

MIZZOU

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[Home](#) » [Spring 2011](#) » [Around the Columns](#) » Mizzou softball fights back to win NCAA Regional title

Around the Columns

Mizzou softball fights back to win NCAA Regional title

When the Mizzou softball team needed her the most, Chelsea Thomas showed why she is one of the nation's top pitchers. The sophomore led the Tigers to back-to-back wins over DePaul on Sunday, May 22 at University Field to move MU into the NCAA Super Regionals.

Missouri opened the NCAA Regional by easily defeating Illinois State, 12-3, on Saturday, May 21. However, a heartbreaking 2-1 loss in 11 innings to DePaul that afternoon put the Tigers on the brink of elimination, an uncommon place for Mizzou to find itself.

The Tigers, playing their third game of the day, took out Illinois State, 8-4, on Saturday night to stay alive and set up a rematch with DePaul.

As she has done so often this year, Thomas carried Missouri to a pair of victories over DePaul on Sunday. After a 7-3 victory in the day's first game, the Tigers picked up an 8-0 shutout in



Missouri's Nicole Hudson fires the ball to first in the opening game of the NCAA Regional against Illinois State. The Tigers won the game 12-3. On Sunday Missouri defeated DuPaul twice to advance to the NCAA Super Regional Tournament beginning on May 28 in Columbia. Photo by Rob Hill

game two. Thomas turned in 13 innings pitched in the two games, allowing just one run and striking out eight. The game two win, which gave MU the Regional Championship, was a no-hitter.

“We’re lucky to have Chelsea Thomas,” MU head Coach Ehren Earleywhine said.

The no-hitter was Thomas’ fifth of the season and eighth in her career.

“I knew I could throw as long as I needed to,” Thomas said. “I was mentally prepared to go two games because I knew we would win the first one.”

Offensively, senior Rhea Taylor led the Tigers, as she was a combined 5-for-8 in the two games and connected on a home run in each game. She entered the weekend with just two home runs on the season.

“I didn’t want it to be the last time I played,” Taylor said. “I told myself ‘you just need to stop thinking and do what you do.’ That’s what got into me today.”

It is the fourth NCAA Regional title in a row for Mizzou, who will now take on Washington in the NCAA Super Regionals.




“I think this was the path that was meant to be,” Thomas said. “We lost that long game [to DePaul on Saturday], and we had to refocus and regroup as a team and come back for two tough games. I think it was a test for us, and we passed it pretty darn well, that’s for sure.”

For the second-consecutive year, Missouri will host a Super Regional at University Field. Missouri (50-8) and Washington (51-12) will battle in a three-game series with the winner advancing to the Women’s College World Series in Oklahoma City. The Tigers will be looking to make it to Oklahoma City for the third-straight year.

Game one of the NCAA Super Regional will take place at 8 p.m. on Saturday, May 28 at University Field and will air live on ESPN2. The second game of the series will be on Sunday, May 29 starting at either at 2:30 p.m. on ESPNU or at 6 p.m. on ESPN2. Game three, if necessary, will also be played on Sunday, with the start time at either 5 p.m. on ESPNU or at 8:30 p.m. on ESPN2.

For ticket information, visit mutigers.com or call 1-800-CAT-PAWS (884-PAWS in Mid-Missouri).

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Published by MIZZOU magazine, 109 Reynolds Alumni Center, Columbia, MO 65211 | Phone: 573-882-5916
| E-mail: Mizzou@missouri.edu

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