

## Brentwood's Season Ends With Loss to New Bloomfield

The Eagles had a lot to be proud of this season, including the school's first district championship in 17 years.

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LADUE — A powerful **New Bloomfield** offense overwhelmed a younger **Brentwood** defense, which couldn't overcome an early deficit and a few fielding errors in a 12-2 loss during state sectional play on Tuesday at Ladue Horton Watkins High School. Brentwood's (16-7) season came to a tough end following the loss.

"We made a lot of mental errors, but the errors we made didn't cost us the game," Brentwood coach Mike Imergoot said. "We just got beat. So we tip our caps. That's a good ball club."

New Bloomfield (15-4) took advantage of a few Brentwood mistakes in the third inning to take a commanding early lead. Junior Timothy Long, batting eighth, started the inning with a hit-by-pitch. After a groundout by junior Austin Pittman in the ninth spot, the top of the lineup terrorized Brentwood's defense.

"We kind of fell apart on defense a little bit and I left some pitches up," Brentwood pitcher **Kevin Smith** said.

Senior Kolby O'Dowd hit a single and senior Aaron Bedsworth drew a walk to load the bases for junior Skyler Lucas. Lucas drew a walk with a full count, earning himself an RBI and keeping the bases juiced for cleanup hitter Brenden Bailey.

The junior center fielder drove his first pitch to deep center field and brought in two RBIs. Then the Eagles made another mental mistake.

Brentwood junior **John Caragher** bobbled a grounder at second base, allowing senior Zachary Rehagen to barely reach first while two more runs scored for New Bloomfield. The Eagles finally ended the inning after giving the Wildcats a 5-1 lead.

But the damage didn't stop there.

Bedsworth led the fifth inning with a double. Lucas and Rehagen both chipped in with RBI singles to widen the gap to 7-1.

Then a fielding error by freshman **Dylan McGehee** allowed O'Dowd to reach base in the sixth to kick off a four-run inning, which included a three-run, inside-the-park home run from Bailey. He ended the day 2-4 with a homer, double and five RBIs.

The game started positively for Brentwood. **Smith** only gave up one hit in the first two innings, striking out one and getting five groundouts. But the junior would leave the game in the fifth after seeing the Eagles give up six runs behind him.

The Eagles were also the first to score after junior **Tyler Jones** reached first base

after a dropped third strike. The umpire ruled New Bloomfield first baseman Rehagen fumbled a ball thrown from catcher Long.

Junior **Jesse Sneed** crushed a double to deep left center to put runners on second and third. Then senior **Franklin Lowe** chopped a grounder over Long's head to bring in the game's first run.

But sophomore pitcher Greg Bedsworth ended the rally after a lineout and a strikeout. The Eagles couldn't muster much offense against Bedsworth, who pitched all seven innings and gave up only four hits and three walks. He also struck out 10 Brentwood batters.

Imergoot spoke at length with his players on the field following the loss. He said the true mark of a champion is to accept losing.

"It's easy to be happy when you win. It's much more difficult to overcome the sadness of losing a game," Imergoot said. "So when you do lose a game—and it ends your season—you have to reflect back on the things that were positive."

And while the final game didn't end in the Eagles favor, Imergoot still had a lot of great things to say about his team's performance in a season that included a district championship and a second-place finish in the South Central AA conference.

"These kids played their hearts out," Imergoot said. "They have nothing to feel bad about."

The Eagles will lose seniors **Dylan Baker, Franklin Lowe, Ryan Jones** and **Ryan Marshall** next season.

"It was a pretty bad way to end a season, but I'd rather end it in a sectional than end it in the first or second round of districts," Marshall said. "It just sucks stepping off the field for the last time."

It's a difficult ending for the four seniors, but the Brentwood Eagles have a lot to look forward to next year. The team will return 13 of its 17 players and will be ready for another shot at the district championship.