

May 21, 2004

IOWA SOFTBALL IOWA'S SEASON ENDS IN TEN INNINGS

LINCOLN, NE – The University of Iowa softball team was eliminated from the NCAA Region V Tournament late Friday night by the Creighton Blue Jays. The score was 8-4 in ten innings. Iowa ends its season with a record of 39-24.

In the top of the tenth with the score tied 4-4, Creighton opened up their offense with four runs on pair of hits, a walk, a hit batsman and a Hawkeye error.

Iowa attempted a two-out rally in the bottom of the inning, loading the bases with two out, but Creighton ace pitcher Tammy Nielsen shut the door on the Iowa season.

“All season we have had trouble overcoming early deficits,” Iowa Head Coach **Gayle Blevins** said. “It is a real positive that we battled back in the late innings the way we did. That is one of the best second halves we have played all season. We didn’t have a good 10th inning, but coming back from four down in the sixth inning to send it to extra innings showed a lot of heart.”

Creighton jumped on the scoreboard early, putting a three-spot on the board in the top of the first. Stacey Rybar led off the game with a double to center, then scored on an RBI single from Christine Fukumoto. Abby Johnson made the score 3-0 with a towering home run over the left field fence.

The Blue Jays took a 4-0 lead in the top of the fifth on a double steal that plated Katie Ayers. With one out, Ayers ripped a single, then stole second. Rybar then hit a towering pop fly that started behind the plate, but was blown into fair territory and fell to the ground just in front of the plate for a single. Ayers and Rybar then executed the double steal to give Creighton the four run lead.

The Hawkeyes began their rally in the bottom of the sixth with a pair of runs. Pinch hitter **Sami Baugh** drilled a single up the middle and was followed by a double off the bat of **Natalie Johnson**. **Stacy May** then blooped a single that scored Baugh. The ball was kicked as the second baseman tried to make the play, allowing Johnson to come home and cut the lead to 4-2.

In the bottom of the seventh, Iowa tied the game with a walk, two singles, an error and a sacrifice fly. With one out, **Laura Chipman** walked and moved to second on a single by **Emily Gerlick**. **Elisha Huse** hit a potential game-ending double play ball to shortstop Jessica Merkel, but the ball went through her legs, allowing Chipman to score.

Johnson then hit a towering fly ball to deep center field that landed just short of the fence to load the bases. **Amanda Hentges** then followed that up with a game-tying sacrifice fly that plated Gerlick.





Lisa Birocci took the loss in relief, throwing eight innings, allowing three hits, five runs (one earned) and striking out 13. The junior ended the season with a Hawkeye single-season record 313 strikeouts.

GAME SUMMARY

Creighton	300	010	000	4	--	8	8	3
IOWA	000	002	200	0	--	4	7	2

WP – Tammy Neilson (27-12)

LP – **Lisa Birocci** (22-14)

