

Saxons plate game-winner in seventh to advance in Empire 8 tournament

5/05/12

ITHACA, NY - The Alfred University softball team scored in the top of the seventh inning to break a tie and earn a 5-4 win over Stevens in an Empire 8 Conference championship tournament elimination game Friday afternoon at Ithaca College. Alfred's win sends the fourth-seeded Saxons (27-13) into the loser's bracket final, to be played Saturday at 1 p.m. against the loser of Saturday morning's matchup between top-seeded tournament host Ithaca and second-seeded St. John Fisher. The winner of the four-team double-elimination tournament earns the conference's automatic bid to the NCAA Division III championship tournament. Stevens, which last Sunday swept a doubleheader from homestanding Alfred to pry the third seed away from the Saxons, was eliminated with Friday's the loss and finishes the year with a 17-24 record. With the score tied 4-4, AU sophomore outfielder Rachel Guszick (Sparrowbush, NY/Port Jervis) was hit by a pitch leading off the top of the seventh and advanced to second on a wild pitch and scored when senior leftfielder Angela Netta (Rahway, NJ/Mother Seton Regional) reached on an error. Freshman pitcher Jessica O'Sullivan (Groton, MA/Groton Dunstable Regional), who tossed 2 1/3 innings of one-hit scoreless relief, induced three straight groundouts in the bottom of the inning to secure the win and improve to 10-6 on the year. Alfred scored two in the first inning and added single runs in the third and fifth to take a 4-1 lead. In the opening frame, sophomore third baseman Jessica Warner (Runnemede, NJ/Triton) drove in a run with a base-loaded sacrifice fly before sophomore centerfielder Breal Delgado (Rancho Cucamonga, CA/Los Osos), who had singled earlier, scored from second after consecutive wild pitches. With AU leading by three, Stevens tied the game in the bottom of the fifth. All three Duck runs against AU freshman starter Samantha Jo Muller (Port Jervis, NY/Port Jervis) came with two outs. After Stevens' catcher Claire Strom tied the game with an RBI double, O'Sullivan relieved Muller and ended the inning on a flyout. Muller allowed four earned runs on seven hits in 4 2/3 innings. Both teams went scoreless in the sixth, setting the stage for the late game heroics from Alfred's Guszick, who finished 2-for-3 with two runs scored. Gross (base hit) and Warner each had RBIs; Delgado and sophomore Stephanie Arguello (Placentia, CA/Vista del Lago) each had a hit and scored; and freshman outfielder Alyson Hampton (Oxnard, CA/Oxnard) was 2-for-3 with a stolen base. Strom finished 2-for-3 with a double, an RBI and a run scored. Kendel Aurand and Jamie DeGenarro each had a base hit, drove in a run and scored once. Kayla Berardi took the pitching loss in relief of starter Brianna Sandone, who lasted only two-thirds of an inning after allowing two unearned runs and allowed a pair of hits. Berardi allowed three runs (two earned) while allowing six hits and striking out three in 6 1/3 innings.