

Six Saxons earn Empire 8 all-conference softball honors

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Hedrick

Fenton

ALFRED, NY Six members of the Alfred University softball team have been named Empire 8 Conference all-stars, the conference announced today. Those honored include sophomore utility player Nicole Hedrick (Albany, NY/Catholic Central) and freshman catcher Emily Fenton (Thorofare, NJ/West Deptford), who were named Player of the Year and Rookie of the Year, respectively. Gino Olivieri was named the conference's Coach of the Year after guiding AU to a share of the Empire 8 regular season title and the school's first-ever berth in the NCAA Division III championship tournament. Hedrick was named Player of the Year and a First Team selection as a utility player. Fenton, in addition to being named the conference's top rookie, was also a Second Team pick at catcher. Sophomore outfielder Angela Netta (Rahway, NJ/Mother Seton Regional) and junior pitcher Chelsey Cary (Corfu, NY/Pembroke) were also named First Team all-stars, while junior first baseman Ashley Passaro (Long Beach, NY/Long Beach) and sophomore third baseman Molly Shepherd (Camillus, NY/West Genesee) received honorable mention. Only statistics from Empire 8 regular season games were used for all-conference consideration. All-stars were chosen in a vote by conference coaches. Hedrick was named a First Team all-star for a second straight year. Heading into Thursday's first-round action at the NCAA regional in Ithaca, she leads the Saxons in batting (.445), runs (43), hits (61), homeruns (nine), slugging (.759) and stolen bases (22, in 22 attempts). Her hits, runs and stolen base totals are new school single-season records. As a pitcher, she has a 17-3 record with a 1.47 ERA and 104 strikeouts. In 14 games in Empire 8 play, she hit .367 with 11 runs, three homeruns, 13 RBIs and was 6-1 with a 1.86 ERA. Fenton is batting .373 with 22 runs scored and 28 RBIs and has hit four homeruns and a school-record 14 doubles. On defense, she posted a .992 fielding percentage, threw out 12 of 26 runners attempting to steal, and picked off five runners. In 14 Empire 8 regular season games she batted .463 with 14 runs batted in. Netta is a first-time conference all-star. In her first season as a starter for the Saxons, she is batting .415 with 44 hits (both second on the team) to go with 25 runs, three homeruns, eight stolen bases, and 20 RBIs. She tallied a perfect 1.000 fielding percentage and had three outfield assists. Cary is a second-time Empire 8 all-star, having earned Second Team honors as a sophomore in 2009. She will enter NCAA regional play with a 17-3 record and 1.12 ERA to go with a school single-season record 130 strikeouts. Her six shutouts this year tie a school record and gave her 11 for her career, also school record. Her 12 strikeouts in a win over D'Youville this year tied a school single-game record. In Empire 8 play, she was 7-0 with a 0.56 ERA. Passaro is a second-time Empire 8 all-star, having earned First Team honors as a freshman in 2008. She is currently fourth on the team in batting (.345) and leads the team in RBIs with 32. She has 38 hits (seven doubles, three homeruns) and has scored 13 runs. Shepherd earned Second Team honors a season after receiving honorable mention. She is hitting .331 with 43 hits (13 doubles) and 22 RBIs. Her 34 runs scored rank second on the team and she has seven stolen bases in eight attempts. Olivieri, Alfred's all-time leader in coaching wins, earned Empire 8 Coach of the Year honors for the second time in his five-year tenure at the Saxons' helm (the other time was in 2008). This year he has guided the team to a 34-6 record the 34 wins broke the school record of 27 set by last year's team and a 13-1 mark in Empire 8 regular season play, tied with Ithaca. This year's team also had a school-record winning streak of 21 games, which was snapped in last weekend's loss to Ithaca in the title game of the Empire 8 Conference championship tournament. AU was ranked 25th in last week's NFCA Division III Top-25 poll, the first time ever the Saxons have been ranked nationally. Each season, the Empire 8 honors students-athletes from each conference school, who play on conference-sponsored teams, with

Sportsperson of the Year awards. Honorees, chosen by their coaches, exhibited outstanding sportsmanship in keeping with the conference's mission of "competing with honor and integrity." Freshman outfielder Laura Haas (Buffalo, NY/Immaculata Academy) is Alfred's honoree from the softball team. Alfred, coming off its runner-up finish at the Empire 8 tournament, is the fourth seed at the eight-team NCAA regional at Ithaca College, which runs from Thursday, May 13, to Monday, May 17. AU opens regional play Thursday at noon against fifth-seeded King's College.