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## Core of Four leads Amherst to top seed in Division I softball tourney

Fran Sypek, May 31, 2011 2:07 p.m.



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Simone Frank, Quianna Diaz-Patterson, Emma Mendoker and Zoe Dillion-Davidson lead Amherst into the tournament. - (Republican file photo)

For third straight season, Amherst Regional earned the top seed for the Western Massachusetts High School softball Division I tournament.

Last season, the Hurricanes won the sectional title and were a state finalist. Two years ago, Pittsfield pinned a stunning first round upset on previously unbeaten Amherst.

"I don't think being a No. 1 seed really makes a big difference," Amherst coach

Kacey Schmitt said. "As long as you come into the tournament ready to play, it doesn't matter. I told the kids I was almost more nervous last year when we went into the tournament undefeated."

Amherst is 19-1.

"There's definitely added pressure," Schmitt said.

In Division II, reigning sectional champion Wahconah Regional of Dalton (19-1) was seeded first. In Division III, reigning Western Mass. champion Turners Falls (19-0) is the No. 1 seed.

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Amherst is led by its core of four. Pitcher Emma Mendoker (19-1, 0.21 ERA, 241 strikeouts), shortstop Quianna Diaz-Patterson (.570, 7 HR 19 RBIs), catcher Zoe Dillon-Davidson (.532, 3 HR, 22 RBIs) and third baseman Simone Frank (.432, 18 RBIs)

Mendoker pitched 14 shutouts, two no-hitters and six one-hitters.

Agawam is led by pitcher Jess Colson and catcher Reilly Wieners. The Brownies beat the Hurricanes, 2-0 during the regular season and saw Amherst rallied from a 2-0 deficit to earn a 3-2 decision.

"It was what we needed, just like what West Side did for us last year," Schmitt said. "Agawam pushed us and I'm sure we haven't seen the last of them, but there are a lot of good teams out there."

Schmitt tried to give her team the weekend off. But the players insisted on practicing on Monday, one day after their prom.

"They were tired but they were all there," Schmitt said. "The kids are hungry and they know what can happen. Every one of them knows how stinging that defeat to Pittsfield in the quarterfinals was. That's never far from their minds and they know how hard they had to battle last year. Any one can beat any one on any given day."

Wahconah is led by pitcher Sam Burgner.

Hampshire can hit and the Red Raiders are led by Bri Mousette (.415 5 HR 24 RBIs), Janelle Gorman (.524 6 HR), and Ashlee McGann (13-2, 115 strikeouts).

Palmer has a top pitcher in Nicole Handzel.

Belchertown has a strong battery in Sam Manitsas and Sara Mackiewicz.

Turners has a tourney-tested pitcher in Emily Mailloux.

Ware is led by pitcher Meghan Swartz, catcher Amanda Pierce and first baseman Kaylie Robidoux

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