



The Kent State Golden Flashes baseball team (46-18) are headed to the College World Series for the first time in school history after beating the Oregon Ducks two games to one in the Eugene Super Regional. Kent advanced to their first Super Regionals, and this is the first visit to Omaha for the MAC in 36 years (Eastern Michigan qualified in 1976).

"Omaha says it all to anyone involved in college baseball," said Flashes coach Scott Stricklin. "It's the dream of every player and coach to make it to Omaha at least once." Coach Stricklin was a catcher for the Flashes from 1991-93 and played on teams that almost made it to the Super Regionals but were always a play or two away. He went on to play in the Twins organization for several years before going into coaching.

The team rode a 20 game winning streak into the Super Regionals after sweeping through the Mid-American Conference tournament and the Gary Regional. The team then travelled to the Beaver State to take on the University of Oregon Ducks in the Supers. In game one junior center fielder Evan Campbell made a leaping, turn-around catch to preserve the win for Kent and keep the winning streak going. In game two the Flashes gave up three runs in the seventh inning to lose 3-2, ending the streak at 21. In the rubber match, it was another nail biter down to the last pitch as senior shortstop Jimmy Rider hit a bloop single in the bottom of the ninth that Oregon could not control, allowing sophomore second baseman Derek Toadvine to score from second giving Kent a 3-2 win and a trip to Omaha. Freshman righthander Jake Reed allowed two runs on five hits in the game. All three games were decided by one run.

Kent State is one of two "cold weather" programs to make it to the College World Series this season, as New York's Stony Brook University of the American East Conference also advanced. Stony Brook is also an interesting story as they have only been granting athletic scholarships since 2006. Cold weather programs are at a decided disadvantage having to practice indoors

and play the first half of the season on the road, out of state.

Kent faces the 44-20 Arkansas Razorbacks Saturday at 6:0PM at TD Ameritrade Park. The game will be broadcast on ESPN. Arkansas features a strong deep pitching staff that brings a 2.16 postseason earned run average into the CWS. The winner plays against the winner of the South Carolina-Florida game which will follow KSU-Ark game and will also be on ESPN. The loser will play an elimination game Monday at 4pm. Arkansas coach Dave Van Horn is 403-221 in 10 seasons with the Razorbacks.

TD Ameritrade Park opened last year in downtown Omaha, and holds 24,000 fans. TD Park replaces Rosenblatt Stadium, home of the CWS for fifty years. The outfield dimensions are LF 335', LC 375', CF 408', RC 375', and RF 335'.