

AU women's lacrosse team completes rebuilding season after one-year hiatus

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ALFRED, NY The women's lacrosse team could be forgiven a little rustiness in 2007. The team's seven seniors hadn't played since the middle of the 2005 season, when the Lady Saxons, decimated by injuries, saw their final five games cancelled. First-year head coach Samantha Valder, hired in the summer of 2005 to reignite the program, brought in eight freshmen, each of whom was expected to contribute immediately. The team struggled, winning its second game before dropping nine straight to finish 1-10. The team loses half its roster to graduation, but returns a group of freshmen who were often the best players on the field. The experience they gained this year bodes well as the Lady Saxons look to move up in the ranks of the Empire 8 Conference. AU will lose seven seniors, five of whom were starters this season. They include attack Erin Brummer (Williamsville, NY/Williamsville South), who tallied three goals this year and finished her career with 12. Attack/ midfielder Molly Amrogi-Yanson (Pittsford, NY/Pittsford-Mendon) (five goals, 25 groundballs), attack Ashley Oliver (Bethel, ME/Gould Academy) (two goals), midfield/defense Jessica Dupuis (Chapel Hill, NC/Chapel Hill) (two goals; 18 groundballs), defenders Erika Richter (Floral Park, NY/Floral Park) (four groundballs) and Casey Cutting (Endicott, NY/Union-Endicott) (26 groundballs, eight caused turnovers), and midfielder Maeghan MacDonald (Alexandria, VA/Mt. Vernon) will be missed. A host of talented freshmen returns, including the team's top four scorers and its lone Empire 8 all-star. Midfielder Kate Simonds (Park City, UT/Park City) led the team with 15 points on a team-high 13 goals and two assists to go with 30 groundballs and a team-high 19 draw controls; attack Emily Tobin (Penfield, NY/Penfield) had 12 points on eight goals and a team-leading four assists; defender Bailey Hebert (Heuvelton, NY/Heuvelton) had eight goals; and midfielder Abbey Schaffnit (Bemus Point, NY/Maple Grove) tallied five goals and three assists, along with 15 groundballs. Midfielder Lisa Button (Troupsburg, NY/Jasper-Troupsburg) totaled 31 groundballs and 16 caused turnovers on her way to earning all-Empire 8 honorable mention. Button and Schaffnit, members of the women's basketball team, were playing organized lacrosse for the first time and should continue to get better with experience. Other returnees include freshman midfielders Emily Steen (South Pasadena, CA/Purnell School), who led the team in groundballs (36) and caused turnovers (18), and Amanda Sullivan (Lexington, MA/Lexington) (19 groundballs); and freshman goalie Shauna Carroll (Babylon, NY/West Babylon) (13.09 goals against average, .360 save percentage). AU will look to improve greatly in all phases, and should with experience and added depth through recruiting. The Saxons were outscored 144-47 and will need to make strides in improving their attack. Still, while the young AU team appeared overmatched in some games, they were competitive in others. In addition to their lone win, a 15-3 decision over Wells in the second game of the year, Alfred dropped a pair of close decisions to Keuka (9-7 in the season opener) and Wittenberg (8-6 in the season finale).