

AU women's volleyball team hopes new coach will bring them success

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ALFRED The 2002 Alfred University women's volleyball team is ready to come together and improve on last year's 10-20 season. Guiding the program is first-year head coach Stacey Brzezinski, who comes to Alfred after a successful coaching career at Corning East High School. She is pleased with what she saw in the team during preseason. "I'm very optimistic walking onto a team that has the work ethic my girls possess," Brzezinski said. "After hours of practice many girls are willing to stay after and put extra time in. That kind of determination will help take these girls to the next level." The Lady Saxons lost seven key players to graduation last year, but despite that there are many key players returning for the 2002 season. Senior setter and captain Erin Murray will be looked upon to call the shots for the AU offense. "Erin is a very intelligent player who is constantly pushing for her best," Brzezinski stated. "I need my setter to be confident on the court and Erin can do just that." Senior setter and right side hitter Jill Culeton and senior outside Kathleen Machnik will also be expected to take on more of a leadership role for this upcoming season. "Jill is definitely a leader on and off the court who will push herself as well as her teammates," said Brzezinski. "Kathleen also has potential to be a powerful outside." Junior middle hitter Sara Beatty will be the powerhouse of the Saxons' attack. Beatty led last year's team in kills (229) and blocks (77) and will be counted on even more this season. Also returning to the lineup as juniors will be defensive specialist and captain Amanda Vizcarra and junior defensive specialist Emily Mishalanie. "Both Amanda and Emily are very talented and determined defenders," Brzezinski said. Mishalanie played during the 2000 season and returns after a year away from the program. Brzezinski will be looking for sophomore outside hitter K.C. Lee, to work her way into a starting position. "K.C. gives 100% all of the time and is a natural athlete. Her quickness will add a lot to the team," Brzezinski commented. Sophomore middle attack, Lauren Fintak will also be expected to step her play up a notch and contribute more at the net. Freshmen Kellie Lobczowski, Catherine Rieck, and Kathryn Goetschius will also be joining the team and are 'all powerful outside hitters who have the potential to be serious offensive threats to our opponents," Brzezinski said. Junior middle hitter Katie Ratchuk along with freshmen outside hitter Elizabeth Sanger and defensive specialist Geraldine Genzardi are solid additions to the team. "Sanger has a good sense of the court and is an all-around athlete who will be fighting for a starting position this year," Brzezinski added. Brzezinski is optimistic the Lady Saxons will improve steadily throughout the year. "We have a young team this year with many new faces, but our determination and ability will make up for the experience we are lacking," Brzezinski exclaimed.