

Sports

Titans win away from Ft. Dodge

Lewis Central to play host to Sioux City East on Wednesday for state berth

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Maybe Jordan Morgan should take weekend batting practice more often.

The Lewis Central senior – trying to break out of a nagging hitting slump – spent 90 minutes Sunday working out the kinks with her dad before darkness took over. With the sun setting again 24 hours later, Morgan and her teammates celebrated a 6-1 win over Abraham Lincoln in Class 4-A regional softball play.

“I’m sorry,” Morgan said while composing herself after the game. “I’m a senior and just really glad we won.”

In a 2-for-4 effort, the second baseman drove in a run with a third-inning double to put L.C. up 2-0. She added an RBI single to make it 6-1 in the sixth. Five different Titans drove in runs en route to their fourth regional win over the Lynx (15-20) in the past five years.

The Titans (27-8) play host to 4-A No. 15 Sioux City East on Wednesday at 7 p.m. with a state tournament berth on the line. East defeated Sioux City North 8-1 to advance.

Lewis Central’s only other senior, pitcher Brittnie Kreiser, also factored heavily into the outcome. She recorded 11 strikeouts and allowed seven hits, but buckled down in the clutch as A.L. stranded eight baserunners.

“You don’t know how bad they wanted (the win),” L.C. coach Don Wittstruck said of the two seniors. “It was a sweet victory for both of them.”

Kreiser said she and Morgan were shivering with nerves before what could have been the final game of their prep careers – not that anyone could tell by their performances.

“There was a little bit of shaking in there that I didn’t necessarily show to everyone,” Kreiser said. “(But) it’s definitely there screaming. Like in the first inning, I felt like I was going to throw up the whole time.”

Instead, she set the Lynx down in order after allowing a leadoff bunt hit. A.L. scored its only run when Taylor Anderson poked an RBI single to center field with runners on second and third in the fourth.

After two scoreless innings to start the game, Lewis Central picked up a pair of runs on doubles from catcher Allie Martinez and Morgan. Morgan Means added her own RBI two-bagger in the fourth, and Paityn Korner and Taylor Kenyon picked up run-scoring singles in the fifth.

Lewis Central beat A.L. 1-0 in its season opener on June 4. But the Lynx had the final laugh last spring with a 2-1 regional win to eliminate the heavily-favored Titans.

As motivation, Wittstruck hung a newspaper page of that defeat in the dugout before Monday’s game. A few hours later, it was torn up and in a trash can.

“Right now is the time to be peaking, and I hope we’re peaking,” Wittstruck said. “Nobody’s bags are packed this year. They’ve got to come out and play 100 percent every game until next week.”

Abraham Lincoln graduates just one senior – third baseman Kristin Burhenne – after a campaign that included breaking in a new starting pitcher in Michaela Kennedy. Kennedy, a sophomore, fanned four and walked four in the complete-game loss.

“We put ourselves in a good position several times tonight; it just wasn’t meant to be,” A.L. coach Pat Kroll said. “And (Lewis Central) is a great team, so I’m not hanging my head at all. We’ve got one way to go, and that’s up.”

With a win Wednesday, the Titans would get to the state tournament for the second time in three years. Morgan said she’s feeling good about their chances after atoning for last season’s early ouster.

“It’s so awesome, this coming after last year,” Morgan said. “We’re going to go to state and it’s going to be great. It feels

very good to start off this way.”

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Abraham Lincoln (15-20) 000 100 0 - 1 7 4

W: Brittnie Kreiser. L: Michaela Kennedy.

2B: LC, Morgan Means, Allie Martinez, Jordan Morgan; AL, Kristin Burhenne.

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