

## AU softball team falls to host Ithaca in first round of Empire 8 championships

5/04/12



ITHACA, NY - The Alfred University softball team couldn't hold an early two-run lead, falling 6-2 to host and top-seeded Ithaca College in the first round of the Empire 8 Conference championship tournament Friday afternoon. With the loss, AU, the tournament's fourth seed, falls to 26-13 and will now take on third-seeded Stevens in an elimination game beginning at 5 p.m. today. The winner of the AU-Stevens game will move on to play the loser of tomorrow morning's game between Ithaca and second-seeded St. John Fisher, which beat Stevens 11-8 in Friday's other first-round game. Against Ithaca, things looked promising for the Saxons after senior shortstop Nicole Hedrick (Albany, NY/Catholic Central) led off the game with a single off Bombers' starter Samantha Bender. After being sacrificed to second, Hedrick scored on a single by sophomore centerfielder Breeal Delgado (Rancho Cucamonga, CA/Los Osos), who advanced to second on the throw home. Delgado scored on a single by senior leftfielder Angela Netta (Rahway, NJ/Mother Seton Regional) and ensuing throwing error and Alfred was up 2-0. The lead may have been greater, but Netta was doubled off first on a fly-out to rightfield to end the inning. AU wouldn't get any more chances to score, as Jillian Olmstead relieved Bender with one out in the third and proceeded to hold the Saxons hitless over 4 2/3 shutout innings. Ithaca cut Alfred's lead in half with a run in the fourth, then went ahead with four runs (three earned) on four hits in the fifth. The Bombers closed out the scoring with a single run in the sixth and AU went down in order in the top of the seventh to end the game. AU freshman starter Jessica O'Sullivan (Groton, MA/Groton Dunstable Regional) took the pitching loss for Alfred, allowing five runs (four earned) on seven hits while walking four and striking out two in 4 1/3 innings. Freshman Samantha Jo Muller (Port Jervis, NY/Port Jervis) went 1 2/3 innings in relief and allowed one earned run on two hits. Julianne Vincent went 2-for-2 with two runs and Jennifer Biondi hit a sixth-inning solo homerun to lead the Bombers, who improve to 28-11 on the year. Originally, the winners of the two first-round games were to play at 4 p.m. Friday, but heavy rain overnight Thursday pushed back all start times two hours, and that game (Ithaca-Fisher) will now be played at 11 a.m. Saturday. If AU beats Stevens Friday afternoon, the Saxons will take on the loser of the Ithaca-Fisher game at 1 p.m. Saturday, with the loser eliminated.