

Nearly Perfect!

Prep pitcher falls short of third straight perfect game

Lima News – May 2, 2006

NEW YORK (AP) – Nobody's perfect all the time. Anthony Velazquez gave it a shot.

The New York City high school junior who threw two straight perfect games pitched a one-hitter Monday – it might've been a two-hitter – ending his unprecedented run of dominance.

No pitcher in prep history had ever thrown consecutive perfect games before according to the National Federation of State High School Associations.

“I really didn't care about pitching a perfect game or a no-hitter, I just wanted to win,” Velazquez said after Bayside beat Cardozo 11-0.

New York City has spawned its share of pitching phenoms, from Sandy Koufax to Danny Almonte.

Now, the slightly built Velazquez is making a name for himself, too.

The 5-foot-7, 145-pound righty retired the first two batters Monday before hitting Jamie Liebowitz with a pitch. Next up was Adam Torres, who slapped a sharp grounder toward

second base – Bayside scored it as an error, Cardozo called it a hit.

Velazquez settled down and gave up only a clean single in the second inning to Mike Bean in a game shortened to five innings because of the mercy rule.

Far from overpowering, Velazquez used a sharp curveball, deceptive changeup and excellent control to strike out six with out a walk, and improved to 5-0 this season. A crowd of about 100 came out to watch, along with several camera crews and reporters. “Overwhelming. It's been stressful the last three weeks,” Velazquez said.

Velazquez pitched his first perfect game April 11 against John Bowne High for a 2-0 victory in the full seven innings. He finished that one off by getting his brother, Hector, on a popup back to the mound.

Then Velazquez fanned 16 in a 10-0 rout of Flushing High that was stopped after six innings. Batting leadoff, he had three hits, a walk and three stolen bases on Monday.