

No .2 Kirkwood stunned twice at nationals

Written by Metro Sports Report
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CLINTON, Miss. - The Kirkwood softball team suffered two stunning defeats at the national tournament Thursday and is now facing a long, sad bus ride home from Mississippi.

Coach Joe Yegge's second-ranked Eagles lost to 11th-ranked Cowley County, 4-3, in the winners bracket semifinals Thursday and immediately had to play again in the losers bracket.

Perhaps still shaken, the Eagles promptly lost to Illinois Central, 6-0, and were eliminated from the tournament with two losses in three games.

Kirkwood ripped Illinois Central, 9-0, in five innings in March, but the rematch went to Illinois Central in a stunner.

Kirkwood finished the season with a 55-6 record. Cowley County advanced to the winners bracket semifinals at 45-15, and Illinois Central stayed alive in the losers bracket at 27-23.

Kirkwood's game against Cowley County was tied, 2-2, after six innings. Cowley County belted two solo home runs in the top of the seventh against Kirkwood ace Lexi Kinnaird for a 4-2 lead.

Lexi Ferrari led off the bottom of the seventh with a home run to make it 4-3, but Taylor Nearad, Maddie Hansen and DoniRae Mayhew - the heart of the Kirkwood lineup - were retired to end the game.

Illinois Central collected 15 hits in the losers bracket game against Kirkwood, including four runs in the bottom of the fourth against Angie McBeain.

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The Eagles had only four hits in the game.

The NJCAA Division II national tournament will continue Friday and Saturday, but it will continue without the No. 2 team in the country.

GAME 1

Cowley County █ █ 200 000 2 - 4 7 1
Kirkwood █ █ █ █ 010 010 1 - 3 7 0

W - Wenzel. L - Kinnaird

GAME 2

Kirkwood █ █ █ █ █ 000 000 0 - 0 4 2
Illinois Central █ 041 010 x - 6 15 1

W - Shaw. L - McBeain.