

## Softball team sweeps Fisher to earn share of Empire 8 Conference crown

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HORNELL, NY - The Alfred University softball team swept visiting St. John Fisher Sunday afternoon at Hornell High School, giving the Saxons a share of the Empire 8 Conference title. With the 1-0 and 2-1 victories, AU (32-4, 13-1 Empire 8) is named Empire 8 co-champion with Ithaca College. Ithaca, which finished 13-1 in conference play as well, split two games with Alfred on April 10. The Empire 8 title is the first ever in AU team history. A coin flip will be held at 8 p.m. this evening to determine which team will host the Empire 8 championship tournament, Friday and Saturday, May 7 and 8. The loser of the coin toss will be seeded second in the four-team double-elimination tournament, the winner of which earns the conference's automatic bid to the NCAA Division III championship tournament. AU junior pitcher Chelsey Cary (Corfu, NY/Pembroke) earned the win in Sunday's second game to improve to 16-1 on the season. She had four strikeouts, including one to end the game, giving her 123 for the year, a new AU single-season record. Alfred took a 1-0 lead in the top of the second when senior shortstop Jesika LeBarron (Campbell, NY/Corning West) singled, advanced to second on an error and scored on a one-out single by sophomore leftfielder Angela Netta (Rahway, NJ/Mother Seton Regional). The Saxons added an insurance run in the sixth when sophomore Nicole Hedrick (Albany, NY/Catholic Central) led off with a double, advanced to third on a single by senior second baseman Karen Folts (Penn Yan, NY/Penn Yan) and scored on a fielder's choice off the bat of junior first baseman Ashley Passaro (Long Beach, NY/Long Beach). Fisher (24-16, 8-6 Empire 8) closed to within a run in the bottom of the seventh. Emily Britzzalaro singled and advanced to second on a groundout, then took third on an error. After a strikeout, Kayla Goodberlet singled Britzzalaro home and put runners at first and second with two outs. Cary then fanned Fisher cleanup hitter Carissa Carlson to end the game. Cary allowed one unearned run on seven hits; Fisher starter Sarah Stefanon took the loss, allowing two runs (one earned) on six hits and striking out five. Hedrick went 2-for-3 with a double and a run scored for Alfred. Britzzalaro and Jenn Vanek each had two hits for Fisher. In the opener, Hedrick outdueled Fisher starter Danielle Leone, shutting out the Cardinals on two hits, striking out eight and walking one. After a one-out error in the top of the seventh, Fisher had the tying run on third, but Hedrick struck the next batter out, then induced a game-ending groundout. AU scored what proved to be the winning run in the bottom of the fourth. Freshman third baseman Molly Shepherd (Camillus, NY/West Genesee) led off with a triple and, after a walk, scored on Passaro's sacrifice fly to center. Freshman catcher Emily Fenton (Thorofare, NJ/West Deptford) had two hits and Netta had one. Hedrick improved to 16-3 on the season with her fifth shutout. Megan Zoerb and Leanne Merchant each had base hits for Fisher. Leone took the loss, allowing four hits while striking out five and walking two. Fisher will be seeded third and RIT fourth in the conference tournament. If AU wins the top seed, the Saxons would host the tournament at Alfred State College and play RIT in Friday's first-round game, while Ithaca would play Fisher. If Ithaca is named top seed, the Bombers would host the championships and take on RIT in the first round, while AU would earn play a rematch with Fisher. The losers of the two first-round games play an elimination game (Game Three) Friday. The winners of the first-round games would play Saturday morning in Game 4, with the loser of that game taking on the Game 3 winner in another elimination game (Game 5) Saturday. The Game 5 winner would play the Game 4 winner Saturday in Game 6, with a Game 7 played that day if necessary.