

Kirkwood streak, season end at nationals

Written by Christopher Lay

Friday, 17 May 2013 17:45 - Last Updated Saturday, 18 May 2013 17:00

A two-out RBI single in the bottom of the ninth inning ended Kirkwood's softball season Friday.

Stephanie Cruse's hit lifted Cowley County, Kan., past the Eagles, 3-2, in an elimination round game of the NJCAA Division II national softball tournament.

The Eagles had their 50-game winning streak snapped earlier in the day by Phoenix College, 2-1. That loss, the team's first since March 18, put Kirkwood in the losers bracket.

Kirkwood held a 2-1 lead against Cowley County going into the bottom of the seventh inning.

It looked like the Eagles may hold onto their lead, but Cowley County's Colby Prester drove a double past right fielder Kayla Tatge, who made a diving try for the catch.

The loss ended an incredible season for Kirkwood (57-5).

As Coach Joe Yegge reflected after the game, "what these players have accomplished this season is something they can be proud of ... it was a great season, going 57-5.

"Fifty straight wins that set the school records and setting another with over 100 home runs. It was a great year."

The usually hard-hitting Eagles had their bats silenced for the most part Friday. They managed only four hits against Cowley County after getting only three in the loss to Phoenix.

Strong-armed Amber Logemann also was unable to pitch against Cowley County after tossing a nine-strikeout, five-hitter against Phoenix.

Freshman Shy Saladino started in Logemann's absence and pitched 4.2 strong innings and allowed only five hits. One of those hits, however, was a two-out home run in the bottom of the fifth by Cruse that tied the game, 1-1.

Freshman Sam Belz relieved and pitched the rest of the game. She gave up five hits and was hung with her first loss of the season.

Kirkwood had taken a 1-0 lead in the fourth inning. Krysta Tutsch drove a single to center field that brought in Kristen Winter, who had reached on an error.

The Eagles took a 2-1 lead in the top of the sixth when Lauren Smith singled home Winter, who had reached on a sharply hit single to left.

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NJCAA DII SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT

At Clinton, Miss.

(Double-elimination)

Friday

Winners Bracket

Semifinals

Phoenix, Ariz. 2, Kirkwood 1

LSU-Eunice 8, Jones County, Miss. 2

Finals

LSU-Eunice 6, Phoenix 1

Losers Bracket

Third Round

Illinois Central 4, Highland, Kan. 3, 11 innings (Highland eliminated)

Cowley County, Kan. 12, Sauk Valley, Ill. 4 (Sauk Valley eliminated)

Quarterfinals

Cowley County 3, Kirkwood 2, 9 innings (Kirkwood eliminated)

Illinois Central 1, Jones County 0 (Jones County eliminated)

Semifinals

Cowley County 9, Illinois Central 0

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Saturday

Losers Bracket Final - Phoenix 1, Cowley County, Kan. 0 (Cowley County eliminated)

Championship Game 1 - LSU-Eunice 8, Phoenix 0 (Phoenix eliminated)