

CLASS 2A REGIONAL SOFTBALL

# Extra anguish



Eighth grader Katie Allison slid safely into home to score South Hardin's run in the fifth inning. The Tigers fell by a 2-1 count to No. 5 Interstate 35 in a nine-inning Class 2A Regional Final.

PHOTOS BY MARISSA VANWINGEN / TIMES CITIZEN

## I-35 walks off Tigers in ninth inning, 2-1

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**T**wice South Hardin has been on the precipice of punching a ticket to Fort Dodge and both times, the result came down to just one run.

Both squads played well enough to win Monday's Class 2A Regional Final clash, but Interstate 35 scratched out a walkoff run in the bottom of the ninth to advance to their 11th State Tournament in school history and first since 2017.

During the bottom of the ninth, the fifth-ranked Roadrunners (25-12) had two runners on base and the leadoff appeared to interfere with shortstop Charlee Rosonke, but no call was made as Shailey Dixon crossed home plate for the 2-1 win.

"Coming here, we were expected to lose. It hurts to say that, but at the same time, I think we all came here fired up and ready to go. Nothing to hang our heads about. We couldn't have done anything better to change that game," said Tigers senior third baseman Ellie Anderson. "I don't even know how many errors we had, I have no idea how many hits we had. Just watching the game, we couldn't have done anything different."

The road to Truro was eerily similar for both teams, as they followed the same trajectory the past three years. Both produced three 20-plus win seasons in a row and have made the regional final and the semifinal without breaking through.

Heading into the game, the defensive numbers were also similar between the two teams. Starting pitchers Katie Murphy (I-35) and SH ace Hailey Rosonke were within one or two in nearly every category. Offensively, the stats were just as close, which led to predications of a low-scoring, close game.

"I knew it was going to be a close game, I knew it was going to be a one-run game. I was just hoping it was going to sway our way," said Tiger head coach Becky Rosonke. "We did everything right. I could not be more proud of each and every one of them. We had a couple girls strikeout but they didn't let it get to them. They went back up there and started putting the ball in play. They made their plays for the most part. It hurts when a bad call is really what ended it... I can't believe the umpires walked off the field and wouldn't even listen to us. Overall game-play, we played a heck of a game, going that many innings."

I-35 had a base runner in the second that was left stranded at first. Then in the third, leadoff hitter Gracie Kirk smacked a double to the leftfield fence. She did not advance as SH got out of the inning on a grounder to second.

Betsy Jones reached on an error and was in scoring position in the fourth, but good defensive stops by Taya Hollingsworth at second and Grace Eller in left ended the threat.

In the top of the fifth, the first run crossed the plate. E. Anderson walked and she moved to second on a free base issued to Alli Sheldahl. With runners on and two outs, eighth grader Lucy Anderson produced a huge RBI single to score her pinch runner Katie Allison. Sheldahl moved to third, but the two were left stranded following one of Murphy's 12 strikeouts in the game.



Shortstop Charlee Rosonke made the tag and caught the runner stealing second in the bottom of the eighth inning. The Roadrunners scored the winning run in the ninth frame to advance to the State Tournament.



SH's Grace Eller tracked a ball in left field that was over her head. I-35 tallied six hits in nine innings and advanced to State with a 2-1 win.



Alli Sheldahl tried to leg out a bunt in the Regional Final. The Tigers had two hits in the season-ending loss.



Tiger fans made the trek to Truro to watch the Class 2A Regional Final game between South Hardin and Interstate 35. The Tigers finished the season 27-8 and were one step from State for the second time in three years.

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