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Hopkins Academy V Athol High School Baseball 4/26/11 from Michael Beswick, The Republican



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Nikki Vatalaro sparks Franklin Tech softball team

Fran Sypek, April 25, 2011 9:43 p.m.



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Palmer's Nicole Handzel pitched a perfect game last Thursday. (Republican file photo)

Nikki Vatalaro is an exceptional athlete who does a number of things very well.

The junior from Greenfield, who plays for Franklin County Tech in Turners Falls, is a spark-plug leadoff hitter with power and speed, and an outstanding defensive player at third base.

"She's the best female athlete in our school and if she went to Greenfield High School, she'd be the best female athlete in that school," Eagles coach Mike Blanchard said.

Greenfield's loss is Franklin Tech's gain, and the Eagles are sure glad she's on their side.

She's batting over .600 and last week she homered in consecutive games. She hit a solo shot in a wild, 15-12 loss to Athol and followed that with a grand slam the next day against Commerce.

Vatalaro had three hits and drove in seven runs in that 20-6 win over Commerce.

"She can really drive the ball - that home run against Athol was a shot," Blanchard said. "She works very hard and she's someone I can play anywhere."

She even took a turn on the mound against Commerce. In five innings she had

six strikeouts.

PERFECT GAME: □ Palmer's Nicole Handzel pitched a perfect game in a five-inning, 16-0 win over Southwick on Thursday.

Handzel did not walk a batter and had nine strikeouts. The game came one day after she fanned 15 Chicopee batters in a 10-inning loss to the Pacers.

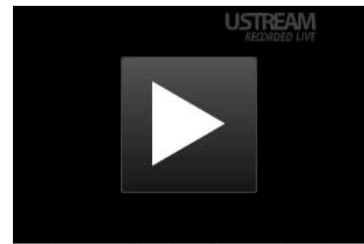
Handzel also had three hits and three RBIs against Southwick.

SCORING CHANGE: □ Take that home run credited to Cathedral's Avery Orszulak away.

The official book is the home book and, according to those stats, Avery had a double and came home on two throwing errors in a game against Ludlow on Thursday.

SOFTBALL SLANTS: □ Putnam's Justice Wallace is swinging a hot bat. She had five RBIs against Smith Voc .x.x. Longmeadow's Myriam Poznar had quite a game against Holyoke. She had nine strikeouts on the mound and three hits at the plate .x.x. Westfield is off to a 6-0 start. "We're playing well as a team and everyone is playing together," coach Joe Stella said. Heather White, Madison Atcociatis and Kaitie Albright have all hit well for the Bombers .x.x. Tasha Polona is among the bright spots for Mahar. "She's hitting the ball well," coach Larry Fisher said .x.x. Frontier is off to a 6-0 start. "We've had kids step up," coach Ben Barshefsky said .x.x. Saint Joseph's Central traveled to Gateway Friday for a scheduled game, but the umpires did not show up and the teams were unable to play. "We're hoping to reschedule," Gateway coach Mike Mason said .x.x. Agawam's Angelina Massoia pitched a two-hitter Friday as Suffield Academy shut out Northfield Mount Hermon, 3-0 in a prep school game. □

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Time	
Chicopee @	4 p.m.
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Time	
Greenfield @	3:30 p.m.
Palmer	Palmer High School
Box Score	
04/29 at 5:15 p.m. Boys Volleyball	
Time	
Holyoke @	5:15 p.m.
Minnechaug	Minnechaug Regional High School
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