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North Meck softball at Hopewell (Thursday, May 7, 5:30 p.m.): Just like their baseball brothers, the North Meck (14-3) and Hopewell (11-6) softball teams are streaking toward the playoffs.

Hopewell has won its last seven games, while North Meck has a five-game winning streak. The Vikings, however, have won 14 of their last 15 contests and wrapped up the MECA 7 championship on May 1 with a 15-0 pounding of Vance.

The Titans have some power in the lineup to make it interesting. Hopewell's Kristy Giragosian, Kelly Braman, Lindsey Russell and Racquel Cooke can turn on a pitch and hurt a pitcher's feelings. If Hopewell's first two hitters – Chaney Watson and Stephanie Spain – can get on base for the heart of the Titan order, it could be a long day for North Meck. But that, most likely, won't happen. North Meck has the pitching and infield defense to match Hopewell's power surge. The Vikings have not one, but two, stud pitchers in Sara Allen and Morgan Hopper. If one doesn't have it on Thursday, North Meck coach Paul Kikta can go to the other. That's what he did in an 8-2 victory over Hopewell on March 31. Allen struggled early, but Hopper relieved her and struck out the first five batters she faced. The Vikings also have a smooth fielding shortstop in Lauren Lewis and a tough third baseman in Carol-Anne Sherril. Second baseman Daniela Torres is solid, and catcher Sara "Boomer" Mooney (see story, page 28) is the best catcher, if not the best player, in the conference.

This game will test the theory that a good defense beats a good offense. The problem is, North Meck can also whack the softball, led by Mooney, who has three home runs and a .696 slugging percentage. Allen also cranked a three run homer to break open the first meeting between the two teams. Leadoff hitter Andrea Mayne's batting average is above .500.

Winner: Vikings