

## AU volleyball team a mix of veterans, newcomers

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ALFRED, NY Former AU standout Catherine Rieck takes over as coach of the Alfred University volleyball team this season. She hopes six returnees and a group of four new recruits will be able to improve on last year's 2-25 record. AU was hurt by inexperience and injuries a season ago. This year's team has four of six starters back and is healthy and enthusiastic, giving Rieck reason for optimism. "The team attitude is much better. They all want to be here and are working very hard," she said. "They really want to win and are pushing each other to do well." The team will be led by senior captain Stephanie Troiano (Clifton Park, NY/Shenendehowa) and a trio of juniors Emily Steen (South Pasadena, CA/Purnell), Danielle Van Cott (Rochester, NY/Webster Schroeder), and Janelle Brandow (Dolgeville, NY/Dolgeville) who have each seen extensive playing time throughout their careers. Troiano, an outside hitter, led the team last year in kills (134), digs (207) and aces (20) and added 13 blocks. "She's our leader and most experienced player. She's a strong outside hitter with a good serve. She's just a good all-around player," Rieck said. Steen, an outside hitter and setter, contributed 98 kills, 61 assists and 152 digs. Van Cott, a right side hitter and setter, led the team with 151 assists and had 12 aces and 22 blocks. Brandow, an outside hitter, was limited to 20 games due to injury and contributed 19 kills and nine aces. "Emily is very athletic," Rieck said of Steen, a three-sport athlete who also plays for the AU basketball and lacrosse teams. "She has a great attitude, she's very coachable and is willing to play anywhere." "Danielle (Van Cott) will be our setter. She has a very strong serve and is one of the team's leaders," Rieck said. "Janelle (Brandow) is a strong hitter. She was hurt last year but has come back strong." Sophomore middle hitter Tara Quigley (Bluepoint, NY/Bayport-Bluepoint) is coming off a solid freshman campaign in which she had 72 kills and 24 blocks (second on the team). "Tara is our most energetic and enthusiastic player. She has a great attitude," Rieck said. Other returnees are sophomore outside hitters Karen Sill (Kendall, NY/Kendall) and Ashley Denio (St. Mary's, PA/Elk County Christian). Sill had 12 digs in 10 games last year while Denio finished the 2007 season with 32 kills and 10 aces in 48 games. "Ashley and Karen are strong servers with good work ethics," Rieck commented. Newcomers include freshmen Emily Crosby (Fairport, NY/Fairport) (outside hitter/right side hitter), Caitlin Murphy (Newfield, NY/Newfield) (setter), and sophomore Gillian Cox (Geneseo, NY/Geneseo) (libero). "(Crosby) is a very strong hitter, passer and server. She's a good all-around player. (Murphy) is a strong server and passer and (Cox) is a strong passer who is always trying to get better," Rieck said. Rieck said there are some needs for improvement if AU is to make strides this season. "We need to be better receiving serves, but we're pretty good servers ourselves," she said. "Our hitting has looked pretty strong. Our goals are to keep a positive attitude, communicate better, hustle and put forth a solid effort throughout the whole season. If we do those things, I think we'll be successful."