

## KCC baseball gets No. 3 seed for regional

Written by Jim Ecker  
Sunday, 06 May 2018 05:31 -

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The Kirkwood Eagles made a spirited run for the ICCAC conference baseball title this season, but a pair of one-run losses to Southeastern this weekend ruined their chances.

The first one-run setback occurred in the second game of their doubleheader in West Burlington on Friday. The other one-run defeat happened in the first game of their twinbill at Kirkwood on Saturday.

Flip those two outcomes, and the 11th-ranked Eagles would have been the 2018 conference champs.

"It was a tight series," said Kirkwood Coach Todd Rima. "We were one hit away, one play away.

"But against a really good team, we gave them some free outs and free chances and they took advantage of it."

Kirkwood needed to win 3-of-4 games from Southeastern to claim the league title. Instead, the Blackhawks won 3-of-4 to earn the conference championship for themselves.

Southeastern swept Kirkwood on Friday, 9-1 and 3-2. The fourth-ranked Blackhawks won the first game of their doubleheader Saturday, 10-9, but the Eagles bounced back with a 13-2 victory in five innings in the second contest.

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"It didn't go the way we were hoping, but I was really proud of the way we competed today," said Rima. "After the way we struggled offensively yesterday, it was good to see our guys battle back and have the approach they did today. I thought they showed a little character."

Kirkwood (36-14-1) earned the No. 3 seed for the regional tournament and will face No. 6 seed DMACC (24-26) in the opening round on Thursday at 3 p.m. at Ashford University Field in Clinton.

Kirkwood swept a doubleheader from DMACC, 10-8 and 5-1, on March 25 when the teams were forced to play in Omaha due to adverse weather and field conditions at DMACC. Their second doubleheader was canceled and not rescheduled.

Southeastern (45-11) is the No. 1 seed for the regional tournament and drew a bye into the winner's bracket semifinal. NIACC (34-18-1) is the No. 2 seed, having slipped ahead of Kirkwood in the league standings this weekend.

The double-elimination tournament will be held May 9-14 in Clinton.

"You've got to win the first game," said Rima. "We've got to work hard to clean up some things and be ready for Game 1."

"You worry about the first game and once you get that one, you can move into the next. We've got to be prepared to play on Thursday."

Rima has not named his starting pitcher for Game 1 but has good options with Cameron Leff (7-2), Adam Ketelsen (7-1), Hunter Lee (7-2) and Peyton Long (2-2).

Lee tossed four strong innings in the 13-2 victory on Saturday, allowing only one run on two hits. He struck out six batters.

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"It was really great to see Hunter bounce back and throw as well as he did," said Rima. "It gives us options and gives us a chance going in there."

There's a chance that injured second baseman Cal Clark could return for the regional. Clark has been sidelined since being hit by a pitch on April 25 against Indian Hills. He fractured six bones on the left side of his face, but had surgery on Thursday and will visit his doctor again this Thursday to see if he's cleared to play.

Clark, a sophomore, is hitting .314 with four homers and 36 RBIs. The Cedar Rapids Prairie grad had two plates installed in his face to promote healing and is determined to play again this season.

"If he's cleared, he's probably going to be on the field," said Rima. "We'll see what he does."

"That would be pretty neat. A kid like that who plays the right way, if he could get a chance to come back and play, that would be pretty special. It would be a boost for our team."

Ross Kramer hit a three-run homer for Kirkwood in the 10-9 loss to Southeastern. Korry Howell, Izaya Fullard, Kirby Kerr, Chili Moseley and Joel Thompson had two hits. Moseley had two doubles and two RBIs.

Adam Ketelsen (7-1) had his only rough outing of the season and took his first loss of the year. He was charged with seven runs and nine hits in four innings.

Fullard went 3-for-3 with a homer and two RBIs in the second game. Kramer also had three hits. Howell had three RBIs. Moseley, Kerr and Ellison Hanna had two RBIs. Taylor Jackson had two hits.

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### GAME 1

**Southeastern** ▯ ▯ **001 162 0 - 10 11 0**  
**Kirkwood** ▯ ▯ ▯ **000 431 1 - 9 14 1**

L - Ketelsen (7-1).

### GAME 2

**Southeastern** ▯ ▯ **000 11 - 2 3 1**  
**Kirkwood** ▯ ▯ ▯ **006 7x - 13 14 0**

W - Lee (7-2).