

May 21, 2004

IOWA SOFTBALL**HAWKEYES TOP MAINE, 2-0, TO ADVANCE IN NCAA REGIONALS**

LINCOLN, NE – The University of Iowa softball team defeated the Maine Black Bears, 2-0, Friday in the elimination bracket of the NCAA Region V tournament in Lincoln, NE. The Hawkeyes (39-23) will play the loser of the Nebraska-Creighton game tonight at 8 p.m.

Iowa followed the lead of starting pitcher **Lisa Birocci**, who pitched a gem. The junior threw seven shutout innings, allowing only three hits and striking out ten.

The Hawkeyes struck first in the top of the second by manufacturing a run with some patented **Gayle Blevins** small ball. **Kylie Murray** led off with a double to the wall in right, then Birocci laid down a perfect bunt and beat out the throw for a single. The throw got past the first baseman, allowing Murray to come home and give the Hawkeyes a 1-0 lead. Another sacrifice bunt by moved Birocci to third with one out, but Iowa was unable to get their starting pitcher home.

Iowa went to the ground again in the top of the third, having four consecutive batters bunt and pushing the second run of the game across the plate. **Laura Chipman** and **Natalie Johnson** led off with bunt singles, then were pushed over on a sacrifice bunt from **Amanda Hentges**. **Stacy May** laid down a perfect sacrifice squeeze to bring Chipman across the plate and take a 2-0 lead. The Hawkeyes looked like they may get another run when Murray ripped a grounder to the left side, but Maine shortstop Brittany Cheney made a great play deep in the hole to get the Hawkeye DH at first.

The Hawkeyes had a chance to put some insurance runs on the board in the top of the seventh, loading the bases with one out, but were unable to score. Birocci struck out the side in the ninth to seal the victory.

GAME SUMMARY

IOWA	011 000 0	-- 2 7 0
Maine	000 000 0	-- 0 3 1

WP – **Lisa Birocci** (22-13)

LP – Sarah Bennis (10-11)

