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Agawam, Amherst on a collision course in softball

Fran Sypek, May 09, 2011 8:58 p.m.



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Danielle Circosta has pitched well for Agawam. - (Republican file photo)

Shock waves went through Western Massachusetts softball last week when Agawam beat Amherst, 2-0.

It wasn't so much that the Brownies ended the Hurricanes' 10-game winning streak to start the season, but rather that they did something no team had been able to do:

Beat Amherst with Emma Mendoker on the mound during the regular season.

That had not happened in the three years in which Mendoker has pitched for the Hurricanes. Before that game on May 2, the only losses Mendoker had suffered were during the tournament – one in 2009 and the other in 2010.

Mendoker gave up one earned run on May 2. She still has an incredible 0.10 ERA and 153 strikeouts in 78 innings.

More often than not, a pitcher giving up only one earned run goes home a winner.

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But that day, the distinction went to another of the area's outstanding pitchers, Danielle Circosta. She gave up only two hits and pitched seven shutout innings.

The game brought back memories of last year's three meetings between Amherst and West Springfield. All were close decisions won by the Hurricanes.

Then Annie Pitkin made the difficult decision to leave West Springfield and attend Suffield Academy, a decision made more for academics than for athletics.

Those Pitkin-Mendoker match-ups were classics. Now the Circosta-Mendoker battles should be equally exciting.

That is if they do meet again. Agawam has three pitchers and, on Monday, Jess Colson nearly pitched a no-hitter against Palmer.

Colson allowed only a single to Emily Czaja with one out in the seventh inning. Colson settled for a tidy, one-hit shutout.

Agawam and Amherst will meet again before the regular season ends. The Brownies and Hurricanes appear to be battling each other for the top seed in the Western Massachusetts Division I tournament.

They could meet in the final.

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