

Kirkwood baseball swept by No. 13 NIACC

Written by Jim Ecker
Sunday, 10 April 2016 08:32 -



The Kirkwood Eagles had little choice Saturday night.

They needed to go home, get warm and flush Saturday's double-header against NIACC from their system as soon as possible and get ready for a better performance on Sunday.

The 13th-ranked NIACC Trojans swept the Eagles, 8-1 and 16-5, in a chilly ICCAC conference twin-bill at Kirkwood.

"We have to flush it," said KCC Coach Todd Rima. "We don't have any other choice. We've got to move on and be better tomorrow."

Kirkwood and NIACC are scheduled for another double-header Sunday at 1 p.m. at the Kirkwood field, weather permitting.

"We've got to show up ready to go tomorrow," said Rima. "We're going to be a better team and we'll have to play well to win."

"Our guys will come ready to play. They'll respond," he vowed. "They've responded all year. There's no reason they won't do it tomorrow."

Kirkwood had gotten off to a fast 8-0 start in conference games this season, but Saturday's results left Kirkwood, Iowa Central and Southeastern all tied for first place at 8-2 with NIACC a game back at 7-3.

It's a 28-game season, so there's still a long way to go.

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Kirkwood wasted a strong effort by sophomore pitcher Nick Drahozal in the 8-1 loss in the first game. The southpaw allowed only one earned run in 5 2/3 innings and fanned 12 batters, but NIACC pitcher Dan Loats was a little better.

Loats tossed a complete game with 12 strikeouts and allowed only three hits. The pitchers duel was scoreless after five innings, but NIACC scored four times in the sixth inning and four more times in the seventh to break it open.

"I thought Drahozal was unbelievable today," said Rima. "I think he deserved better with the outing he had."

Kirkwood fell to 22-10 overall and NIACC raised its mark to 20-8.

The Eagles battled back from a 9-0 deficit in the second game and pulled within 9-5, but the Trojans tacked on seven more runs in the ninth inning to win easily. Brandon Michie went 4-for-6 with a grand slam and six RBIs for NIACC.

Bryce Grimm and General McArthur had three hits for Kirkwood in the nightcap. Matt Paciello hit a solo homer.

The Eagles struck out 23 times in 16 innings in the double-header and had only 10 hits.

GAME 1

NIACC 000 004 4 - 8 10
Kirkwood 000 001 0 - 1 3

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GAME 2

NIACC 105 030 007 - 16 17

Kirkwood 000 022 100 - 5 7