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By Dennis Garcia
SportsTone.net

RANDLEMAN - Jeff Webster and his Randleman High School varsity softball team looked around the field after Thursday night's 8-0 loss to West Wilkes in the state 2-A regional finals, and admitted to being amazed at the support the community had shown.



The Tigers, a team without a senior on the roster, had just dropped the regional series 2-0 to West Wilkes, and after a few minutes of disappointment, realized how far they had actually gone in a sport where senior leadership is supposed to play such a huge role.



*Randleman softball coach
Jeff Webster.*

"I am so grateful for the Randleman community and their support," Webster said after the Tigers finished the season 20-7, including a 10-2 record inside the very competitive Piedmont Athletic Conference. "There was a crazy amount of people who were there. I know every school has that, but I don't think the girls understand just how special that is. How this community has gathered around this team. It was a tough night, but a good night for Randleman softball."

West Wilkes, which rallied for a 6-5 win in Game 1 by scoring two runs in the bottom of the sixth, scored four runs in the first three innings for the lead in Game 2 and never looked back in front of the overflow crowd at RHS.

Led by a group of talented sophomores with an experienced class of juniors and some first-year freshmen sprinkled in, the Tigers reached the regional championship series perhaps a year earlier than expected.

"They were definitely upset with not winning," Webster said of his team. "They all believed they were going to win a state championship. After the third round, a light kind of went on and they were like 'we are going to do this'. There was a little disappointment that we didn't do it. Once we had our team meeting after the game and I told them how proud I was for the season, the smiles came back. Everyone was excited to celebrate the season."



Addyson Dees.



Kinzie Ivey.

Sophomores Kinzie Ivey, Addyson Dees, Kaylee Phillips and Teanna Bostick along with juniors Kadie Green, Natalie Roach, Lyric Chriscoe and Kaylie St. John among others were the leaders of the team that captured a first-round playoff win over 18th-seeded R-S Central 4-2 and then road wins over second-seeded West Caldwell 3-2, seventh-seeded Owen 4-3 and sixth-seeded West Stokes 3-1.

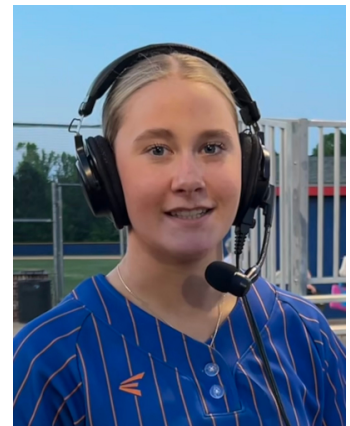
"I feel a lot of girls are very mature for their age already," Ivey said, adding that a couple of very talented eighth-graders will be making their varsity debuts next season. "We make smart decisions. We have a couple of leaders on the field that are telling everyone things are going to be fine.

I think from here on out we have some freshman pitchers that will help us grow. I feel we will be back again. I truly believe next year with the team we will have, we should be just as good or better."

The bar has definitely been set high.

"I think you have to look at the growth process for them mentally," Webster said. "Also, use this as a hunger or a passion to get here again. They have experienced what getting this far looks like. Hopefully, this drives them to work in the off season and get ready for next year."

What a year it should be.



Natalie Roach.