

No. 1 Eagles share ICCAC softball title

Written by Metro Sports Report

Monday, 24 April 2017 05:03 - Last Updated Monday, 24 April 2017 05:06



NORFOLK, Neb. - The Kirkwood softball team should send two dozen roses and a box of chocolates to their friends at Southwestern Community College in Creston.

Thanks to Southwestern, the Eagles have finished the ICCAC season with a share of the conference title.

It looked like the top-ranked Eagles would finish a game behind fifth-ranked DMACC in the league standings, but Southwestern upset DMACC on Sunday to open the door for Kirkwood.

Kirkwood obliged by sweeping its conference doubleheader at Northeast Community College Sunday, so Kirkwood and DMACC finished in a tie for first place with identical 24-2 records.

Southwestern beating DMACC was quite an upset, because Southwestern finished in seventh place in the conference with a 6-22 record. Southwestern beat DMACC in the first game of their doubleheader, 6-2, but DMACC responded with a 10-0 victory in the nightcap.

Kirkwood Coach Joe Yegge has now won eight conference titles (outright or shared) in his 10 years with the Eagles.

Kirkwood swept Northeast, 9-2 and 20-4, on the road in Norfolk, Neb., on Sunday, raising their overall record to 48-3.

Lexi Kinnaird (24-2, 1.24 ERA) allowed one earned run in the 9-2 victory. She allowed four hits, with 12 strikeouts and one walk.

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Angie McBeain (19-1, 1.76 ERA) was the beneficiary of all that offense in the 20-4 triumph in the second game.

DoniRae Mayhew went 5-for-8 in the twinbill with six RBIs. Maddie Hansen was 5-for-9 with five RBIs. Taylor Nearad and McBeain had four hits. Lexi Ferrari, Morgan Frost, Monika Bevens, Audra Bridenstine and Amanda Pipolo had three hits. Frost hit a home run and drove in four runs. Ferrari and Bevens had three RBIs.

Kinnaird leads the nation in victories (24) and strikeouts (232). Hansen leads the nation by a wide margin with 84 RBIs. Nearad leads the country in runs scored (92), hits (98) and doubles (31).

Kirkwood is scheduled to finish the regular season by hosting Indian Hills in a non-conference doubleheader Tuesday at 2 p.m.

The Eagles will host the NJCAA Region XI-B tournament this Friday, Saturday and Sunday at the Kirkwood field. The Eagles will face Southwestern in the opening round Friday at 2 p.m.

DMACC will host the NJCAA Region XI-A tournament this week. DMACC and Kirkwood will not meet in the regional or district tournaments, so both of them have a clean shot at reaching the national tournament in Clinton, Miss., May 17-20.

DMACC drew the top seed for the Region XI tournaments and Kirkwood got the No. 2 seed based on a tiebreaker, since they both finished with 24-2 records in the league.

DMACC and Kirkwood split their doubleheader this season, so the head-to-head tiebreaker did not apply. However, DMACC outscored Kirkwood 9-7 in those two games and DMACC was awarded the No. 1 seed on the basis of fewer runs allowed against the Eagles.

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If DMACC wins the Region XI-A tournament, it will host a district tournament. If Kirkwood wins the Region XI-B tournament, it will have to face the Region 13 champion on the road in North Dakota, Minnesota or possibly Montana on May 11-13.

Kirkwood and DMACC were scheduled for two doubleheaders this season, but the first twinbill at Kirkwood was postponed several times and finally canceled due to league rules.

GAME 1

Kirkwood ▯ ▯ ▯ **000 301 5 - 9 12 2**

Northeast ▯ ▯ **100 000 1 - 2 4 3**

W - Kinnaird. L - Edens.

GAME 2

Kirkwood ▯ ▯ ▯ **160 76 - 20 22 1**

Northeast ▯ ▯ **040 00 - 4 5 5**

W - McBeain. L - Payton.