



PHOTOS BY JIM RYDBOM / jrydbom@greeleytrib.com

The Eaton High School baseball team celebrates its Class 3A State Baseball Championship victory in a dog pile. The Reds defeated Denver Christian, 12-0, at Denver All-City Stadium on Saturday. This is the second straight year that the Reds have won the 3A state title.

CHAMPS AGAIN

Eaton throws Denver Christian for a curve to win state title

Eaton head baseball coach Jim Danley, right, gets a victory hug from senior Dylan Ramer after the Class 3A State Baseball Championship game.



BY SAMUEL G. MUSTARI
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DENVER — Jim Danley gave an honest answer to an inquiring question.

How did his Eaton High School baseball team, inexperienced, unassuming and clearly the underdog, beat the senior-dominated, talent-laden Denver Christian Crusaders, 12-0, for the Class 3A state baseball title Saturday afternoon?

“I don’t know,” said Danley with a blank stare through his steely-blue eyes. “Can you believe these kids?”

There weren’t many who would have believed the Reds (22-3) would upset the top-ranked Crusaders, winners of 23 straight.

Eaton right-hander Lee Griffith, who teased the Crusaders all day with a vari-

ety of breaking pitches, envisioned a dog pile at the pitcher’s mound in his dreams Friday night.

“I was dreaming it, and I just wanted to be in that dog pile,” Griffith said.

As unexpected as Eaton’s dominance was the play of reserve first baseman Eric Kelly, who launched an Andy Draayer fastball 400 feet over the left-centerfield fence for a three-run homer in the third to give Eaton a 9-0 lead.

“I’m not really even a home-run hitter,” said the 6-foot-3, 240-pound Kelly. “I’ve only hit two in summer baseball, and I still take a lot of kidding from my teammates.

“I didn’t know it was out, but when I got to first base, Coach (Randy) Spark-



See **STATE CHAMPS**, Page C11