

No. 2 Eagles roll at national tourney

Written by Metro Sports Report

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CLINTON, Miss. - The second-ranked Kirkwood softball team brought their potent bats to the national tournament on Wednesday.

The Eagles scored six runs in the bottom of the first inning and dumped Oakland Community College, 12-3, in five innings in the opening round of the NJCAA Division II tournament at Traceway Park.

Kirkwood (55-4) will face Cowley County (44-15) in the winners bracket quarterfinals Thursday at 3:30.

Taylor Nearad, the 2016 Junior College National Player of the Year, belted a two-run homer in the bottom of the first inning to get things started. Morgan Frost had a two-run single in the first inning and Chaise Light collected a two-run double for the early 6-0 lead.

Laken Berthume, the starting pitcher for Oakland, got only one out in the first inning before being chased from the game.

Kirkwood scored three runs in the third inning for a 9-3 advantage and scored three more times in the fourth to make it 12-3. The game ended after the top of the fifth due to the mercy rule.

Light finished 3-for-3 with two doubles and three RBIs. Frost also went 3-for-3 with a double and three RBIs. Monika Bevans was 2-for-3 with two RBIs.

Nearad's home run was her 19th of the season, tying her with Maddie Hansen for the most round-trippers with the Eagles this year.

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Hansen, DoniRae Mayhew, Frost, Angie McBeain and Bevans scored two runs for the Eagles.

Lexi Kinnaird, who leads the nation in victories and strikeouts, struck out 10 batters in five innings for her 30th win. Kinnaird allowed only four hits, but three of them were solo home runs.

Oakland     **012 00 - 3 4 0**

Kirkwood    **603 3x - 12 13 0**

W - Kinnaird. L - Berthume.