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Softball Contact: Aaron Blau

IOWA SOFTBALL
HAWKEYES ADVANCE AT BUZZ CLASSIC

MARIETTA, GA – The University of Iowa softball team advanced to the championship bracket at the Buzz Classic on Saturday. In the final day of group play, the Hawkeyes were defeated by Auburn, 2-1 but bounced back with a 3-1 victory over Middle Tennessee State. Iowa knocked off Gardner-Webb in the first round of bracket play, 9-1 in five innings.

Auburn's Holly Currie held the Hawkeyes to one hit and also went 2-3 at the plate. Iowa's lone hit came in the form of a single off the bat of **Natalie Johnson** in the bottom of the seventh inning. **Barb Weinberg** scored Iowa's single run on a wild pitch in the bottom of the second inning.

Lisa Birocci took the loss for the Hawkeyes. The senior went the distance and gave up six hits while striking out five.

Iowa scored two runs in the bottom of the fifth inning to lock up the victory against Middle Tennessee State. **Summer Downs** led off the inning with a triple and **Kylie Murray** followed with an RBI single. **Emily Nichols** laid down a sacrifice bunt to move Murray to second and a wild pitch advanced her to third. An error by the catcher allowed Murray to score the final run of the game.

Ali Arnold struck out a career high 14 batters and allowed only three hits in the win. Arnold also stole a base for the Hawkeyes.

The Hawkeyes entered championship bracket play as the six seed and were matched up against Gardner-Webb, who was the 11 seed. Iowa pounded out 12 hits and took advantage of four Gardner-Webb errors. **Abby Ruff**, **Summer Downs** and **Emily Nichols** all collected extra-base hits. Ruff went 3-3 with two RBI and a run scored while Nichols was 2-2. Stacy May went 2-3 with an RBI and two runs scored.

Birocci struck out six batters in five innings of work to improve her record to 6-2. She also led off the bottom of the fourth inning with her first home run of the season.

Competition at the Buzz Classic will conclude on Sunday with quarterfinal action starting at 8:00 a.m. The Hawkeyes are scheduled to face Virginia Tech, who they defeated twice earlier this season at the Stetson Invitational.

