

WVC softball: Holy Redeemer secures division crown

By Matt Bufano



Christopher Dolan / Staff Photographer Holy Redeemer's Kristen Coffay looks on during Thursday's game against Northwest.



Holy Redeemer's Abby Shorts makes a catch during a softball game against Northwest on Thursday, May 11, 2017. Holy Redeemer beat Northwest 10-0 to win the its fifth consecutive WVC Division 3 title. Christopher Dolan / Staff Photographer Holy Redeemer's Abby Shorts makes a catch during a softball game against Northwest on Thursday, May 11, 2017. Holy Redeemer beat Northwest 10-0 to win the its fifth consecutive WVC Division 3 title. Christopher Dolan / Staff Photographer



When Brittany Hebda is at the plate, her goal is simple enough.

“I just want to get on base,” she said. “That’s all I need to do.”

Hebda’s been one of the league’s best at following her own hitting advice — be confident, be selective, focus when down in the count — and it showed again Thursday.

Hebda reached base in all four plate appearances (single, double, walk, hit by pitch), leading Holy Redeemer to a 10-0 win against Northwest in Wyoming Valley Conference softball.

The win clinched Holy Redeemer (11-0) its fifth straight WVC Division 3 title, though Hebda — a senior who started at third base for the 2015 and 2016 state champion teams — and her teammates are not about to get complacent with simply that.

“We tell them, ‘Congratulations. That’s one step,’” said head coach Jerry Paulukonis. “That’s the first step. The second step is finishing the season with trying to get that No. 1 seed. We just continue to grow from there.”

Having outscored opponents 130-0, Redeemer is in prime form to win its final three regular-season games and clinch the No. 1 seed in the District 2 Class 3A playoffs.

Meanwhile, Northwest (7-5) projects to be either a No. 4 or 5 seed in the Class 2A tournament — far away from Redeemer and aces Kristen Coffay and Morgan Bienkowski, who threw a combined one-hitter Thursday.

“We know we’re done having to deal with Holy Redeemer and hopefully we don’t run into anybody else with that kind of pitching staff,” said Northwest head coach Kevin Harvey. “I think that we will match up fairly well with what we have to face in districts. I think that we should be a tough out.”

Redeemer wasted no time making an impression Thursday, as leadoff-hitting sophomore Tiana Wren led off the bottom of the first with a home run to straightaway center field. Wren leads the Royals with five home runs.

Redeemer scratched across a few more runs, making it 5-0 when Allyson Laiuvara strode to the plate with the bases loaded in the fifth.

Laiuvara, another sophomore like Wren who broke into the starting lineup last season, saw a pitch come right down the middle of the plate. She crushed it over the center-field fence for a two-out grand slam, making it 9-0.

Laiuvara hopes it's the start of a trend, saying she had previously been mired in a slump.

"I couldn't really hit," she said. "I was always dropping my shoulder, I wasn't seeing the ball as good as I should be. But I worked at practice with coach Jerry, and he helped me a lot with it."

Catcher Abby Shorts had one of the more unique lines in the box score, as she was 0 for 3 with three RBIs. The 10-run rule ended the game in the sixth, when Shorts was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded.

Reagan Harrison had Northwest's only hit, which happened in the game's second at-bat.

Coffay was 3 for 3 with a walk. Bienkowski, Hebda and Laiuvara had two hits each. Taylor Josefowicz also singled.