

McBeain stars as Eagles sink Lakers

Written by Jim Ecker

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Angie McBeain has made a powerful impact on the Kirkwood softball team this season as a freshman.

Powerful arm. Powerful bat.

McBeain starred as a hitter and pitcher Thursday as the second-ranked Eagles topped 16th-ranked Iowa Lakes, 12-4, in six innings in the second round of the regional tournament at Kirkwood.

Kirkwood (51-4) will face Southwestern (9-27) in the championship round again Friday at noon. The Eagles need one more victory to win the regional title, but the Spartans would have to win twice in the double-elimination tourney to earn the crown.

McBeain, who hails from Prior Lake, Minn., went 3-for-4 with a three-run homer and four RBIs Thursday. She also pitched well in relief, allowing no runs in 2 2/3 innings.

Lexi Kinnaird, who set the Kirkwood record with her 51st victory in the opening round Wednesday, suffered a rough patch in the fourth inning against Iowa Lakes and was touched for four runs, but McBeain came to the rescue and stopped the bleeding.

McBeain is hitting .433 with 11 home runs and 60 RBIs, and she's compiled a 19-1 record and 1.72 ERA in the circle.

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DoniRae Mayhew, another talented freshman who can hit and pitch, also socked a three-run homer Thursday. She's hitting .441 with 15 homers and 74 RBIs, along with a 5-0 record and 2.38 ERA as the team's No. 3 hurler.

Kirkwood already had a powerful lineup when McBeain and Mayhew joined the club with All-Americans Taylor Nearad, Maddie Hansen and Morgan Frost back as sophomores, along with Lexi Ferrari.

McBeain bats in the No. 6 spot in the lineup and almost always has somebody on base waiting to score.

"It's awesome," she said. "You know they're always going to have your back and you're going to have theirs, so we're all one big family no matter what. It's pretty great."

McBeain thought she might attend a four-year college in Florida after graduating from high school, but there was a coaching change at the college and the opportunity slipped away.

Kirkwood Coach Joe Yegge spotted her at an event for top prospects, found out she was available and made his move.

"Yegge saw me and said, 'I want her,'" McBeain related, "so that's kind of how it all happened for me. When Yegge said he would take me in, it was great."

It's been a terrific move for McBeain and the Eagles.

"I think I've grown as a player exponentially," she said. "It's been a lot of fun playing for Yegge and growing as an athlete."

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McBeain said she's been contacted by several four-year colleges for next season, but has not decided what to do for 2018. She might return to Kirkwood or she might go somewhere else if a good opportunity comes along for a powerful hitter and pitcher.

"I'd be open to something else, but I'd love to come back," she said.

Frost went 2-for-3 and drove in two runs for Kirkwood. Maddie Hansen, who leads the nation with 89 RBIs, was 2-for-3 with one RBI. Kinnaird (27-3) picked up the victory, giving her 52 in her career.

Southwestern topped Iowa Lakes, 7-3, in the loser's bracket finals to earn another shot at Kirkwood, which beat the Spartans, 20-0, in a first-round game on Wednesday.

Iowa Lakes ▯ ▯ **000 400 - 4 7 3**

Kirkwood ▯ ▯ ▯ **540 111 - 12 13 3**

W - Kinnaird. L - Calkins.