaro and Ogden belted home runs in the second game, backing Prior's efforts in the pitching circle in the 12-2 conquest.

Biehl moved into first place in the national home run derby with 22 round-trippers. Prior has

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socked 18 homers, which ranks fourth in the nation. Both of them have 69 RBIs, which is tied for fourth in the country.

Biehl transferred to Kirkwood from Marshalltown Community College this year and helped the Eagles win a conference title.

"It feels really good, especially with this team," she remarked. "It feels like family."

Prior said there's more to Kirkwood softball than just home runs, strong pitching, good defense and coaching.

"Great teammates," she said. "We talk about it all the time, how awesome it feels to just come out here and play for each other. We give it our all and hope for the best."

Game 1

DMACC 001 00 - 1 4 0
Kirkwood 201 51 - 9 9 1

W - Simpson (15-5). L - Brown.

Game 2

DMACC 010 001 - 2 2 2
Kirkwood 012 414 - 12 14 0

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W - Prior (11-0). L - Hinkel.