

## Kinnaird shines as Eagles blank Highland

Written by Metro Sports Report  
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CLINTON, Miss. - Freshman Lexi Kinnaird spun a seven-hit shutout Thursday as the Kirkwood Eagles blanked Highland, 6-0, in the second round of the NJCAA D2 national softball tournament at Traceway Park.

Kirkwood (58-4) will face Jones County (47-6) in the winner's bracket semifinals Friday at noon. Kirkwood is the No. 2 seed in the 16-team tournament and Jones County, from Mississippi, is the No. 3 seed.

Kinnaird (25-2) struck out four batters and walked two in the seven-inning ballgame. The Eagles broke a scoreless tie with three runs in the third inning for a 3-0 lead. They made it 4-0 in the fourth and tacked on two insurance runs in the top of the seventh.

Morgan Frost went 3-for-4 for Kirkwood with two doubles and two RBIs. Lexi Ferrari was 3-for-3 with a double and two runs. Peyton Mercer went 2-for-4 with three RBIs.

Gabi Carter collected a double, two walks and two runs for the Eagles. Maddie Hansen contributed an RBI. Taylor Nearad went 1-for-4 with a run.

Labette (28-23) will face LSU Eunice (55-7) in the other winner's bracket semifinal Friday. Labette upset Phoenix, the No. 1 seed, in the winner's bracket quarterfinals Thursday and dropped Phoenix into the loser's bracket of the double-elimination tournament.

DMACC, Illinois Central and Kankakee are also alive in the loser's bracket.

If Kirkwood beats Jones County on Friday, the Eagles will advance to the winner's bracket final at 4 p.m. Friday. If the Eagles lose to Jones County, they'll face DMACC or Phoenix in an elimination game at 2 p.m. Friday.

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Kirkwood has won 34 straight games. The tournament ends Saturday.