

Kirkwood falls to DMACC in regional

Written by Jim Ecker

Thursday, 07 May 2015 14:27 - Last Updated Thursday, 07 May 2015 16:46



WATERLOO - Kirkwood Coach Todd Rima still thinks his club can make a deep run in the regional baseball tournament in Waterloo this weekend, but the job got a lot tougher Thursday.

The Eagles lost to DMACC, 7-4, in 11 innings in the opening round and fell into a loser's bracket game Friday morning in the double-elimination tournament at Riverfront Stadium. Kirkwood will meet Ellsworth, a 12-7 loser to top seed Iowa Central at 10 a.m.

Kirkwood (32-21) jumped to an early 3-0 lead on home runs by Jack Fitzgerald and Randy Perez, but DMACC battled back against Kirkwood starter Nick Drahozal and prevailed in extra frames.

"That's a heartbreaker a little bit," said Rima. "You felt like you had chances to win. You can't change it now. We have to move forward and bounce back."

The Bears took a 4-3 lead with a pair of home runs of their own against Drahozal, the Xavier grad who lasted 6 1/3 innings and threw 95 pitches.

Kirkwood tied the game, 4-4, in the bottom of the eighth on an RBI single by Toran Shahidi following a leadoff double by Luke Hassman.

The Eagles had a chance to win the ballgame in the bottom of the 10th with Perez, their most productive hitter, at the plate with runners at first-and-second and two puts. Perez was 3-for-5 at that point, but he struck out swinging.

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DMACC got a leadoff double in the top of the 11th against Kirkwood relief pitcher Brock Neuhaus, who had tossed 3 2/3 innings of scoreless ball at that point. Perez, who also pitches for the Eagles, moved from third base to the mound at that point and got two outs on strikeouts.

Perez had an 0-2 count on the next batter, but Anthony Mroska singled to left field to drive in Edwin Collazo with the go-ahead run to make it 5-4.

Perez walked a man and Brad Mathiowetz belted a two-run double off the wall in center field to make it 7-4. Kirkwood went quietly in the bottom of the 11th and that was the game.

"I thought we put ourselves in a position to win. I think the little things did come back to get us," said Rima. "We just have to move forward and get ready to go tomorrow."

The Eagles failed to turn a routine double-play that would have ended the top of the fourth inning and the next man (Jacob Adams) hit a two-run homer against Drahozal. That homer pulled DMACC within 3-2 and gave the Bears new life.

Other "little things" went wrong as well. "It's a game you felt we should have won, but DMACC found a way to get it done," said Rima.

Kirkwood is the No. 4 seed in the tournament and DMACC is the No. 5 seed.

"I thought Drahozal did a good job for us. And I thought Neuhaus was incredible," said Rima. "Our pitchers did a great of working out of some innings."

In the end, DMACC got the clutch hits in extra innings and Kirkwood did not.

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"We've been getting that hit lately," said Rima. "We had a couple of opportunities. It's the story of the game."

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W - Jackson. L - Neuhaus.