Fordham Prep beats Iona Prep, 1-0, in CHSAA baseball seeding round baseball matchup

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Fordham Prep pitcher Conor McNamara wasn’t worried about the hole he had dug himself into.

In the sixth inning of Saturday’s CHSAA seeding round matchup at Iona Prep, McNamara – who had pitched nearly flawlessly in the first five innings – walked two Iona Prep batters and then missed a pop fly ball to load the bases for the Gaels’ with no outs.

But the pitcher worked out of the hole and prevented No. 3 seed Iona Prep from scoring as sixth-seeded Fordham hung on for a 1-0 win.

“I just looked at myself and tried to get in just one pitch at a time,” McNamara said. “Mentally, I was so in this game, I believed in myself all the way through. And I knew if they got hits, the guys behind me would take care of it for me.”

After five great innings on the mound where he allowed just two hits, things nearly went south quick for McNamara in the sixth inning. But with the bases loaded, McNamara struck out the next two batters on just seven pitches, and got the third out when Fordham Prep first baseman Christian Greco caught a line drive and just touched the bag for the easy out.

McNamara breathed a heavy sigh of relief as he walked toward the dugout while
Conor McNamara and Fordham Prep shut out Iona Prep Saturday.

being swarmed by his teammates, but Fordham Prep coach Pat Deane said he was never worried.

"There's nobody I'd rather have in that situation than him," Deane said of McNamara, who has already garnered interest from schools like Fordham University. "He made pitches when he had to, and he said he was still good to go, so I left him out there."

The Rams (13-6) will now play Thursday and Friday to determine the top four seeds for the CHSAA playoffs. Meanwhile, the Gaels (15-4) will play for the fifth-through eighth-seed.

After two scoreless innings, Fordham Prep finally broke through in the third inning when McNamara struck on the offensive end. The junior hit a line drive that hit Iona Prep pitcher Brad Case, and Case, who was able to pitch the remainder of the game, was unable to get the ball fast enough to stop Fordham Prep sophomore Jason Apostile from rounding to home plate from second base.

"I saw a good pitch and squared it up," McNamara said. "Unfortunately it hit him, but that [pitch] was probably the one mistake he made today because he's a dominant pitcher."
That was all the offense the Rams needed Saturday with McNamara completely dominating on the mound on the other end, as he finished the day by only allowing three hits.

And with the Rams preparing for the CHSAA playoffs, Deane believes the pitcher makes his team a force to be reckoned with.

"There's nobody else I'd rather have the ball, that's no discredit to anyone, I just love the kid," Deane said. "He does everything correctly, he's running sprints, lifting, a good boy in school.

"And once he gets in the zone, gets comfortable, he's tough to hit."