



NKU defeats Ashland, stays alive in NCAA Tourney



NKU's Jake Morris (left) rounds second base in the fifth inning of the Norse's 7-6 win against Ashland on Friday. Morris, who just doubled, later scored on a wild pitch. On the right, NKU's Kevin Jordan delivers a pitch in the ninth inning and collects the save.

Norse stave off elimination with come-from-behind 7-6 victory

CHILLICOTHE, Ohio - For at least one more day, Northern Kentucky University's dream of earning a trip to the NCAA Division II World Series is alive.

NKU rallied from a 5-2 deficit against top-seeded Ashland and staved off elimination from the NCAA Division II Midwest Regional with a 7-6 victory Friday. The Norse (41-21) scored four times in the fifth inning to gain a 6-5 lead and held on at the end to advance to an elimination game against Grand Valley State at 3 p.m. Saturday.



Jason Cisper makes a nice running catch Friday.

NKU bunched together five hits in the fifth inning to erase a 5-2 Ashland lead. A wild pitch by Ashland starter Ben Minard allowed Jake Morris to score with the first run of the inning. A run-scoring single by Evan McDole plated Jason Cisper to make it 5-4, and Joe Mack's double to right-center field drove in McDole to tie the game at 5-all.

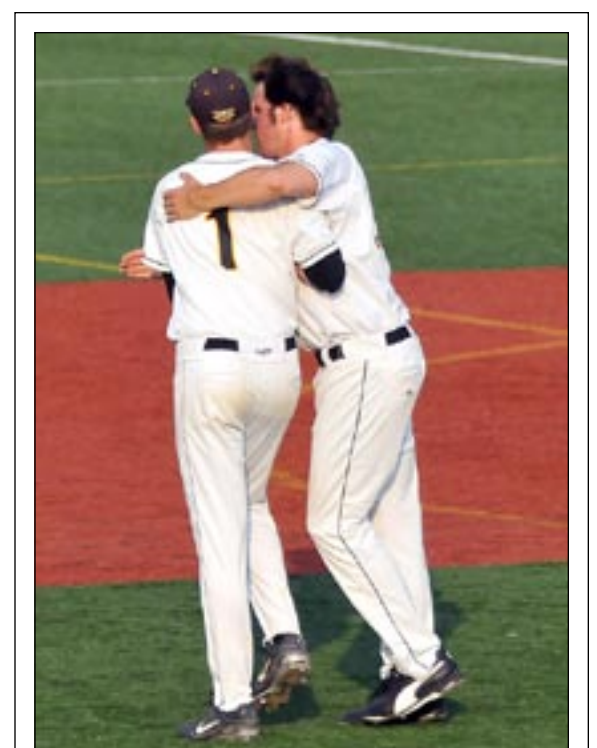
Jack Ambrose then stepped to the plate and delivered a run-scoring single to right on an 0-1 pitch to give NKU a 6-5 lead.

NKU added an insurance run in the seventh inning when Kevin Dusold doubled down the left-field line to drive in Pat

Muth and extend the Norse advantage to 7-5. Dusold finished 2-for-4 with two runs batted in, giving him 71 RBIs this spring. The NKU single-season RBI record is 72, set by Steve Walton in 2002.

The NKU bullpen also played a major role in Friday's win. Jay Hale and Matt Winterhalter combined for four innings of one-run baseball. Kevin Jordan relieved Winterhalter in the ninth and picked up the save by retiring three consecutive batters with a runner at first base.

Ashland (42-14-1) entered the game ranked No. 6 nationally in the NCAA Division II poll.



Kevin Jordan (1) receives a hug from Matt Winterhalter after the final out.