

AU's Blair sets school record, earns NCAA qualifying time at state swimming championships

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SYRACUSE, NY -- Alfred University sophomore Sarah Blair (Auburn, NY/Auburn) earned an NCAA "B" cut and set a new school record in the 50-yard freestyle during the first day of action at the New York State Women's Collegiate Athletic Association championship meet at Nottingham High School in Syracuse. Blair's time of 24.24 seconds in the lead-off leg of the 200-yard freestyle relay broke the AU school record for the 50 free. The time also met NCAA "B" cut provisional standards, and could qualify her to compete in the NCAA Division III championships March 11-14 in Minneapolis, MN. She later placed fourth in the 50-yard free with a time of 24.30 seconds, which also met NCAA "B" qualifying standards. The state championships, which also serve as the Empire 8 Conference championship meet, are being held Thursday through Saturday (Feb. 19-21) in Syracuse. After six events Thursday, AU stands tied with Vassar for 10th place out of 16 teams competing. Ithaca is in first, followed by Stevens (second) and Union (third). Also Thursday, AU sophomore Elyse Caldwell (Endwell, NY/Maine-Endwell) placed fourth in 1-meter diving (332.75 points). Alfred competed in two relays Thursday evening. The team of Blair, junior Meghan Jones (Beaver Falls, NY/Beaver River), sophomore Calista Merritt (Conesus, NY/Livonia) and senior Jessie Caccamo (Ballston Lake, NY/Shenendehowa) took 14th in the 200-yard freestyle relay (1:46.36). Freshman Donna Hoops (Geneseo, NY/Geneseo), senior Amy Buisman (Rochester, NY/Penfield), Caccamo and Blair placed 13th in the 400-yard medley (4:23.42). The championship meet continues Friday, with preliminaries in the afternoon and finals in the evening.