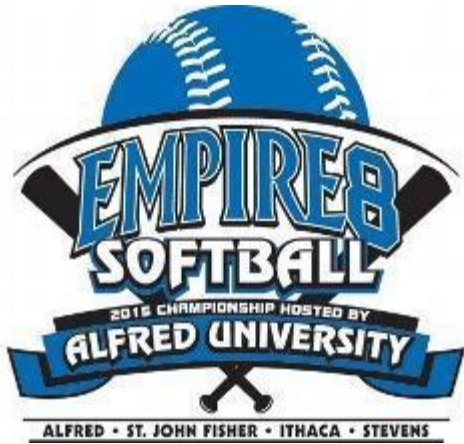


## AU hosting Empire 8 softball championships

4/30/15



The field is set for the Empire 8 Conference championship tournament, hosted this weekend by Alfred University with a bid to the NCAA Division III playoffs going to the winner.

AU is the top seed in the four-team, double-elimination tournament, scheduled for Friday and Saturday, May 1 and 2. The Saxons earned the top seed and the right to host by virtue of winning the league's regular season crown. Alfred has clinched a tie for the regular season crown and holds a tiebreaker over second-seeded Ithaca, which AU swept earlier in the year. Stevens Institute of Technology is the third seed and St. John Fisher is seeded fourth.

Alfred (29-3 overall and ranked 22nd in the nation) has a league record of 11-1 going into today's regular-season finale at 5 p.m. against visiting E8 foe Houghton. A win in one of the two games will give Alfred its first-ever outright regular season Empire 8 title. The Saxons tied with Ithaca for the conference regular season title in 2010, when the two teams each went 13-1 in league play. Alfred won a coin toss to determine the championship host that year.

The championship kicks off at 10 a.m. Friday at Harrington Park on the AU campus, with Ithaca (20-12, 11-3 E8) taking on Stevens (27-4-1, 10-4 E8). AU plays Fisher (26-12, 9-5 E8) at noon. The loser of the Ithaca-Stevens game plays the loser of the AU-Fisher game in Game 3, at 2:30 p.m., with the loser of that game eliminated. The winners of the first two games will meet in Game 4 at 4:30 p.m.

The tournament continues on Saturday, with the winner of Game 3 playing the loser of Game 4 at 11 a.m. (Game 5). The loser of Game 5 is eliminated, with the winner moving on to face the Game 4 winner at 1 p.m. (Game 6). If a seventh game is needed, it will be played on Sunday, May 3, at 1 p.m. Sunday is also reserved as a make-up date for any earlier games postponed due to inclement weather.

Ticket prices are set at \$4 general admission and \$2 for students with valid student ID's. Children 12 and under are free. The parking lot behind the McLane Center will be available for fans but there will be no parking beyond centerfield in the field adjacent to Harrington Field, the driveway going into the back of Yunevich Stadium or the strip above Harrington next to the press box.

This marks the eighth time in [Gino Olivieri's](#) 10 seasons as head coach at AU that the Saxons have qualified for the Empire 8 championships. In 2010, AU lost to Ithaca in the championship game but went on to earn an at-large bid to the NCAA playoffs, the program's first ever. Alfred returned to the NCAA's last season, again earning an at-large bid after falling to top-seeded Ithaca in a winner-take-all title tilt.