

Jackson helps No. 7 Eagles sweep IC

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 30 March 2018 20:48 -



Taylor Jackson and Giancarlo Stanton have something in common now as baseball sluggers.

That's very good news for the Kirkwood Eagles.

Jackson belted two home runs Friday in his first game for the Eagles at Kirkwood field, including a walk-off shot in the bottom of the seventh inning to give the seventh-ranked Eagles a 6-5 victory over Iowa Central in the opener of their conference doubleheader.

Kirkwood won the second game, 8-1, to sweep the ICCAC twinbill and put the Eagles all alone in first place.

Jackson's performance came a day after Stanton crushed two homers in his first game for the New York Yankees in a victory over Toronto, although the resemblance ends there.

Stanton is a big man who led the Major Leagues with 59 home runs last season, so his round-trippers are not a great surprise. Jackson, by contrast, is 5-foot-10 and 160 pounds, but it's pure muscle.

"I'm not big at all," he acknowledged. "I just try to keep hitting line drives. I'm working on it.

"And I eat," he added, smiling. "I eat a lot. I may be small, but I eat a lot."

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Jackson, a center fielder from Kenwood Academy in Chicago, has been making a strong impression for the Eagles this season, but this was the first time he got to play at Kirkwood after they shoveled away the snow and declared the field ready for duty. All of the previous 21 games were all played on the road.



Jackson went 3-for-4 in the opener with two homers, three RBIs, two stolen bases and four runs scored. His first home was a two-run laser to right-center in the fifth inning to snap a 3-3 tie and give the Eagles a 5-3 lead, but Illinois Central tied the game 5-5 in the top of the seventh and Jackson had to deliver again.

His game-winning homer was a blast to left-center with one out. His teammates greeted him at home plate and the crowd gave him a standing ovation for winning the game.

"It's fun playing out here in front of all these fans," said Jackson. "Back home, I didn't really have a lot of fans at the games. I think there were like 10 or 12 people."

Jackson is hitting .370 with six homers and 24 RBIs for Kirkwood, which is 20-3 overall and 4-0 in the conference.

Kirkwood first baseman Spencer Wiskus, who missed the first 21 games of the season with a broken hand, returned to the lineup Friday and smacked a solo homer for the Eagles. Left fielder Ellison Hanna went 2-for-3 in the opener with a double.

Kal Youngquist, Cal Clark and Joel Thompson hit home runs for Kirkwood in the 8-1 victory in the nightcap. Thompson and Korry Howell were both 3-for-4. Clark, Izaya Fullard and Hanna had two hits. Fullard drove in two runs in the doubleheader, giving him 37 RBIs in 23 games.

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The Eagles had excellent pitching in the nightcap. Cameron Leff allowed one run in six innings, then Cal Stalzer did not allow any runs in three innings in relief for the save.

Kirkwood has a good-hitting team this season with 24 homers in 23 games and a team batting average of .330. The Eagles are averaging a healthy 9.6 runs per game and the pitchers are holding teams to fewer than three earned runs per game.

"We can hit all the way down the lineup," said Jackson, "and our pitchers are going to hold them down."

The Eagles are 20-3 overall and riding an 11-game winning streak.

Kirkwood and Iowa Central were scheduled to play another doubleheader on Saturday, but those games have been postponed and are tentatively planned for Monday.

Iowa Central fell to 4-2 in the conference and 13-14 overall with Friday's losses. Nolan Monthei hit two solo homers for the Tritons in the first game.

GAME 1

Iowa Central █ █ █ **001 020 2 - 5 3 0**
Kirkwood █ █ █ █ **101 120 1 - 6 8 0**

W - Wadle.

GAME 2

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Iowa Central 100 000 000 - 1 5 2
Kirkwood 402 002 00x - 8 14 3

W - Leff. S - Stalzer.