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STATE CHAMPS

man told me to be sure I touched 'em all."

Not Griffith, nor anybody in their wildest dream could imagine sending the Crusaders (23-2) home from All-City Stadium in five innings, via the 10-run rule.

Not even Danley, the architect of five Eaton state titles.

"Not in my wildest imagination," Danley said. "Not even close. I figured we'd have to score a run or two and hope to steal the game.

"If we play them 10 times, you'd think maybe we win two or three."

The Reds won the one that counted, and they never left any doubt in doing so.

"We were the best team in this park today," Danley said.

From start to finish, too.

The Crusaders' lineup — with five players hitting

above .400 — buckled under Eaton's biggest weapon, the knuckle-curve.

It was obvious from the first inning that the Crusaders were going to see

enough breaking pitches from Griffith to last a lifetime.

The result was Denver Christian batters looking as if they were doing

kneebend exercises — and nine strikeouts for Griffith, who gave up

just three hits to a Crusader lineup that looked like a hit parade in its

semifinal victory the day before.

"When you listen to the names in their lineup, you know you've heard them before, and they're good," said a humble Griffith. "I watched them swing yesterday (against La Junta), and I noticed the La Junta pitcher was having his only success with a breaking pitch."

Griffith bent the Crusaders over every way but backward. They only advanced a runner to third base once.

"We've seen breaking pitches, so this wasn't anything new," Denver Christian head coach Bill Postma said. "We don't go into any game thinking we might be 10-runned.

"Our kids are definitely down right now, and maybe a little shocked."

Draayer, who was unbeaten and shut down the Reds last month, was stymied.

"They're a good hitting team and sure showed it today," Draayer said. "We thought this would be our year and we'd get over the hurdle.

"I still don't think they're the best team this season, but they sure were today."

The Reds tagged Draayer and VanEps for 10 hits, three for extra bases as Kelly and shortstop Branden Trujillo each had 3 RBI.

"When we were ahead 9-0, I said to myself, 'that's a lot of runs to have to make up,' and that's when I figured we'd win, but I felt the intensity get even greater," Griffith said.

Nonetheless, Griffith continued to dominate, striking out four in the last two innings, mainly with the knuckle-curveball.

"I didn't throw many fastballs," Griffith conceded. "I know I threw one on the very last pitch of the game."

VanEps lifted that one to centerfield and right into the glove of Eaton's Tyler Garretson for the final out.

Bring on the dog pile.



Danley

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— Jim Danley Eaton baseball coach

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Class 3A State Championship

Denver Christian	000	00	-	0	3	2
Eaton	018	3x	-	12	10	0

DCHS — Andy Draayer (L, 8-1, 5H, 2ER, 5BB, 0SO), Tyler VanEps (3rd, 5H, 3ER, 2BB, 0SO), Jamie Weitzel (4th, 0H, 0ER, 2BB, 0SO), Derek Peters (4th, 0H, 0ER, 1BB, 1SO) and Tyler Henry.

EHS — Lee Griffith (W, 6-0, 3H, 0ER, 3BB, 9SO) and Tyler Krause. 2B: Eric Kelly, Drew Maulsby. RBI: Branden Trujillo 3, Kelly 3, Tyler Garretson 2, Tyler Tateyama 2, Dylan Ramer, Krause.