

## AU vs. Utica Game Notes

11/06/13

### Alfred University Saxons vs. Utica College Pioneers

Saturday, Nov. 9, 1 p.m.

Yunevich Stadium, Alfred, NY

**Last meeting:** 2012, Utica win, 31-7, at Utica

**Last week:** AU: W, 21-21, vs. Salisbury; Utica, L, 28-27, at St. John Fisher

**Saxon Offense:** 30.6 points per game

**Saxon Defense:** 21 points per game

**Pioneer Offense:** 24.9 points per game

**Pioneer Defense:** 27.6 points per game

**Players to watch:** AU — Tyler Johnson, FR, QB; Austin Dwyer, SR, TB; Josh Phillips, SR, WR; Jonathan Ruffin, SR, WR; Michael Perkins, JR, FS; Seiji Hinton, SR, DB; Justin Liberta, JR, OLB; Peter Diak, SO, OLB; Justin Collen, SR, DE.

**Utica** — Connor Butkiewicz, JR, QB; Anthony Acevedo, JR, WR; Jamie Murphy, SR, WR; Jake Larson, SR, RB; Sean Jones, SR, WR; Joe Giametta, SR, OLB; Ryan Hansen, SR, OLB; James Lenahan, JR, FS; Rob Alexander, JR, CB.

**Key matchups:** Alfred pass defense against a Utica offense that relies heavily on its passing game. Utica produces 361 yard of offense per game, and more than two thirds (247 yards) comes through the air. The Saxons will look to pressure Utica QB **Connor Butkiewicz** (15 interceptions) into some mistakes, and continue a trend over the last three games in which AU has forced 11 turnovers (five interceptions, six fumbles). Last week, AU faced a Salisbury team that had a heavily run-oriented offense and held the Sea Gulls to 100 yards under their per-game rush average; the Saxons hope to do the same to Utica's passing attack this weekend. Alfred's defensive backfield which has 15 interceptions, including a team-high three by free safety **Michael Perkins** -- will be tested by a Pioneer offense that likes to spread the field with three wideouts...Alfred's offense, which has achieved success running and passing the ball during its three-game winning streak, against a Utica defense that has allowed 350 yards per game over its last three games, all losses. For the season, AU averages 380 yards per game (219 passing, 161 rushing), but over the last three games, the Saxons have averaged 414 yards (253 passing, 161 rushing). Against a Salisbury team that had one of the top rushing defenses in the nation (79 yards per game) coming into last weekend's game, the Saxons ran for 165, with leading rusher, senior tailback **Austin Dwyer**, gaining 85. AU will look to strike a balanced attack against a Utica defense that allows 182 yards per contest both passing and rushing. Just as AU hopes to force Utica into mistakes, the Saxons hope to continue a trend that has seen them turn the ball over just once over the last three games.

**Game Notes:** Today is the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting between Alfred University and Utica College, with Alfred holding an 11-1 edge in the all-time series. The last time these two teams met, in Utica in 2012, Utica won 31-7. The last time the teams met in Alfred, AU prevailed, 41-13.

**About the Pioneers:** Utica is 3-5 overall and 1-4 in the Empire 8 after last weekend's 28-27 conference setback at St. John Fisher, the Pioneers' third straight loss.

Utica averages 361 yards of offense per game, with 247 yards coming through the air. Junior QB **Connor Butkiewicz** has completed 203 of 323 passes for 1,973 yards with 12 TDs and 15 interceptions. Junior wide receiver **Anthony Acevedo** has 66 catches for 912 yards and six TDs and senior wideout **Jamie Murphy** has 48 receptions for 377 yards and two scores.

Senior running back **Jake Larson** leads the team in rushing with 660 yards, with 11 touchdowns. Freshman **Ryan Burnett** has 276 yards rushing with a pair of touchdowns.

The Pioneer defense allows 364 yards per contest (182 passing, 182 rushing). Senior outside linebacker **Joe Giametta** has a team-high 85 tackles (two for loss, 2 1/2 sacks) with three fumble recoveries. Senior outside linebacker **Ryan Hansen** has 71 tackles (10 for loss, two sacks); Junior free safety **James Lenahan** has five interceptions and five pass breakups; and junior cornerback **Rob Alexander** has 46 tackles, an interception and a forced fumble.

Freshman **Jarred Beniquez** averages 22.3 yards on kick returns and 6.2 yards on punt returns. Sophomore kicker **Tom Woodburn** has made five of eight field goals and 16 of 22 PATs, while junior **Dakota Peel** averages 39.9 yards per punt.

**About the Saxons:** AU is 6-2 overall and 4-1 in the Empire 8 after last week's 31-21 win at home against then-No. 23 Salisbury.

The Saxons possess a balanced offense that produces 380 yards per contest, with 219 coming via the pass and 161 coming on the ground.

Alfred got touchdown passes from three players in the win against Salisbury: one from freshman quarterback **Tyler Johnson** and one each from senior wideouts **Jonathan Ruffin** and **David Lee Tack**. Johnson, the Saxons' starting quarterback since Week 4, has completed 106 of 178 passes for 1,242 yards with 10 touchdowns and six interceptions. His leading receiver has been senior wideout **Josh Phillips**, who has 39 catches for 610 yards and six touchdowns. Ruffin has 22 catches for 418 yards and two TDs and Tack has 17 receptions for 201 yards and a score. Senior tailback **Austin Dwyer** leads the team in rushing with 478 yards and 10 touchdowns and has over 3,000 yards rushing for his career. Johnson is second on the team in rushing with 313 yards (three TDs) and senior tailback **Tyler DeRosa** has 255 yards rushing with one TD.

The Saxon defense allows 330 yards per game (186 passing, 144 rushing). AU was solid against Salisbury, holding the Sea Gulls to nearly 100 yards below their per-game rushing average and forcing three turnovers. Sophomore middle linebacker **Corry Wallace** has a team-high 82 tackles (4 1/2 for loss) with two INTs.

Sophomore linebacker **Peter Diak** has 45 tackles, (three for loss, two sacks), a fumble recovery and a forced fumble. Junior linebacker **Justin Liberta** has a team-high seven tackles for loss; junior free safety Mike Perkins leads in interceptions with three; senior safety **Seiji Hinton** has 41 tackles, two interceptions and two forced fumbles; senior end **Justin Collen** has a team-best six sacks; and freshman nose guard **Zack Bacon** has returned an interception and fumble for touchdowns.

Sophomore corner **Calvin Bain** averages 22.2 yards on kick returns and Ruffin 5.9 yards on punt returns. Freshman

**Thomas Gioia** has made five of seven field goal tries and 22 of 29 extra point attempts. Freshman **Ryan McDonnell** averages 37.3 yards per punt.