

May 20, 2004

IOWA SOFTBALL

IOWA FALLS IN FIRST ROUND OF NCAA REGIONALS, 2-1 IN EXTRA INNINGS

LINCOLN, NE – The University of Iowa softball team was defeated by Mississippi State, 2-1, in eight innings Thursday at Bowlin Field in Lincoln, NE. The Hawkeyes will continue in the consolation bracket of the double-elimination NCAA Region V Tournament tomorrow at 10 a.m. against the loser of the California-Maine game.

With the score tied at 1-1 in the eighth inning, Mississippi State got a one-out double from Jennifer Waterman, who was replaced at second by pinch runner Keri McFarling. Blaire Brown then bounced back to Iowa pitcher **Lisa Birocci**, but Birocci's throw to first base was wild, allowing McFarling to come home with the winning run.

"I was just thinking that I needed to get a sure out," Birocci said. "I glanced over at third and then went to first, but the throw wasn't there. Now, it's just important to re-focus for tomorrow's game. We need to forget about today and come back tomorrow."

With the score tied at zero, the Hawkeyes had a golden opportunity to score in the top of the second when they loaded the bases with one out. A fielder's choice and a line out ended the threat.

Mississippi State used a trio of hits to push the first run of the game across the plate in the bottom of the fourth. Hayle Guess picked up the RBI on a single to center.

The Hawkeyes scored on a wild play which began with a catcher's interference call and ended with Mississippi Coach Jay Miller being ejected. With runners on first and third, **Kylie Murray** laid down a sacrifice bunt and was forced to avoid Waterman, who was coming from behind the plate to pick up the bunt. Murray then slammed into first baseman Kate Jaspers, and **Natalie Johnson** scored. Murray was awarded first base on the catcher's interference call, while Miller was ejected arguing the call.

Iowa had a chance to score in the top of the eighth, getting a leadoff double from Johnson, who moved to third on a sacrifice bunt from **Amanda Hentges**. Stacy May then hit a sharp grounder to third, catching Johnson off third for the second out. A fly out to right ended the threat.

Hawkeye starter Ali Arnold pitched four innings, allowing five hits and one run while striking out five. Birocci threw the final 3 1/3 innings, allowing one hit and striking out five.

"I thought our pitching gave us a good opportunity to win," Iowa Head Coach Gayle Blevins said. "Ali did a really good job to start, but struggled a bit before we pulled her. Lisa came in and did a nice job in relief. We just continue to struggle offensively. We haven't gotten a lot of quality at bats in the last four or five games. There were some missed opportunities today."





GAME SUMMARY

IOWA	000 001 00 -- 1 5 2
Mississippi St.	000 100 01 -- 2 6 1

WP – Melissa Massey (18-9)

LP – **Lisa Birocci (21-13)**

