

Arcola softball finishes with best season since 2013; falls to No. 8 Leroy, 2-1

By Mike Monahan

MACON – The Arcola softball team tangled with LeRoy, the No. 8 team in Class 1A in the state and gave them everything they wanted May 16 at Meridian High School in the Class 1A regional semifinals.

The Lady Riders, who lost 2-1, impressed LeRoy coach Doug Hagerman.

“How about the Lady Riders,” said Hagerman, who is 195-72 after they beat Tuscola in the regional championship 6-2. “My goodness. I told their coach afterwards we expected a really good game, but didn’t expect a 2-1 game. I was incredibly impressed... just their improvement in everything. You look at their record and we knew what they were coming with.”

LeRoy, who was to play Villa Grove at the Tuscola Sectional Tuesday, scored what turned out to be the game-winning run in the sixth.

Arcola finished 15-10-1 its best record since Craig VanDeveer guided the 2013 team to a 15-7 record and the last Class 1A regional championship.

Molly Buckles started the inning with a single and went to second on an error by the center fielder. Lauren Bossingham advanced her to third on a sacrifice fly and scored on a pop fly to the first baseman.

“It was a great tag up and a smart play by Buckles,” said Hagerman.

Arcola, who had just two hits in the game and only reached in the fourth and seventh, threatened in the final inning with one out. Kacie Sisk walked on a full-count pitch after fouling off three pitches. She stole second putting the tying run in scoring position. Keira Hohlbauch walked and Makenna Wagoner came in to run for her. However, Lilly

Long, the winning pitcher, got the next batter on a strikeout and the final batter on a fly out to center to end the game.

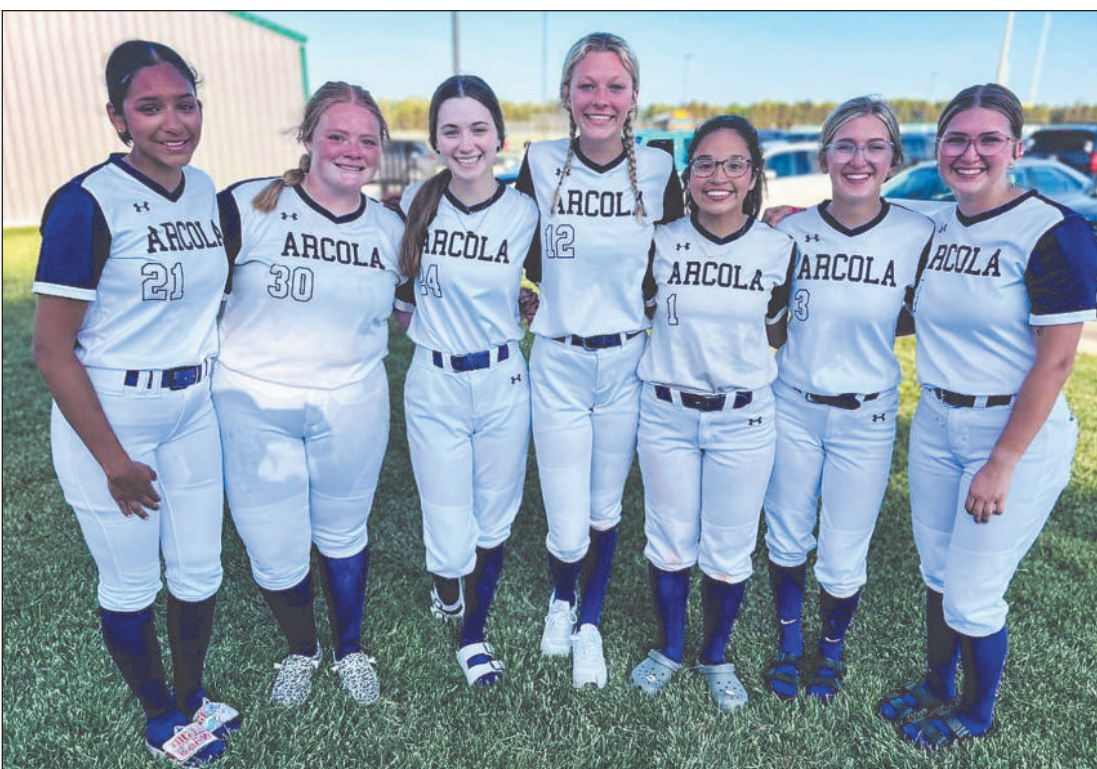
“The first time we played them we saw a different pitcher,” said Arcola coach Cara Roberts. “This pitcher was a little bit different. One of the better pitchers we have seen throughout the year. For some reason we don’t see a lot of good pitching. It is harder in my opinion for us when we see a good pitcher who can spin the ball, has different speeds and things like that. After the first time through we had runners on base. She walked a couple (three). We just did not execute when we needed to. The first time we played them it was 12-2 and this time it was 2-1. I think that shows them how much better we were and how much we have improved as a team.”

The game included a crucial call that cost Arcola a run. Arcola trailed 1-0 in the fourth when freshman Ema Simpson, the leadoff batter, reached on an error by the LeRoy shortstop. With one out Ava Simpson drew a base on balls on a full-count pitch. Sisk hit a double to left on an 0-2 pitch driving in what appeared to be two runs. However, a runner was called out after not touching third base. With Sisk still on second when the LeRoy pitcher, Long struck out the next batter and the game was deadlocked at one.

“I didn’t see it at all,” said Roberts. “I wasn’t watching her feet at all and their coach called it. The umpire evidently saw it because he showed me right where she stepped. You just have to go out and get more runs after that.”

Hagerman said, his assistant coach saw it right away and told me.

The Lady Panthers scored



SEVEN ARCOLA SENIOR softball players helped the Lady Riders to the most wins since 2013. Arcola finished 15-10-1. Seniors are Vanessa Condarco, Keira Hohlbauch, Eva Hopkins, Makenzie Thomas, Reyli Vega, Gracie Wagoner and Makenna Wagoner.

the first run of the game in the second when freshman Laila Carr singled to left. Buckles walked. Bossingham reached on a bunt hit. Long helped her own cause with a single to left, playing Carr. Hohlbauch, the Arcola pitcher, got out of the jam by striking out the next two batters and the third out was on a fielder’s choice as the Lady Riders only allowed the one run.

Long allowed just two hits with 15 strikeouts and three walks throwing 125 pitches, 85 for strikes (68 percent).

“Long is probably our best pitcher,” said Hagerman. “At the beginning of the year, especially when it is cold we rotate pitchers a lot. We have always strive to develop multiple pitchers. About a month into the season

Long had some heart issues and there was about two and a half three weeks where she didn’t play or practice. They (doctors) got some things figured out and she was feeling better when she had back issues. Having both of those pitchers in Haley Cox and Long kind of gave us a 1-2 punch. I think it gave our pitchers more confidence that if things were not going well we have got somebody that they can count on to come in. I thought Long threw really well today.”

Hohlbauch allowed six hits, two runs, only one earned, with two walks and six strikeouts.

“Kiera placed the ball very well and threw well,” said Roberts. “I had all the confidence in her. I knew I wanted

to throw her in this game just because she has been spinning the ball so well and getting batters off balance. I think the defense really stepped up behind her and really showed her that they have got her back.”

Hagerman was also impressed with Hohlbauch’s pitching.

“She pitched unbelievably

well,” said Hagerman. “She hit her spots and was incredibly impressive.”

LeRoy won a regional title last season.

“The biggest thing with them was believing in themselves and having confidence in themselves,” said Roberts of the key going in. “Finding the level of confidence that they could win or play with them or else it wasn’t going to be much of a game.”

Arcola loses seven seniors, or nearly half of the team of 16 in Reyli Vega, Gracie Wagoner, Makenna Wagoner, Makenzie Thomas, Eva Hopkins, Vanessa Condarco and Hohlbauch, who is headed to play at Eureka.

“We are going to miss them all,” said Roberts. “I think five of the seven started every game for us this year. So, there will be a lot of spots to fill.”

Arcola 000 100 0-1-1-1
LeRoy 010 001 x-2-6-1

Losing pitcher: Keira Hohlbauch (6-6) 6 innings, 6 hits, 2 runs, 1 earned, 2 walks, 6 strikeouts

ARCOLA : Sisk 1-for-2, double, RBI, Ema Simpson 2 stolen bases, Kacie Sisk stolen base

Winning pitcher: Lilly Long 7 innings, 1 hit, 0 runs, 3 walks, 15 strikeouts

LEROY: Natalie Loy 1-for-3, Laila Carr 1-for-3, Molly Buckles 1-for-2, run; Lauren Bossingham 1-for-3; Long 2-for-3, 2 RBIs

ARCOLA SPORTS SCHEDULE

(Through May 31)

<p>High school boys track</p> <p>Thursday Arcola boys at Eastern Illinois University in Class 1A state track, 10 a.m.</p> <p>Saturday If Arcola boys have a finalists at Eastern Illinois University in Class 1A state track, 10 a.m.</p>	<p>Baseball</p> <p>Wednesday Arcola vs. South Central, 4:30 p.m. at Altamont Sectional semifinals</p> <p>Saturday If Arcola wins Wednesday, play winner of Effingham St. Anthony vs. Casey-Westfield game, 10 a.m. at Altamont for sectional championship.</p>
--	---

Das SCHLACHT HAUS

COUNTRY FRESH MEATS

- Fresh Meat Case
- Locally Raised Beef, Pork & Chicken
- Cured Meats From Our Own Smokehouse

5% Off Weekly Special - May 29-June 3 Sausage Patties

217-543-5178 Monday-Friday 8:00-4:30 Saturday 8:00-3:00 Fax 217-543-5168 1758 CR 1900N Arthur, IL 61911
2 miles south and 1/2 mile west of Arthur

we protect your house. because to you it's home.

simple human sense

LINDENMEYER INSURANCE AGENCY
A Division of Compass Insurance

217.268.3041

Auto-Owners INSURANCE

Time To Put Students First

Earn *dollars*, not *pennies*.

3.01% Annual Percentage Yield (APY) on balances up to \$20,000 and

0.100% APY on balances in excess of \$20,000

- Age requirement for rate: 0 - 24 years – qualifies for incentive rate and 25 and up – switches to regular savings rate

Terms, conditions and rates are subject to change without notice. Fees could reduce earnings on account.

Open Today!

ARCOLA FIRST BANK

127 South Oak . 217-268-4911 . www.arcolafb.com