

AU women's swimming and diving team gains experience, looks to add depth

3/30/07

ALFRED, NY The 2006-07 season saw the AU women's swimming and diving team struggle at times with youth, inexperience and a general lack of depth. Still, the team swam hard and improved all year nearly every swimmer swam her best time at the state championship meet. With only four seniors on the squad, head coach Brian Striker is optimistic that with increased depth the Lady Saxons will improve on its 2-9 record (1-4 Empire 8) and 11th-place finish at the New York State meet. "We had a young team, but that wasn't the biggest detriment. This team was the smallest we've had in years and the lack of depth hurt us," Striker commented. "But this was one of the hardest working teams I've had." The team will miss the contributions of seniors Erin Collins (Owego, NY/Owego) (diving, Second Team Empire 8 all-star in 3-meter diving, second in the same event at the state meet), Jessica White (Palmyra, NY/Palmyra-Macedon) (freestyle: 13th in the 1,650-yard freestyle and 15th in the 500-yard free at states and one of the top scorers in dual meets this year), Jessica Zekus (Tuscon, AZ/Canyon Del Oro) (backstroke) and Jaime Wingate (Groton, NY/Lansing) (diving). Collins is one of the best women's divers at AU and was consistently among the top scorers in dual meets throughout her four-year career. White has been one of the team's top freestylers (both sprint and distance) the last two seasons and scored high in dual meets. Still, a host of talented swimmers return, led by junior Lyndsay Scypta (Plymouth, MI/Cranbrook-Kingswood) (breaststroke, IM) and sophomore Jessie Caccamo (Ballston Lake, NY/Shenendehowa) (distance freestyle) who will be invaluable to the relays next season. Scypta scored in the top 15 twice in this year's state meet (12th in the 100-yard breaststroke and 14th in the 200-yard breast) and (15th in the 1,650-yard freestyle). Juniors Kim Covino (Derby, NY/Lake Shore) (freestyle, breaststroke), Mary Hodock (Palmyra, NY/Palmyra-Macedon) (freestyle) and Alyssa Ketcham (Salt Point, NY/FDR) (breaststroke, fly), sophomores Brynja Seagren (Bradford, PA/Bradford) (butterfly, diving) and Anne Sheehy (Staatsburg, NY/FDR) (freestyle, breaststroke) and freshmen Meghan Jones (Beaver Falls, NY/Beaver River) (freestyle) and Sara Schwartz (Farmington, NY/Victor) (backstroke) return. With an added year's experience and improved strength, they make up a core group that will look to improve upon the team's 11th-place finish at states. Striker acknowledges the women's team's improvement won't happen quickly, but he is encouraged. "We just need to build steadily," he said. "Recruiting is the biggest key and so far, it's been very good, for both the men and women."