

## Potent attack, improved defense bodes well for AU men's lacrosse team

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ALFRED -- As the Alfred University men's lacrosse team prepares to open its 2004 season, head coach Preston Chapman isn't worried about his team's ability to put the ball in the net. Chapman has every reason to be optimistic with the return of his top four scorers from a year ago: senior attackmen David Vail (Mt. Lakes, NJ/Mt. Lakes), Dylan Macro (Camillus/West Genesee) and Trevor Archer (Penn Yan/Penn Yan) and senior midfielder Anthony Fiorelli (Endicott/Union-Endicott). Macro, an honorable mention All-Empire 8 selection, led the team in scoring with 58 points, including a team-leading 32 goals. Fiorelli, also an honorable mention All-Empire 8 performer, and Archer each contributed 29 goals, while Vail, a First Team All-Empire 8 pick, had 56 points on 26 goals and a team-high 30 assists. "They're the strength of the team," Chapman said of the high-scoring quartet. "As they go, the team goes." Chapman said that while Vail, Macro and Archer will be counted on to provide continued scoring punch, they'll take on different roles in 2004. Because of their abilities to play sound defense, each will see time at midfield. "All three are very good defensively, and they came into the program as midfielders," Chapman said. "We're better with them at midfield." Chapman will look for an improved attack, with an emphasis on quality shots. Four young attackmen are poised to step in and contribute. They include freshmen Jeff Andrews (Horseheads/Horseheads) and Ryan Weiss (New City/Clarkstown North) and sophomores Sergio Ibarra (Buellton, CA/Midland) and Adam Griffin (New Hartford/New Hartford). Fiorelli will once again anchor the Saxon midfield. Chapman expects Fiorelli, one of the fastest players on the team, to kick up his scoring a notch while continuing to play solid defense. "He's really playing with a lot of confidence," Chapman said of Fiorelli. Joining Fiorelli at midfield will be sophomore Carlo DiRisio (Prattsburgh/Penn Yan) and freshman Andy German (Radnor, PA/Radnor). DiRisio scored 11 points (8G, 3A) and picked up 35 ground balls as a freshman. "Carlo is good defender who gets his groundballs. We'll need more scoring from him this year," Chapman said. "We'll look to get scoring from Andy immediately." Providing depth at midfield will be freshmen Dan Griffin (Wooster, OH/Wooster), Andy Aylward (Oswego/Oswego), Julien O'Reilly (Amherst, MA/Amherst), Tyler Corwin (Warwick, RI/Rocky Hill) and Ben Cantor (Pembroke, NH/Kimball Union Academy) and sophomores Rob Harrell (Syracuse/West Genesee) and Pete Ferriello (Nanuet/Albertus Magnus). For Alfred to succeed this year, the Saxons must improve on defense. While the Saxons were scoring 12.4 goals per game in 2003, they were allowing more than 14 per contest. "The play of our defense will be key," Chapman said. "Last year, we gave up too many second and third chances." Chapman is optimistic about the play of his defense. Two starters from last year return. Sophomore Tristan Hujer (Hamburg/St. Francis) and junior Josh Parker (Hamburg/Hamburg) had 43 and 24 groundballs, respectively. They'll be joined by two solid recruits in freshmen James Powell (Corning/Corning East) and Mike McCarthy (Kinnelon, NJ/Kinnelon). "I look for James and Mike to come right in and make an impact," Chapman said. Sophomore Matt Hall (Salt Lake City/Judge Memorial) returns after seeing action in nine contests as a freshman and will split time with Hujer at the long stick position. Adding depth to the defense will be freshman Liam Ealahan (Tully/Tully). Sophomore Chris Wszalek (West Seneca/West Seneca East) will start in goal. He was competing for a starting spot in 2003 when an early-season injury ended his year. He was solid between the pipes during the Saxons' fall ball season, something Chapman hopes will carry over into the spring. "His biggest liability is his inexperience. He's really worked hard to improve his stick skills and his outlet passing. He's very good fundamentally, he just needs some time in net to get his confidence up." Freshman Drew Foster (Pittsford/Pittsford-Sutherland) has progressed well from the fall season and will back up Wszalek in goal. Alfred will look to make improvements on both ends of the field. The Saxons struggled at times last year clearing the ball from their end of the field. Chapman expects that to improve with Vail, Macro and Archer rotating into the midfield. "We've been emphasizing forcing the opponents into bad shot selection and not giving up uncontested shots," Chapman said. "On offense, we have to take better shots and convert more turnovers into goals." Limiting mistakes may be the biggest key to the Saxons' success in 2004. Chapman stressed the need to limit penalties and avoid the man-down situations that plagued the team last year. Mistakes led to AU coming out on the short end of narrow losses to nationally-ranked Ithaca (12-10) and Hamilton (14-11). "We just need to play smart and not beat ourselves," Chapman commented. "We know we can compete with the top teams, we've shown it. We just need to be more consistent and play 60 minutes." Alfred will once again be playing a solid schedule. Aside from Empire 8 powers Ithaca, Nazareth and RIT, the Saxons have tough non-conference dates with Oneonta and Kenyon. Chapman is confident his squad can claim a berth in the conference's four-team championship tournament, the winner of which earns a bid to the NCAA playoffs.