

Kirkwood wins regional softball crown

Written by Metro Sports Report

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FORT DODGE - The Kirkwood Eagles won a pair of games against sixth-ranked DMACC Tuesday and captured the Region XI softball title in Fort Dodge with their 44th and 45th victories in a row.

Leah Duffe hit a walk-off home run in the bottom of the eighth inning as the third-ranked Eagles trimmed DMACC, 1-0, in their first meeting Tuesday.

The two clubs met again in the finals and Kirkwood had a much easier time, posting a 9-2 victory with a barrage of five home runs. Kayla Tatge, who leads the nation with 24 homers, belted two for the Eagles in the championship game.

Kirkwood (52-3) will host the district finals Thursday and Friday at the Kirkwood field. The other teams are Dawson (Mont.) and Dakota County Tech (Minn.).

Thursday's schedule has Dawson playing Dakota County Tech in the first game. The second game has Kirkwood playing the first game loser, and the Eagles will play the first game winner in the day's third game. The district finals are double-elimination.

The district champion will advance to the NJCAA Division II national tournament.

Amber Logemann pitched both games for Kirkwood Tuesday, going the distance both times. She tossed a two-hitter with 14 strikeouts and no walks in the 1-0 victory in extra innings, then hurled a five-hitter with nine more strikeouts in the finals.

Logemann (23-3, 0.43 ERA) has struck out 298 batters in 148.1 innings.

Duffe went 2-for-4 and socked her eighth homer in the first game in a tense showdown of highly ranked ballclubs. Logemann allowed only two singles and kept DMACC off the

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scoreboard until Duffe, a star shortstop, ended the suspense in the bottom of the eighth.

Tatge hit two homers and drove in four runs in the finals. Lauren Smith, Kelsie Campbell and Kadarena Sales all hit solo shots for the Eagles.

Krysta Tutsch went 3-for-3 for Kirkwood in the championship game. Tatge, Campbell and Sales all had two hits.

Kirkwood won all six of its games against DMACC this season.

The Eagles lead the nation with 92 home runs.