

NEWS RELEASE

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University of Saint Mary Baseball and Softball Teams End Season with KCAC Tournament Losses

(Salina, Kan.)— The University of Saint Mary baseball team let a 10-2 lead slip through its fingers and ended its season with a 16-13 loss to Bethany College May 3 in the KCAC qualifying tournament. The loss was the latest in a string of bad luck that saw the Spires just one game out of first place during the last week of the season.

In a season that saw 11 of their 29 scheduled doubleheaders get delayed or cancelled by weather, the Spires had a chance to win the championship of the closely contested KCAC as they entered the week of April 28. Kansas Wesleyan was 14-8. Friends University was 14-9. And USM was 13-9.

It's important to note that college baseball games are seven innings rather than the familiar nine innings from major league baseball. The Spires final two games were in an April doubleheader in Salina, Kan, versus Kansas Wesleyan.

The first game was scoreless going into the bottom of the seventh. A KWU player hit a home run to win the game 1-0. In the second game, the Spires entered the bottom of the seventh leading 1-0 only to see KWU score two runs to win the game.

Despite the heartbreaking losses, Coach Rob Miller said the Spires exited the field with grace, "I want you to know that you can be very proud of how they have represented USM. They win with class and lose with dignity and pride."

KWU and Friends automatically earned slots in the NAIA Regional Tournament. This left the Spires in third place and needing to win the KCAC qualifying tournament in Salina, Kan., to get the third and final KCAC slot in the NAIA Regional.

On May 1, the Spires started the double-elimination tournament (i.e. you get a second chance to win) against sixth place Ottawa. They were tied at the end of seven innings, but won 5-4 in the tenth inning.

On May 2, the Spires were shocked by fourth place Bethany, losing 23-3! So, the Spires had to play Ottawa again, winning 18-7.

This set up the final game on May 3, against Bethany. The Spires jumped out to a 10-2 lead after the first inning! But the Spires were stunned to see the relentless Bethany Swedes rack-up 16 runs to win the game 16-13!

The Spires ended the season with an overall record of 24-23 and 13-11 in the KCAC.

Softball Also Loses Tournament

On May 1, the women's softball Spires traveled to the KCAC tournament in Salina in eighth place after a rebuilding year under new coach Lori Lorenzen.

They lost the first game against first place Friends 6-0. In the second game, the Spires played fifth place Southwestern and the game was tied at the end of seven. The Spires went on to win in the eighth inning 6-5.

On May 2, they played second place Bethany and lost 13-2, exiting the tournament after two losses.

The women's softball Spires' overall record is 6-26-1, and 3-12-1 in the KCAC.

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