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May 16, 2009

Iowa Central takes fifth at National Tournament

NORMAL, Ill. – Iowa Central knew it would be tough to bring home its first NJCAA II National Championship, but they didn't count on Mother Nature making it even tougher. After a thunderstorm cancelled play on Friday after Iowa Central's 5-3 win over Macomb, tournament officials made the decision to finish the tournament on Saturday, meaning the Tritons would need five consecutive wins to win the title.

The fifth-seeded Tritons (62-8) got off on the right foot as they disposed of seventh-seeded Mississippi Gulf Coast 9-5. Iowa Central jumped to a 3-0 lead in the first inning thanks to two errors by the Lady Bulldogs. However, Iowa Central would have to fight to move on as Mississippi Gulf Coast tied the score at 4-4 in the fifth inning thanks to a two run home run.

Iowa Central wasted little time taking the lead back as Ashley Willard singled and later scored on a passed ball. Two errors led to three Tritons runs. Staci Ritchey put the game away in the sixth inning as she hit her first home run of the season, a two-run shot, to make the score 9-4.

Christina Bradley (23-3) got the win as she pitched her second complete game of the tournament. She scattered seven hits and struck out five.

Hannah Jones and Ritchey each had two hits in the game. Jones had a double and two RBIs and Ritchey had three.

Game two brought Kankakee and a late inning rally that would end Iowa Central's season.

For the fourth time this tournament, Iowa Central jumped to a first inning lead