

Eight members of softball team earn Empire 8 Conference honors

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Eight members of the Alfred University softball team have earned all-conference recognition. Among the Saxons' honorees are sophomore third baseman [Liz Thompson](#) (**Horseheads, NY/Horseheads**), named Player of the Year, and head coach [Gino Olivieri](#), Coach of the Year.

Five Saxons, including Thompson, were named to the First Team. The others are sophomore first baseman [Sophia Chiavatti](#) (**Tustin, CA/Foothill**), junior shortstop [Nicole Maher](#) (**Newark, DE/Caravel Academy**), freshman outfielder [Shannon Schaefer](#) (**Westfield, NJ/Westfield**) and senior utility player [Alison Wickwire](#) (**Towanda, PA/Towanda**).

Junior second baseman [Dana Torchia](#) (**Pompton Plains, NJ/Pequannock Twp.**) and freshman pitcher [Kerri Keeler](#) (**Jamesville, NY/Jamesville-DeWitt**) were named to the Second Team.

The Saxons are preparing for the NCAA Regional tournament that will be held at Alfred University's Harrington Park this weekend, May 8-10. Alfred (35-4) earned an automatic bid to the NCAA Division championships by winning the Empire 8 Conference championship tournament, which AU hosted last weekend.

Heading into this weekend's NCAA regional, Thompson has a .508 batting average with 54 runs (a school record), 64 hits (two off a school record), 12 homeruns and 43 RBIs. She has a .976 slugging percentage, a .981 fielding percentage and leads her team in steals with 20. Thompson's eight triples this year and 12 in her career are also school records. Thomson was a honorable mention all-conference selection as a freshman in 2014.

Chiavatti is batting .481 with 20 RBIs and 10 runs scored. Among her 39 hits are 22 doubles, an AU single-season record. Chiavatti has played flawless defense, with a perfect 1.000 fielding percentage in 115 chances.

Maher earned First Team E8 honors for a second straight year. She is hitting .327 and slugging .554 with 16 runs scored and 31 driven in. On the year, Maher has 12 doubles (second on the team) and three homeruns, and has a .957 fielding percentage

Schaefer has seen action in 33 games this year, making 26 starts primarily as an outfielder. She is batting .344 with 12 runs scored and eight RBIs. Schaefer has appeared in 10 games as a pitcher (five starts) and is 6-0 with a 1.83 ERA and three saves.

Wickwire becomes a three-time First Team league all-star, having previously been honored in 2013 and 2014. She is batting .420 with 34 runs and leads the team with 16 homeruns, 52 RBI and a .990 slugging percentage. This has been a record-setting year for Wickwire, who set new school single-season records for homeruns and walks and also new career marks for homeruns, doubles and walks. She has made 14 pitching appearances, all starts, and is 10-3 with a 3.23 ERA and team-high 95 strikeouts.

Torchia earned E8 honors for a second time, following up a 2014 season in which she was given honorable mention. Heading into the NCAAs, Torchia is hitting .345 with 35 runs scored (second on the team) and 32 driven in. She has a .992 fielding percentage, with just one error in 125 chances.

Keeler has pitched in 17 games, making 13 starts, and has a perfect 15-0 record with four shutouts and one save. She has a team-low 1.70 ERA and has struck out 62 batters. Among her 15 wins were four in the Empire 8 championships (two shutouts), which earned her tournament MVP honors.

Olivieri was named Empire 8 Coach of the Year for a third time; he was previously honored in 2010 and 2008. During

the Empire 8 tournament last weekend, Olivieri earned his 250th career victory of his 10-year coaching tenure at Alfred University.

Each season, the Empire 8 honors students-athletes from each conference school who play on teams sponsored by the conference, with Sportsperson of the Year awards. Honorees, chosen by their coaches, exhibited outstanding sportsmanship in keeping with the conference's mission of "competing with honor and integrity." Junior outfielder [**Samantha Jauregui \(Lindsay, CA/Lindsay\)**](#) is Alfred's honoree from the softball team.

The Saxons are the second seed in this weekend's NCAA Regional and will open the four-team double-elimination tournament at 1 p.m. Friday against third-seeded Lebanon Valley. Following that game, at 3:30 p.m., top-seeded Rowan plays fourth-seeded Penn State-Behrend. The tournament winner advances to next weekend's Super Regional round, with eight winners of two-team best-of-three series will advance to the Division III College World Series May 21-26 in Salem, VA.