

Kirkwood ousted from NJCAA tourney

Written by Metro Sports Report
Friday, 15 May 2015 17:14 -

CLINTON, Miss. - The Kirkwood softball team went into a batting slump at the absolute worst time of the year this week.

The sixth-ranked Eagles were shut out by Labette, 4-0, Friday in the loser's bracket of the NJCAA Division II national tournament and were eliminated from the double-elimination event.

Kirkwood tied for seventh in the national tournament and finished the year with a 47-10 record. The Eagles went 2-2 in the tournament.

Kirkwood led the nation in home runs this season and batted more than .400 as a team, but the Eagles struggled to score runs in Mississippi. Kirkwood was averaging approximately 10 runs per game heading into the national tournament, but the Eagles scored a total of only eight runs in four games in the event.

Kirkwood was shut out only once during the regular season, but the Eagles were blanked twice in the national tournament by Johnson County (1-0) and Labette (4-0). They beat Mercyhurst, 3-2, and topped Macomb, 5-3, for their two wins in the tournament.

DMACC, which finished second behind Kirkwood in the ICCAC conference this season, reached the championship game of the winner's bracket Friday against Johnson County.

Kirkwood won the district tournament on May 1 and was scoring runs at a prolific pace at the time, but the Eagles had a long wait for the national tournament to begin May 13 and never began hitting again.

The Eagles trailed, 2-0, in the bottom of the sixth inning against Labette Friday and had runners at first and second with nobody out. The game was delayed by rain at that point, killing the rally.

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Nicky Simpson (20-6) pitched six innings Friday, allowed two runs and took the loss. Allie Mengler pitched the seventh inning after the rain delay and allowed two runs. The Eagles had only three hits in the game, all singles.

Kirkwood hit .234 in the tournament as a team with four doubles and no home runs. For the season, the Eagles hit .406 as a team with 114 home runs.