

## **Fisher knocks off Saxons, 41-13**

11/11/06

ALFRED, NY St. John Fisher defeated the Alfred University football team, 41-13, Saturday afternoon at Merrill Field. The visiting Cardinals twice held Alfred to field goals after the Saxons had first-and-goal inside the Fisher 5-yard line and intercepted AU quarterback Paul Keeley (Caledonia, NY/Caledonia-Mumford) three times, converting each turnover into touchdowns. With the win, Fisher (9-1, 5-1 Empire 8) wins a share of the Empire 8 Conference title. Co-champion Springfield, by virtue of their win over Fisher earlier in the year, wins the conference's automatic bid to the NCAA championships, while Fisher will hope to earn an at-large bid when the playoff field is announced Sunday afternoon. Alfred (7-3, 4-2 Empire 8) will likely earn a bid to an Eastern Conference Athletic Conference (ECAC) championship bowl game. The ECAC will announce its championship pairings Monday. The game was close early, as Fisher scored on its opening drive. Tailback Mark Robinson scored the first of his three touchdowns on the day with 10:46 left in the opening quarter, capping a nine-play, 65-yard drive. Alfred made it 7-3 when junior kicker Chris Reynolds (Pittsford, NY/Pittsford-Sutherland) booted a 23-yard field goal with 2:28 left in the quarter. Reynolds' field goal came after the Saxons failed three times to punch the ball in from the Fisher 4-yard line. Alfred took its only lead of the game 1:29 into the second quarter when junior tailback Elmer Newsome (Cadosia, NY/Hancock) capped a six-play 56-yard drive with a seven-yard touchdown run. Fisher would score 20 unanswered points in a six-minute span at the end of the second quarter to take a 27-10 halftime lead. Four plays after Keeley was intercepted at the AU 20-yard line by Fisher cornerback Steve Stepnick, Cardinal quarterback Rob Kramer hit tight end Chris Harmon with a seven-yard touchdown pass to put Fisher back on top, 13-10. After Alfred turned the ball over on downs on its next possession, Fisher drove 67 yards in six plays with Robinson plowing in from five yards out with 2:16 left before halftime. Fisher linebacker Gene Lang intercepted Keeley at the Alfred 26-yard line with 55 seconds left in the half and two plays later, Kramer hit wideout Tim Marion with a 13-yard pass to give Fisher a 27-10 lead going into halftime. After got the ball to begin the second half and drove to the Fisher four before settling for a 20-yard Reynolds field goal to make the score 27-13. But AU would get no closer as Robinson tallied his third TD of the day with two minutes left in the third and Marion closed out the scoring with a 58-yard punt return with just under 11 minutes left in regulation. Fisher finished the day with 339 yards of offense and had 18 first downs to 238 yards and 13 first downs for Alfred. Robinson ran for 142 yards to go with his three TDs, while Kramer threw for 160 yards, two touchdowns and one interception. Marion (43 yards) and wide receiver Sean Nowicki (40 yards) each had a team-high three catches for the Cardinals. Keeley completed 17 of 41 passes for 238 yards and for the first game this year failed to throw a touchdown pass. Junior tight end Matt Gibbins (Clifton Park, NY/Shenendehowa) caught a game-high six passes for 106 yards while freshman wide receiver Jared Manzer (Johnson City, NY/Johnson City) caught four passes for 26 yards and sophomore wideout Trevor Bork (Fisher, NY/Victor) added three for 50 yards. The Saxons were held to 46 yards rushing, their lowest total of the year, with freshman tailback Vinson Hendrix (Rochester, NY/East) running for 31 yards on six carries. Freshman linebacker Chad Pieri (LeRoy, NY/Caledonia-Mumford) had a game-high 11 tackles (seven solo), including two for loss and a sack. Senior linebacker Nick Gatto (Bemus Point, NY/Maple Grove) added nine stops and junior tackle Don Miller (LeRoy, NY/LeRoy) had five tackles and a fumble recovery. Freshman cornerback Brent McGill (Rochester, NY/East) got his first career interception and added four tackles. Defensive end Josh Henninger had eight tackles (four solo) including three for loss to pace the Fisher defense, while Lang and linebacker Josh Gottlieb (one tackle for loss, one sack) each had seven stops.