Eagles stomp Kankakee at JUCO nationals

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CLINTON, Miss. - Cool, calm and relaxed.

That's how Kirkwood softball coach Joe Yegge described his team at the NJCAA Division II national tournament Wednesday.

The Eagles scored nine runs in the bottom of the first inning and blasted Kankakee, 17-0, in five innings in the opening round of the World Series at Traceway Park.

Monika Bevans belted a grand slam in the first inning, DoniRae Mayhew socked a solo homer in the fourth inning and Lauren Kuch went 4-for-4 with two RBIs to pace the 18-hit attack.

Natalie Halvorson (26-8) pitched a one-hitter with five strikeouts with another impressive showing. Halvorson tossed a perfect game in the district finals last week against Nebraska Central.

Kirkwood (49-11) will face Phoenix (50-8) in the winners bracket quarterfinals Thursday at 3:30 p.m.

The Eagles are making their fourth straight appearance at the World Series and sixth trip in 11 years under Yegge. He liked his club's attitude on the big stage Wednesday.

