

NHSBCA Teams to Watch



**St. Francis High School
Mountain View, Calif.**

Casie Vogel

Photo from www.sfhs.com

Despite illness and injury, St. Francis High School, 16-1, has managed to stay at the top of the NHSBCA/Baseball America rankings all season. “Hopefully, we will get back to full strength by the end of the year and make a run at the title,” said Head Varsity Coach Mike Oakland in an e-mail interview.

Because of health issues, Oakland says he has had to play players out of position and juggle the line-up. “Right now I would say the pitching has carried us. With the missing players we have not been able to catch a rhythm offensively,” Oakland said.

St. Francis High's star players include five pitchers, Alex Blandino SS/RHP, Colin Reed LHP, Braden Bishop CF/RHP and Kevin Zhang RHP, along with Tyler Goeddel 3B/SS, Richard Prigatano OF/1B, John Williams OF and Jon Nelson UTL.

“We have a great group of seniors and a group that is growing closer and closer everyday. Our team chemistry is the best its been since I have been here,” Oakland said.

St. Francis's only loss was to Valley Christian High School (San Jose, Calif.), 1-3, last March.

“We were beat by a very good Valley Christian team. Valley competed well and won the big spots in the game,” Oakland said. “Our league is very difficult and can beat anyone on any given day.” However, the St. Francis Lancers were redeemed last week, defeating Valley Christian 9-6.

The Lancers are looking toward winning their league and section title, but Oakland says the emphasis is on practicing and playing well.

“We have tried to focus on the training and preparation and not the outcome. Obviously, this is easier said than done and the goals are something our players are striving for everyday,” he said.