

AU women's lacrosse team set to open 2005 campaign

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ALFRED, NY Despite the loss of five seniors from the 2004 Alfred University women's lacrosse team, first-year coach Brianne Bastian is optimistic about what her team can accomplish this season. "I expect as the season progresses, our veterans and new additions will mold well together," Bastian said. "All we need to do is focus on developing and coming together as a team." The Lady Saxons will be without five players from last year's 3-10 team (2-5 Empire 8). Lost is much of the offensive punch provided by graduated seniors Katie Haarmann, Chris Sanford, Kelly Farrell and Katie Ratchuk. The quartet combined to score 101 of the team's 124 goals last season. Returning at midfield to help fill the void will be junior captain Jessica Giuricich (Blairstown, NJ/Blair Academy) and sophomore Jessica Dupuis (Chapel Hill, NC/Chapel Hill). After finishing fourth on the team in points last season with 24 (11G, 13A), Giuricich will be counted on to continue the success she enjoyed in 2004. Dupuis started all 13 games last season and finished the year with 15 groundballs. She is an aggressive player and is expected to provide more of an offensive spark for the Saxons this season. Rounding out the midfield will be sophomores Molly Ambrogi-Yanson (Pittsford, NY/Pittsford-Mendon) and Maeghen MacDonald (Alexandria, VA/Mount Vernon). Bastian is excited about what her new midfielders will bring to the team. "Molly has a lot of endurance and speed and is expected to stand out in the midfield," Bastian said. "Maeghen is a new player for the Saxons, but she will be a big addition to the team." Returning to anchor AU defensively will be junior captains Rosemary O'Sullivan (Cold Spring Harbor, NY/Cold Spring) and Jessica Sundberg (Acton, MA/Acton-Boxboro). O'Sullivan finished the 2004 season with four goals and one assist, while picking up 24 groundballs. Sundberg started in 12 of 13 games last season, scoring one goal and scooping up 10 groundballs. The combination of O'Sullivan and Sundberg, along with the addition of sophomores Casey Cutting (Endicott, NY/Union Endicott) and Erika Richter (Floral Park, NY/Floral Park Memorial), will provide a solid defensive front for Bastian. "We have a strong group of athletes who each demonstrate their own individual skills," Bastian said. "Our defense should be our greatest strength this season." Poised to lead the attack for AU will be returning sophomore Erin Brummer (Williamsville, NY/Williamsville South). She appeared in 10 games last season notching four points (3G, 1A) and grabbing 10 groundballs. Joining Brummer at attack will be junior Amanda Myers (Cheektowaga, NY/West Seneca East), sophomore Priya Gandhi (Voorhees, NJ/Eastern Regional) and freshman Jessica Sipes (Bellevue, MA/Sammamish). Returning in the cage for the Saxons will be sophomore goalie Ashley Oliver (Bethel, ME/Gould Academy). Oliver served as a backup to graduating senior and current assistant coach Jessica Dunster last season. She appeared in one game, finishing the year with a .667 save percentage while allowing only one goal. "We hope that when the season begins, Ashley's confidence level will be where it should be," Bastian stated. "Ashley has solid fundamentals which will be an asset to our team." Despite returning only six players from last year's squad, Bastian is confident about her team's chances going into the season. "We have a lot of new faces on the field this season, but once we become more comfortable with each other and as a whole, I expect many accomplishments," the head coach said. "We will have to make a lot of adjustments, but we will do whatever it takes."