

## Mayhew belts five 3-run homers

Written by Jim Ecker  
Friday, 20 April 2018 06:21 -

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DoniRae Mayhew blasted a pair of three-run homers Thursday afternoon at the Kirkwood softball field.

Oh, by the way. That was in the first inning of their doubleheader against NIACC.

Mayhew crushed another three-run job in the second inning and walloped another three-run blast in the fourth.

That gave her four homers - all of them three-run blasts - and 12 RBIs as Kirkwood pummeled NIACC in the opener of their conference twinbill on a sunny day, 24-2.

For good measure, Mayhew socked another three-run homer in the second game for five 3-run bombs and 15 RBIs in one day.

The third-ranked Eagles won the second contest, 19-2, and hit 11 homers in the twinbill.

Mayhew, a sophomore from Bettendorf, amazed her teammates, coaches, fans and opponents.

"You're an animal!," exclaimed one of the Eagles after one of her prodigious shots.

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"Check her bat!" joked another.



Mayhew tied the school record for most home runs in a single game. Kayla Tatge also hit four homers in a game against NIACC in 2012 and had five round-trippers in the doubleheader.

Mayhew hit her rockets to left field, left-center, center, right-center and right field, so there was no way to pitch her. And there was nothing "cheap" about any of them.

NIACC Coach Dan Gratz could have walked Mayhew after it became obvious she was going to be a one-girl wrecking crew, but he wanted his pitchers to challenge her.

"We're not going to take the bat out of a great player's hands," said Gratz. "It's not my mentality, especially when the scores were the way they were. If it was a tight game, it changes things a little bit.

"We got her a couple of times, but she's a great hitter," he said.

For the record, Mayhew also hit a couple of ground balls, a long fly ball to right field, walked once and was hit by a pitch.

Kirkwood Coach Joe Yegge lost track of how many RBIs she had in the first game.

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"Twelve?," he said incredulously. "That's ridiculous. That's just ridiculous."

Mayhew now leads the country with 22 home runs in 40 games. She's also tied for the most RBIs among NJCAA Division II players with 63.

And oh, by the way (again). She's tied for fourth in the country with 17 victories and is 17-1 with a 1.73 ERA after tossing a complete game in the opener.

Ho-hum, Mayhew seemed to say after her big day.

"I try not to let things affect me," said Mayhew, who does not show a lot of emotion on the field. "Don't get too excited, don't get too down."

Mayhew was a prolific slugger at Bettendorf High School, where she hit 58 homers during her five-year career, drove in 255 runs and had a lifetime batting average of .493.

"I remember seeing D-Rae as an eighth grader," said Yegge. "She mashed the ball. I never thought she'd pitch for us, but she mashed it and I just knew she would have tremendous power."

Mayhew hit 18 homers with 83 RBIs as a freshman at Kirkwood last year, giving her 40 homers, 146 RBIs and a career batting average of .448 with the Eagles.

Incredibly, Mayhew has shed 75 pounds since January of 2017 with a smarter diet, a commitment to the weight room and serious exercise. She looks and feels terrific.

"Yegge pushes us a lot to hit the weight room and get stronger, get better," she said. "And just different eating habits. Over the summer I took some classes and every day I was working out. I

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was lifting, doing cardio, making lifestyle adjustments."

Mayhew has accepted a scholarship to play softball for Iowa Coach Marla Looper and the Hawkeyes next season. Looper likes Mayhew as a hitter, and she especially likes the way Mayhew has worked on her body to become a legitimate Division I athlete.

In fact, Looper did not recognize Mayhew when the Hawkeyes and Eagles played a game last fall.

"Marla goes, 'Where's DoniRae?,'" said Yegge, chuckling at the memory. "And I said, 'She's standing right next to you.'"

"Marla goes, 'You know what? That shows me commitment, and we're going to put her at the top of the list.'"

Mayhew was not the only star for the Eagles Thursday, although she overshadowed everybody else.

Lauren Kuch blasted two homers in the second game, including a three-run shot and a grand slam for seven RBIs in the 19-2 victory. Monika Bevans also hit a pair of homers, one in each game.

Brianna Smith and Miranda Kaste also connected for four-baggers, giving the Eagles 11 home runs in the doubleheader.

Rachel Stewart was 5-for-8 in the twinbill with three doubles, a triple, five RBIs and eight runs. Smith was 5-for-9 with two doubles, a homer and five RBIs.

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Kenady Waugh was 4-for-6 with three doubles. Hannah Mauser was also 4-for-6. Kuch finished 4-for-5. Kaste and Bevans had three hits.

Natalie Halvorson pitched a complete game in the 19-2 victory in the nightcap. She tossed a five-hitter with eight strikeouts, raising her record to 16-4.

The Eagles raised their records to 35-5 overall and 14-2 in the conference. NIACC fell to 16-20 overall and 7-7 in the league.