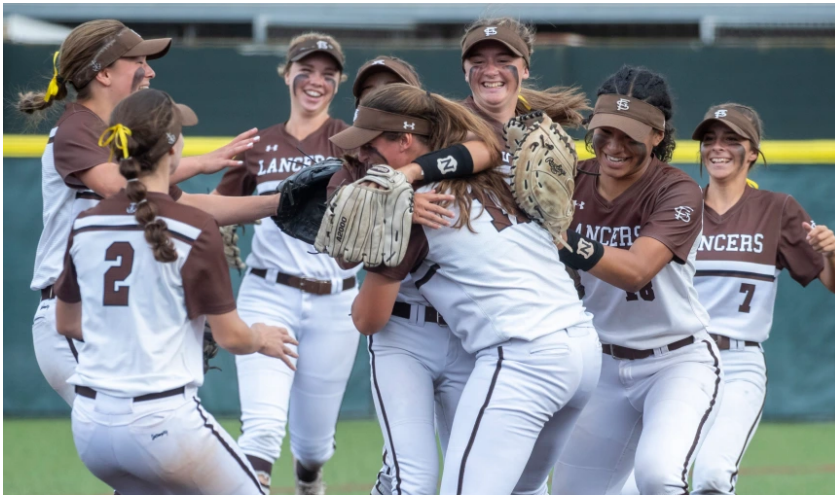


**SPORTS > HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS** • Analysis, News

SUBSCRIBER ONLY

# St. Francis softball reaches new heights as inaugural NorCal Division I champion

In their final game together, St. Francis coach Mike Oakland, daughter Jessica celebrate the program's rise to the top





MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIFORNIA – June 4: St. Francis celebrates their 6-0 victory over Clovis in the California Interscholastic Federation NorCal Division I championship softball game, Saturday, June 4, 2022, at St. Francis in Mountain View, Calif. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)

---

By **VYTAS MAZEIKA, CORRESPONDENT** |

PUBLISHED: June 4, 2022 at 10:50 p.m. | UPDATED: June 5, 2022 at 9:55 p.m.

---

MOUNTAIN VIEW – As a seventh-grader, Jessica Oakland watched from the dugout while the St. Francis softball team claimed its first West Catholic Athletic League title.

It was a stunning last-to-first turnaround by the Lancers, who hired a new coach prior to the 2017 campaign.

Her father.

Five years later Mike Oakland embraced his oldest of three daughters – now a senior co-captain – on the field after St. Francis crowned itself as the inaugural California Interscholastic Federation NorCal Division I champion following a 6-0 victory over visiting Clovis.

“It’s special, definitely,” said Oakland, who previously claimed three Central Coast Section titles in 10 years as the baseball coach at St. Francis. “When we first took over the program, we weren’t so hot. We got better, and (Jessica) and her senior class took us to another level – a much-different level. I don’t know if A) how we’re going to replace them, or if B) if there’ll ever be a better senior class than that.”

He added: “I don’t know if we’ll ever be as good as we are right now.”

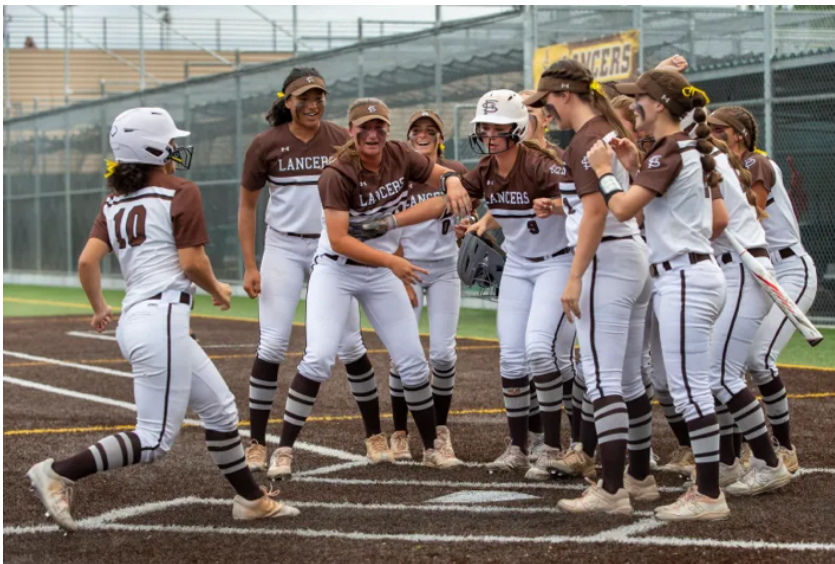
Top-seeded St. Francis (31-2), unbeaten the previous year, has only lost twice since the pandemic wiped out spring sports in 2020.

It claimed a third CCS Open Division title under Oakland last week, to go with two runner-up finishes.

All six seniors will play in college, leaving big shoes left to fill.

Jessica Oakland, a Gold Glove-caliber shortstop who hit .578 with 21 home runs and 67 RBIs, is bound for Minnesota.

“What we have here is unbelievable,” said Oakland, who delivered a two-run double in the bottom of the fifth. “What we’ve done here, we’ve left a legacy – the seniors have – and they do have some big shoes to fill, but I know that they’re going to be just fine next year.”



MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIFORNIA – June 4: St. Francis’ softball team waits at home plate for Ella Milante after her fourth-inning home run against Clovis in the California Interscholastic Federation NorCal Division I championship softball game, Saturday, June 4, 2022, at St. Francis in Mountain View, Calif. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)

“We’ve been working hard since literally January and I’m just so happy it’s paid off,” said second baseman Brooke Deppiesse, who will play at Boston University and led the Lancers with 15 doubles plus five triples. “It’s definitely going to be hard leaving everyone, but I know they’re going to do great next year and the years to follow.”

The rest of the senior class is comprised of:

— first baseman Sydney Stewart (Washington), who blasted a pair of HRs during the NorCal playoffs;

— catcher Ella Milante (Chapman), who hit a solo shot in the bottom of the fourth against Clovis to make it 2-0;

— left fielder Claire Turner (Georgetown), who went 3-for-4 in the final with an RBI single and stolen base that sparked a two-out, four-run rally in the bottom of the fifth;

— Jaz Hsiao (Brown), the backup catcher who went 1-for-3 in pinch-hit at-bats during NorCals.

“No one is ever going to replace those girls, there’s no way,” sophomore Shannon Keighran said. “These seniors mean so much to me. They’ve been my best friends since Day 1. They let me into this team with open arms. They’re my role models, for sure, and they’re my best friends.”

Runs were initially tough to come by, though No. 3 Clovis (27-7) eventually succumbed to a 15-hit barrage from St. Francis, which stranded 14 runners.

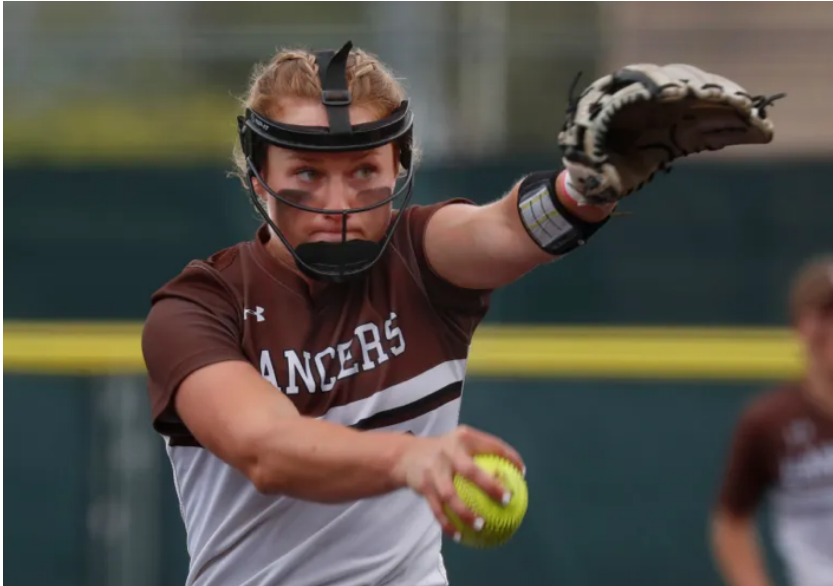
Each batter recorded at least one hit as the Lancers flipped the lineup five times in six innings, with the relentless pressure finally resulting in a two-out RBI double by Deppiesse in the bottom of the third to break a scoreless tie.

“Every pitch she had to throw were stressful pitches and eventually that gets to you,” Oakland said of Clovis’ pitcher. “The bottom-line is our lineup has so much depth to it that you just don’t get a break.”

St. Francis also enjoys a plethora of options in the circle.

Sophomore left-hander Kate Munnerlyn, who tossed a couple of complete games earlier this week, went barely unscathed through three innings. But a leadoff single and ensuing double to open the top of the fourth forced Oakland to turn to the bullpen while clinging to a one-run lead.





MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIFORNIA – June 4: St. Francis relief pitcher Shannon Keighran (3) helps the Lancers to a 6-0 victory over Clovis in the California Interscholastic Federation NorCal Division I championship softball game, Saturday, June 4, 2022, at St. Francis in Mountain View, Calif. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)

---

In came Keighran, who promptly struck out the cleanup hitter for the first out.

“It’s incredible, I never thought we’d get here,” said Keighran, who fanned five in three scoreless innings of relief. “I mean, I hoped, but I just never comprehended how much this actually means to me.”

The next out wasn’t quite as easy.

A chopper over junior Chloe Cummings at third base required Jessica Oakland to shift to her right and throw out the runner at home plate, with Milante applying the tag.

“Even as her dad, I was like, ‘That’s a pretty damned good play,’” said Mike Oakland, with a smile.

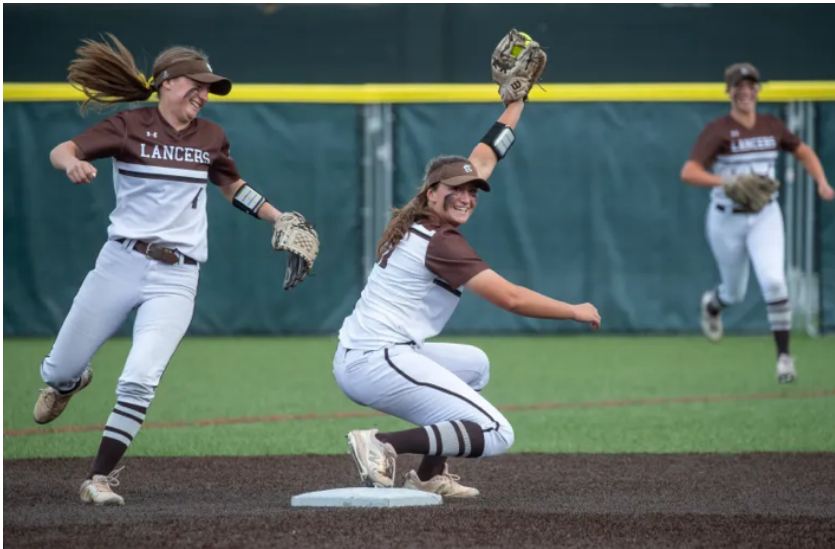
Jessica added: “During practice, we go through a lot of scenarios and at that point it’s instinctual.”

The only other time Clovis seriously threatened to score was in the top of the seventh, after back-to-back walks.

This time Oakland moved Cummings from third and into the circle for the final three outs.

Few teams, if any, feature the luxury of three live arms.

"It's huge, and I'm fortunate to have it for another year," Oakland said. "It's rare. Usually, you have one, maybe one-and-a-half. If you have two, you're lucky. Three just doesn't happen very often."



MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIFORNIA – June 4: St. Francis' Jessica Oakland makes the final out at 2nd base to seal a 6-0 victory over Clovis in the California Interscholastic Federation NorCal Division I championship softball game, Saturday, June 4, 2022, at St. Francis in Mountain View, Calif. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)

After a strikeout, a flare to Deppiesse turned into a championship-clinching double play as the runner strayed off second base and Oakland didn't hesitate to cover the bag.

A simple underhand flip, suddenly it was all over.

"I think we're the best second base-shortstop duo," Oakland said. "You should've seen the smile on her face when she caught that ball and I was standing right there. That was a great moment."

"I got a little ahead of myself," Deppiesse said. "Eye contact, eye contact."

"Biggest smile I've ever seen," Oakland added.

Asked about the end of a six-year crusade that marks not only the peak of a program but also the departure of a daughter, is either ready to bid adieu?

"No," the father said. "But all good things come to an end."

"Absolutely not, I don't think I'll ever be ready," Jessica said. "But it's something that's gotta happen, so you just have to adjust to it. I don't want to say goodbye at all, but I'm ready to take the next step to college and see what I can do there."

Good news? Jaime Oakland, a 9-year-old third-grader when her dad took over the program, is an incoming freshman at St. Francis.

## **Division V**

### **No. 1 Big Valley Christian-Modesto 5, No. 3 Los Altos 3**

Los Altos (17-13-1) fell behind 4-0 in the fourth, cut the margin to 4-3, but could get no closer.

Emeline Gaunce, Paolo Lara-Espinoza and Ainsley Witte drove in runs for Los Altos. Lara-Espinoza and Witte return next season. Gaunce, a senior catcher, will play next spring at Wellesley College in Massachusetts.

The Eagles had their chances for more runs, twice leaving the bases loaded.

Big Valley Christian finished 22-6.

## **Division II**

### **No. 2 Lincoln-Stockton 7, No. 5 Benicia 1**

Santa Clara University signee Robynn Balmediano drove in the only run of the game for Benicia (24-7) in a game played on Friday.

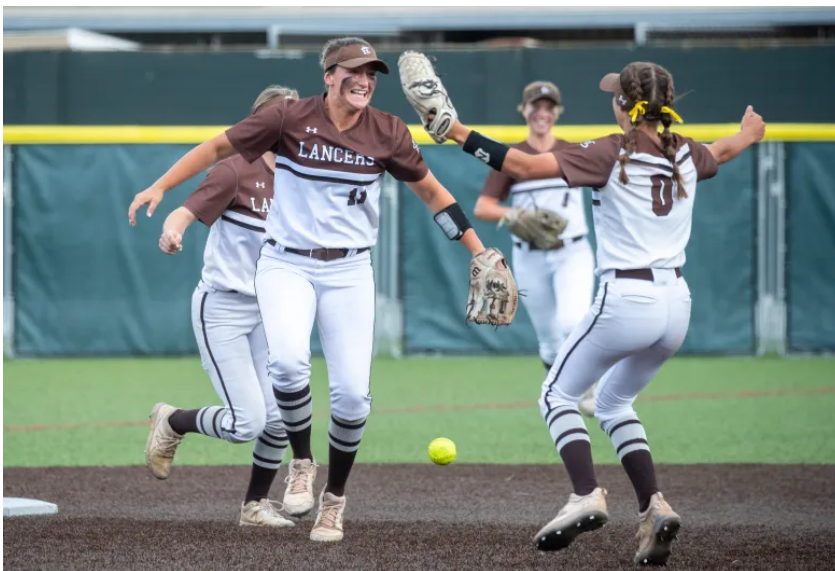
Lincoln (27-5-1) led 7-0 after two innings, powered by homers off the bats of Danielle Hunter and Mia Pamplona.

---

*Correspondent Mike Lefkow contributed to this report.*



MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIFORNIA – June 4: St. Francis takes a group photo following their 6-0 victory over Clovis in the California Interscholastic Federation NorCal Division I championship softball game, Saturday, June 4, 2022, at St. Francis in Mountain View, Calif. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)



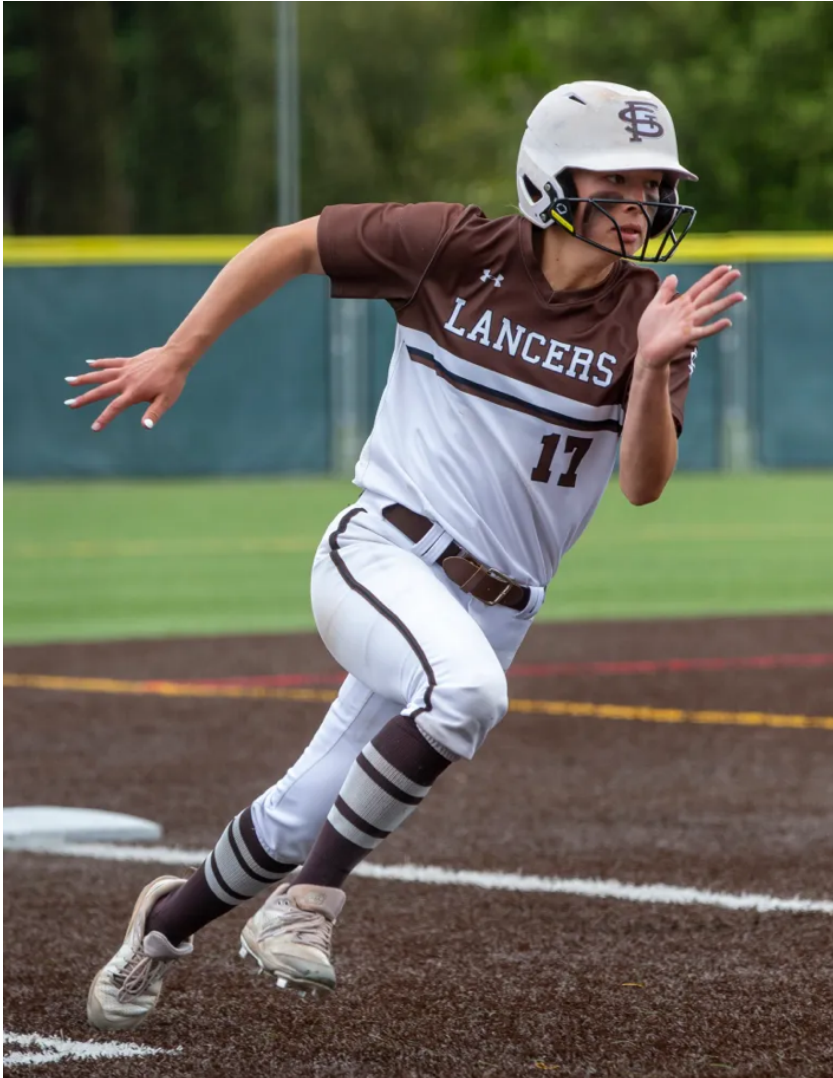
MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIFORNIA – June 4: St. Francis' Jessica Oakland (11) and Chloe Cummings (0) hug after a 6-0 victory over Clovis in the California Interscholastic Federation NorCal Division I championship softball game, Saturday, June 4, 2022, at St. Francis in Mountain View, Calif. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)



MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIFORNIA – June 4: Clovis starting pitcher Lauryn Carranco catches a pop up over teammate Paige Bristol (19) during the California Interscholastic Federation NorCal Division I championship softball game against St. Francis, Saturday, June 4, 2022, at St. Francis in Mountain View, Calif. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)

---

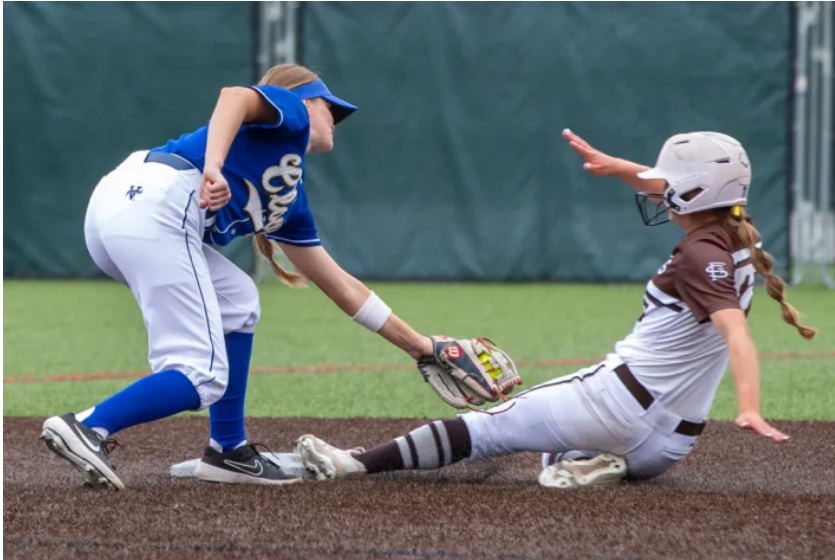




MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIFORNIA – June 4: St. Francis' Claire Turner (17) scores in the fifth inning against Clovis in the California Interscholastic Federation NorCal Division I championship softball game, Saturday, June 4, 2022, at St. Francis in Mountain View, Calif. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)

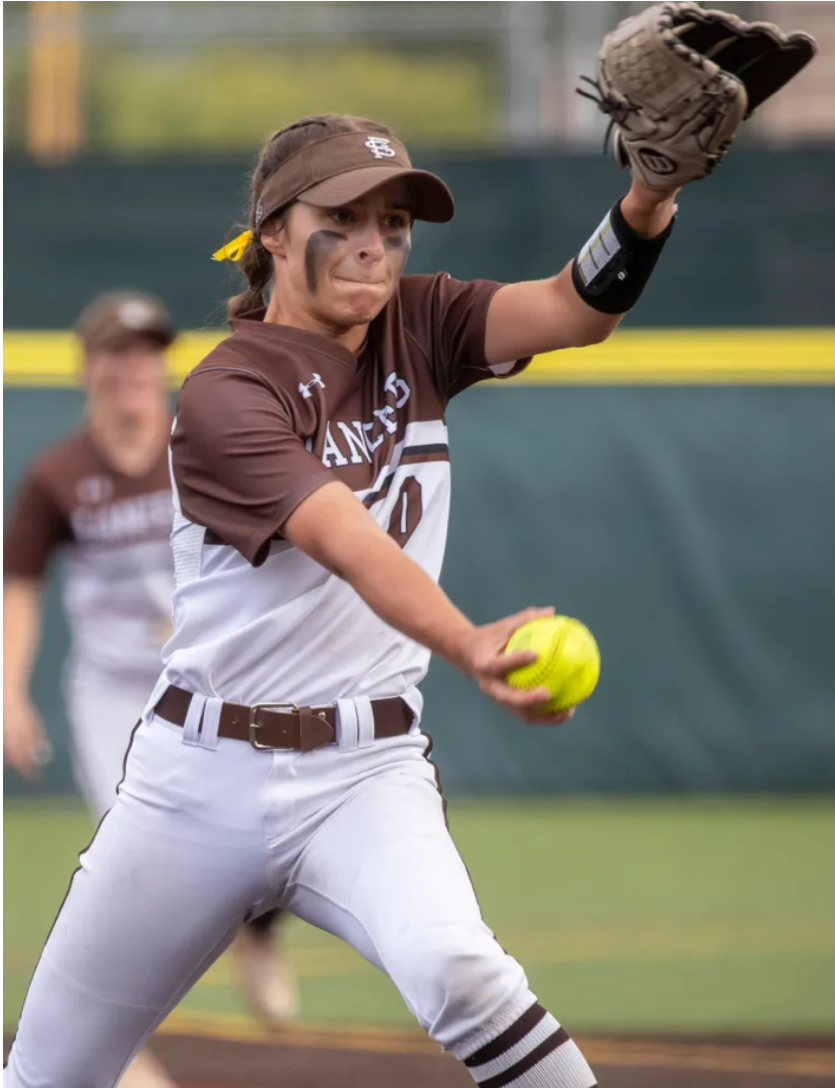
---





MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIFORNIA – June 4: St. Francis' Claire Turner (17) slides into 2nd base under the tag by Clovis' Brooke Brazill in the fifth inning of the California Interscholastic Federation NorCal Division I championship softball game, Saturday, June 4, 2022, at St. Francis in Mountain View, Calif. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)

---



MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIFORNIA – June 4: St. Francis' Chloe Cummings (10) closes out the 6-0 victory over Clovis in the California Interscholastic Federation NorCal Division I championship softball game, Saturday, June 4, 2022, at St. Francis in Mountain View, Calif. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)

---



MOUNTAIN VIEW, CALIFORNIA – June 4: St. Francis catcher Ella Milante tags out Clovis' Kaylynn Munoz in the California Interscholastic Federation NorCal Division I championship softball game, Saturday, June 4, 2022, at St. Francis in Mountain View, Calif. (Karl Mondon/Bay Area News Group)

---

[Report an error](#)[Policies and Standards](#)[Contact Us](#)

---

Tags: **High School Softball,**  
**Inside Sports, PM Report**



**Vytas  
Mazeika,**

**Correspondent**

---



SPONSORED CONTENT

## **When You Eat Oatmeal Every Day, This Is What Happens**



By GundryMD

Top US Doctor: Sugar Is Not The  
Problem (This Is)

---

**SUBSCRIBE  
TODAY!**

**ALL ACCESS DIGITAL OFFER FOR  
JUST 99 CENTS!**

## Join the Conversation

We invite you to use our commenting platform to engage in insightful conversations about issues in our community. We reserve the right at all times to remove any information or materials that are unlawful, threatening, abusive, libelous, defamatory, obscene, vulgar, pornographic, profane, indecent or otherwise objectionable to us, and to disclose any information necessary to satisfy the law, regulation, or government request. We might permanently block any user who abuses these conditions.

