



By EARL WATT

• Leader & Times

One strike.

That's all the White Sox needed to be the first, and only, team to defeat the Cardinals.

But the Cardinals were undefeated for a reason, and Ulises Rivera delivered a clutch double to left field that completed a rally in the final inning and gave the Cardinals a 5-4 championship win.

It was the only time the White Sox trailed all night.

Hunter Carson crossed the plate in the first inning and so did Brody Sumner to give the White Sox an early 2-0 lead.

The Cardinals responded in the bottom of the first with a run, but the White Sox preserved their 2-1 lead.

The powerful bats that the Cardinals have shown all season with run rule victories were cooled by Carson in the second and third innings, and the White Sox were able to add two more runs while Braxton Hyde was on the mound for the Cardinals to build a 4-1 lead.

In the bottom of the fourth, the Cardinals were able to trim the lead when Syris Dunlap hit an in-the-park home run with a runner on tow cut the lead to 4-3.

Dunlap then took the mound for the Cardinals in the top of the fifth, and despite getting a runner to third, the White Sox could not score.

But neither did the Cardinals in the bottom half of the fifth, an the White Sox took a 4-3 lead to the sixth and final inning.

The White Sox left two runners stranded in the top of the sixth, and the Cardinals had one last at-bat.

Sumner relieved Carson who reached his pitching limit, and Sumner recorded two quick outs.

Sumner then had a full count against the third Cardinal batter in the inning, but Sumner missed with the pay-of pitch, and the batter walked.

Dunlap was intentionally walked, and Rivera came to the plate with two outs and the tying and winning run on base.

Rivera roped a shot to left center, and the tying run crossed the plate. Dunlap followed by scoring from first before the ball made it back to the infield, and the Cardinals began to celebrate a perfect season.

For the White Sox, it was a bitter ending, but it was also the most competitive game the Cardinals had all year.

The teams will break into age divisions for the Cimarron River teams and prepare for district tournaments later this summer.