

Saxon softball team ranked 18th in the nation

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The Alfred University softball team continues its ascent in the national rankings, moving up four spots to 18th in the latest National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) weekly [Division III poll](#).

The Saxons (31-3), winners of seven straight and 25 of their last 26 games, received 46 votes to move up from the 22nd position in last week's NFCA poll. It marks the third straight week AU has moved to its highest spot ever in the national poll; the Saxons' ranked 23rd in the poll for the week of April 13. The team's previous high before this season was 25th in 2010, the year AU made its first ever appearance in the NCAA Division III championship tournament.

The Saxons swept visiting Houghton on Monday to finish the regular season with a 13-1 Empire 8 Conference record, which earned them the top seed in the four-team league championship tournament, which AU hosts this weekend.

Alfred is represented well in the national statistical listings for Division III, both for team and individual rankings. As a team, the Saxons rank fourth in slugging percentage (.608), fifth in batting average (.391), sixth in homeruns per game (1.09); sixth in win-loss percentage (.912), seventh in scoring (8.29 runs per game) and ninth in on-base percentage (.447).

Saxon sophomore third baseman [Liz Thompson](#) (Horseheads, NY/Horseheads), senior pitcher-first baseman [Alison Wickwire](#) (Towanda, PA/Towanda) and sophomore first baseman [Sophia Chiavatti](#) (Tustin, CA/Foothill) all rank in the top 10 in the nation in several statistical categories.

Wickwire is tied for first in homeruns per game (1.44) and is third in total homeruns (14). She is fourth in slugging (.988) and eighth in RBI per game (1.44). Thompson is first in slugging (1.045) and third in runs per game (1.61). She is fifth in homeruns per game (0.39) and seventh in total homeruns (12); tied for sixth in both triples (8) and triples per game (0.26); and eighth in batting average (.527). Chiavatti (19 doubles in 26 games) leads the nation in doubles per game (0.73).

AU opens Empire 8 championship tournament play at noon Friday against fourth-seeded St. John Fisher. The double-elimination tournament opens at 10 a.m. Friday, with second-seeded Ithaca taking on third-seeded Stevens. The winner of the tournament, which is scheduled to run through Saturday, earns the Empire 8's automatic bid to the NCAA Division III playoffs.