Saxons picked fourth in Empire 8 preseason coaches football poll 8/07/08

Saxons picked fourth in Empire 8 preseason coaches' football pollALFRED, NY The Alfred University football team has been picked to finish fourth in the Empire 8 Conference in the coaches' preseason poll.St. John Fisher, co-champion in the Empire 8 last year, is tied atop the preseason poll with Ithaca, the conference runner-up in 2007. Fisher received four first-place votes, while Ithaca received two. Hartwick, last year's co-champ with Fisher, is picked to finish third in 2008. Rounding out the poll after Alfred is Springfield (fifth). Utica (sixth) and Norwich (seventh).Alfred is coming off an 8-3 season in which the Saxons placed tied with Ithaca for third in the Empire 8 with a 4-2 Conference mark. The Saxons returns 11 starters (five on offense and six on defense) from a season ago. Among the returnees are junior tailback Vinson Hendrix (Rochester, NY/East), senior wide receiver Trevor Bork (Fishers, NY/Caledonia-Mumford).Hendrix, who set a new school single-season rushing record with 1,406 yards in 2007, was recently named a preseason First Team All-American by D3football.com. Bork is a four-year starting wideout who led the team in receptions (55) and TD catches (nine) last year. Nitsche is a three-time conference all-star who had 64 tackles and a team-high three interceptions last year, while Pieri, a two-time Empire 8 all-star, led the team with 88 tackles and nine sacks while forcing four fumbles.Alfred opens its 2008 season Saturday, Sept. 6, at 1 p.m. at home against Ursinus.