

AU men's swimming and diving team wins Empire 8 championship

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ALFRED, NY The Alfred University men's swimming and diving team has claimed its second Empire 8 Conference championship in three years. The Saxons took the conference crown after finishing second at the weekend's Upper New York State Collegiate Swimming Association (UNYSCSA) championship meet. The conference championships are determined using results turned in by Empire 8 teams competing at the state meet: AU finished first among Empire 8 teams, with 743 points, ahead of conference runner-up Hartwick. AU head coach Brian Striker was named 2004-05 Coach of the Year by both the UNYSCSA and Empire 8. He also won those honors in 2003, when the AU men's team won its first conference crown as well as the state title. The Saxons placed second overall at this year's state championships, held Thursday, Friday and Saturday at Nottingham High School in Syracuse. Junior Brian Gotham (Syracuse, NY/Nottingham) won a conference title in the 100-yard and 200-yard breaststroke events. His times of 58.25 seconds in the 100 and 2:08.71 in the 200 established new Empire 8 championship records. Gotham also won state titles in both events. Senior Kevin Martin (Conesus, NY/Livonia) won a conference title in the 200-yard butterfly with a time of 1:55.63. He also won the state championship in that event and was runner-up for both the conference and state titles in the 100-yard butterfly. The Saxons won conference titles in three relay events. The team of senior Bill Brown (Chaffee, NY/Pioneer) Gotham, junior Alex Crowell (Wayland, MA/Wayland) and Martin won the 200-freestyle relay; the team of sophomore Brandon Striker (Caledonia, NY/York), freshman Page Beecher (Scarborough, ME/Scarborough), Gotham and Martin won the 800-yard freestyle relay; and Martin, Brown, Striker and Crowell won the 400-yard freestyle relay. AU won a state title in the 200 freestyle relay. Other Saxons finishing in the top-three in individual conference championship standings were: Striker, second in the 500-yard freestyle and 200-yard freestyle; Gotham, third in the 200-yard individual medley; Martin, second in the 100-yard butterfly and third in the 50-yard freestyle; Brown, third in the 100-yard butterfly; Beecher, third in the 400-yard individual medley and 1,650-yard freestyle; and Crowell, third in the 100-yard breaststroke and the 100-yard freestyle. The AU teams of freshman Jon Wordingham (Prattsburgh, NY/Naples), Gotham, Brown and Martin placed second in the 400-yard medley and 200-yard medley relays. Several Saxon swimmers now wait to learn if NCAA provisional qualifying times they turned in at the state meet will be fast enough to earn them spots in the NCAA Division III championship meet March 17-19 in Holland, MI. The following from AU logged NCAA "B" cut qualifying times at the state meet: Brown, Gotham, Crowell and Martin in the 200-freestyle relay; Martin and Brown in the 100-yard butterfly; Gotham in the 100-yard breaststroke; and Martin, Brown, Striker and Crowell in the 400-freestyle relay.