

## **Paramus Cath.'s Sheppard is solid**

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EMERSON -- Brittany Sheppard didn't blink twice when Saddle Brook's Jamie Rattacasa blooped a two-out single into shallow center field in the seventh inning.

Until that point, the Paramus Catholic pitcher had struck out eight, retired 21 of 22 batters and hadn't given up a hit. And she had no idea.

"I wasn't even keeping track," Sheppard said of the possible no-hitter. "I didn't even know until after the game when somebody told me."

It didn't matter though. The sophomore got the next batter, Kaitlin Samra, to pop up to first baseman Candice Beards for the final out in a 3-0 upset of the No. 5 Falcons at Saturday's Emerson Benefit Softball Tournament.

"She was phenomenal," said Falcons coach Darren White. "We looked bad at the plate and I attribute that to Sheppard's pitching. When you're playing a quality team, and you don't look sharp, you're going to lose."

Sheppard also chipped in on offense. After the Paladins took a 1-0 lead in the first on a Saddle Brook error, she laced a single to center to drive in Beards to put the Paladins (6-3) up 2-0. The third run in the fifth also was unearned.

"I think that highlights how focused she was," Paladins coach Larry Hughes said of Sheppard. "Knowing that she didn't know she had a no-hitter with two outs in the seventh inning, I think that really explains her mentality and I think the rest of the girls were in a similar position."

The victory couldn't have come at a better time for Paramus Catholic following back-to-back 1-0 losses last week to Ridgewood and Northern Highlands.

"I'm proud of my girls [because] we learned from those two losses," Hughes said. "We learned that we can't just come in and expect people to lay down for us. I think those two together can become the turning point for us this year."