



## **Sellers sensational; AR snags SPSL crown**

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KENT -- Ashley Sellers made sure Saturday afternoon that she left the South Puget Sound League with a bang.

One of the league's top pitchers the past four years, Sellers' dominant performance led the Ravens past Curtis, 2-1, in the SPSL championship game at Russell Road Park.

It's Sellers and the Ravens' first league crown and gives Auburn Riverside (21-2) the No. 1 seed heading into Friday's West Central District tournament at Sprinker Recreation Center in Spanaway.

A hard-throwing right-hander, Sellers has delivered time and time again for the Ravens. Against Curtis, she allowed just three hits and struck out seven.

"I just know that I will never forget this," said Sellers, who has accumulated more than 400 strikeouts during her career. "It just keeps getting better every game."

Curtis (16-8) advanced just one runner past second base all game.

"I thought she was on her game. She's just so focused right now," Auburn Riverside coach Chris Leverenz said.

While Sellers was her usual dominant self, it took some clutch offense in the seventh inning for the Ravens to pull out the title-clinching win.

Sellers took a 1-0 shutout into the sixth inning, when Curtis' Cassidy Fabre lined a shot into the left-field corner. Auburn Riverside left fielder Amanda Fitzsimmons slipped when she broke for the ball, allowing Fabre to round the bases for an in-the-park home run. Had Fitzsimmons kept her footing, Fabre likely would've been held to at best a double.

"She hit that really hard," said Fitzsimmons, who collected three of Auburn Riverside's five hits in the game and drove in a run in the first.

" At first, I was like, " Oh man, the game's tied now. But I believed our team would come back." That it did. Kelley Kaneshiro opened the seventh inning with a flare single that dropped over the head of Curtis pitcher Ashley Burks and in front of two teammates. Kristine Kaneshiro then sacrificed Kelley Kaneshiro to second with a bunt. Burks then intentionally walked the hot-hitting Fitzsimmons, a freshman who led the SPSL North in batting average this season with a .623 average. Burks then walked Auburn Riverside's Katie Payne on four straight pitches, loading the bases with one out for Maggie Denbo.

Denbo scalded the second pitch she saw between the legs of Curtis third baseman Cassie Walny, bringing Kelley Kaneshiro home with the winning run. "All I knew is that I didn't want to mess up," Denbo said. "I've had a problem dropping my shoulder. I knew if I concentrated and kept my shoulder up, I'd get a hit. And that's exactly what I did"

Denbo hit the ball so hard, Walny was unable to get her glove down quick enough to make a play.

" I think (it was a) little bit of luck and a lot of practice," Denbo added.

The Ravens capped off a solid overall day for North Division teams.