

## AU earns spot in E8 softball title game; will play Ithaca-Fisher winner Saturday

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ALFRED, NY - The Alfred University softball team won both its games Friday at the Empire 8 Conference championships to advance to the title game of the double-elimination tournament. The Saxons will take on the winner of Saturday morning's game between Ithaca and St. John Fisher. AU, the tournament host and top seed, defeated fourth-seeded RIT, 10-4, and third-seeded St. John Fisher, 5-1. Ithaca, the second seed, bounced back from an opening 2-0 loss to Fisher to eliminate RIT, 2-0 in eight-innings, behind a no-hitter by senior Alyssa Brook (Tinton Falls, NJ). Ithaca faces Fisher at 11 a.m. Saturday at Alfred State College; the loser is eliminated and the winner takes on Alfred at 1 p.m. The Saxons earn the conference title and earn the conference's automatic bid to the NCAA championships with a win in that game. If AU loses, the same teams would meet at 3 p.m. for the conference crown. In the opening game, Fisher (25-17, 9-7 Empire 8) shut out Ithaca behind the pitching of freshman Sarah Stefanon (Perry, NY), who held the Bombers to four singles while striking out four and walking two. The Cardinals scored the only runs of the game in the second inning off Ithaca junior Allison Greaney (Iselin, NJ). Senior Megan Graves (Fort Ann, NY) led off with a single and was sacrificed to second before junior Lauren O'Brien (East Amherst, NY) was hit by a pitch. After a single by sophomore Jenn Vanek (Smythtown, NY) loaded the bases with one out, sophomore Megan Zoerb (Painted Post, NY) plated Graves and O'Brien with a two-run double. Junior Brittany Lillie (Honeoye Falls, NY) relieved Greaney and held Fisher to two hits and no runs the rest of the way. Zoerb, Graves and sophomore Carissa Carlson (Little Genesee, NY) each had two hits for Fisher. Junior Kait Dolan (Farmington, NY) had two hits and freshman Molly O'Donnell (Niskayuna, NY) and senior Alyssa Guzman (Newburgh, NY) each had one for Ithaca (27-13, 14-2 Empire 8). Alfred (34-4, 15-1 Empire 8) scored in every inning but one in its win over RIT. The Tigers scored an unearned run in the top of the first on an RBI single by junior Carlissa Cole (Alden, NY), scoring freshman Megan O'Donnell (Hilton, NY). AU responded with two in the bottom of the inning. Sophomore pitcher Nicole Hedrick (Albany, NY/Catholic Central) led off with a single and sophomore Molly Shepherd (Camillus, NY) sacrificed her to second, reaching on an error. A sacrifice put Hedrick on third and Shepherd on second and both scored on a double by junior Ashley Passaro (Long Beach, NY). Alfred added a run in the second before plating four in the third and two in the fourth to take a 9-1 lead. The Saxons batted around in the third, scoring four runs (three unearned) off RIT freshman starter Brittany Kemp (Dansville, NY). Freshman Emily Fenton (Thorofare, NJ), sophomore Angela Netta (Rahway, NJ) and freshman Hana Gross (Union, NJ) each had RBIs. RIT scored twice in the fifth and once in the sixth. Hedrick was 2-for-4 with a run and an RBI; Passaro was 2-for-4 with a run scored and two driven in; and senior Karen Folts (Penn Yan, NY) had a hit, scored once and drove in two. Hedrick pitched seven innings, allowing four runs (two earned) on seven hits while striking out four. Kemp allowed 10 runs (five earned) on eight hits and struck out five for RIT. Sophomore Allee Emmi (Cicero, NY) had two hits, a run and an RBI for RIT, while Cole, sophomore Michelle Tabisz (Silver Spring, MD) and sophomore Shannon McCormick (Auburn, NY) each drove in a run. Brook won a pitcher's duel with RIT's Cole in the third game of the day. Cole held Ithaca hitless through six innings before Lillie broke up the no-hit bid with a leadoff single in the seventh. Ithaca didn't score, but after Brook retired the Tigers in the bottom of the seventh, the Bombers tallied two unearned runs in the top of the eighth. Greaney reached on an error to open the eighth and advanced to second on a sacrifice bunt. Guzman brought Greaney home with an RBI single, stole second and went to third on a sacrifice fly before scoring on an error. Brook closed out her

no-hitter in the bottom of the frame with two strikeouts and a game-ending fly-out. Brook struck out nine and walked five, while Cole allowed two unearned runs on three hits and struck out one. In Friday's final game, AU beat Fisher for the third time on six days, scoring all five of its runs in the third inning, to advance to Saturday's championship game. Junior Chelsey Cary (Corfu, NY) held the Cardinals to an unearned run on three hits while striking out two and walking none. After two scoreless innings, AU jumped on Fisher junior starter Michelle Krier (Kenmore, NY) in the third. Senior Shannon Mather (Endicott, NY) and Hedrick opened the inning with singles and Shepherd walked to load the bases. Senior Jesika LeBarron (Campbell, NY) scored Mather with a single and Passaro followed with a two-run single, scoring Hedrick and Shepherd. Stefanon relieved Krier and retired the first two batters she faced before Netta plated Mather and freshman pinch runner Kassandra Corsi (Willoughby, OH) with a two-run single. Fisher scored the game's final run in the bottom of the third when freshman Kayla Goodberlet (Columbus, OH) came home on a two-out error. Netta was 2-for-3 with two RBIs and Mather had two hits and scored a run for Alfred, while LeBarron (one RBI) and Hedrick each went 2-for-4 with a run scored. Goodberlet had two hits and Graves one for Fisher. Krier allowed five earned runs on six hits and struck out three for Fisher; Stefanon allowed three hits and struck out one.