

## Saxons top Springfield in Empire 8 opener

9/26/09



ALFRED, NY The Alfred University football team opened its 2009 Empire 8 Conference slate with a convincing 49-28 victory over visiting Springfield College Saturday afternoon at Merrill Field. The Saxons (4-0, 1-0 Empire 8) rushed for 190 yards against a Springfield team (2-1, 0-1 Empire 8) that came into the game allowing only 10 yards per game on the ground, tops in the nation. Senior tailback Vinson Hendrix (Rochester, NY/East) ran for 175 yards and three touchdowns on 36 carries, giving him at least 100 yard rushing in each of Alfred's four games this year. The Saxons didn't turn the ball over, while the AU defense forced a pair of Springfield miscues. Sophomore quarterback Tom Secky (Bemus Point, NY/Maple Grove) turned in a solid performance, completing 14 of 19 passes for 185 yards and three touchdowns. Senior wideout Jared Manzer (Johnson City, NY/Johnson City) caught eight passes for 168 yards and three scores and junior receiver Ryan Thon (Victor, NY/Victor) caught a TD pass and threw for a score. Alfred took the opening kickoff and marched 70 yards in 11 plays, with Thon catching a five-yard pass from Secky to give Alfred the early lead. Springfield answered on the first play of the second quarter, when quarterback Josh Carter connected with wideout Tim Brady on a 10-yard scoring pass on fourth-and-two. The Saxons wasted no time re-taking the lead. On the first play from scrimmage after freshman cornerback Andre McCloud (Bath, NY/Haverling) returned the kickoff to the Alfred 43-yard line, Thon took a pitch from Secky, pulled up and lofted a perfect strike down the right sideline to a streaking Manzer. Springfield would tie the game at 14-14 on its next possession, driving 73 yards on six plays. Carter capped the drive with a four-yard run with 12:11 left in the half. The Pride had a chance to take the lead after the Saxons turned the ball over on downs at the Springfield 19-yard line. But after Springfield drove to the Alfred 32, junior linebacker Chad Pieri (LeRoy, NY/Caledonia-Mumford) forced a fumble to end the threat. The Saxons punted on their ensuing possession, but on Springfield's second play from scrimmage at the Alfred 49-yard line, Pieri intercepted a tipped Carter pass to give AU the ball near midfield. The Saxons would take the lead for good nine plays later, when Secky connected with Manzer from six yards out. AU scored on its first two possessions of the third quarter to take control of the game. After forcing Springfield to punt on the Pride's opening possession of the second half, Alfred drive 50 yards in eight plays, taking a 28-14 lead on Secky's nine-yard scoring pass to Manzer with 9:36 left in the third. After another four-and-out for Springfield, the Saxons needed only three plays to score again, as Hendrix ran in from 38 yards out to give his team a 35-14 lead with 6:34 left in the period. Springfield scored on its next possession, driving 63 yards in 10 plays. Halfback Joe Myhren capped the drive with a 10-yard TD run with 2:08 on the clock. Hendrix scored on a pair of short TD runs in the fourth to give AU a 49-21 lead. His first, from yard out, came with 9:17 left in regulation and ended a four-play 54-yard drive. His second, from four yards out, came with 1:39 left after the Saxons drove 56 yards in nine plays. Springfield closed out the scoring on backup quarterback Brian Staub's 55-yard TD run with just over a minute remaining. The AU defense played a solid second half against one of the nation's strongest running attacks. While Springfield tallied 228 yards rushing in the first half, the Pride managed only 113 yards on the ground after intermission, before Staub's late run. The Saxons held Springfield to only 39 yards passing. Pieri finished with nine tackles (five solo), including one for loss, to go with his forced fumble and interception. Senior linebacker Marc Mangovski (Kirkville, NY/East Syracuse-Minoa) had 10 tackles and sophomore linebacker Nick Clark (Canisteo, NY/Canisteo-Greenwood) had nine. Freshman end Chris Steeves (Rochester, NY/Gates-Chili), making his first career start, had six tackles (one for loss) and a fumble recovery. Carter finished with

115 yards rushing to lead the Springfield offense. Fullback Baldwin Cunningham and halfback Antoine King had 60 and 55 yards on the ground, respectively. Tackle John Ward led the Springfield defense with a game-high 13 tackles and end Cody Flanigan had seven tackles, including two for loss and a sack. Alfred is idle next week and returns to action on Saturday, Oct. 10, at 1 p.m., when the Saxons host Empire 8 rival Hartwick College.