

AU football team moves up in national and state rankings, awaits Hartwick

10/01/07

ALFRED, NY The Alfred University football team is ranked 20th in this week's D3football.com national ranking of Division III teams. AU (4-0, 2-0 Empire 8), which had been ranked 22nd last week, moved up in the polls after Saturday's 45-21 victory at Norwich University. The Saxons are also ranked first in this week's New York State Division III rankings, the highest position they've ever held in the NYS poll. Alfred had been ranked second in last week's NYS poll. AU faces Empire 8 Conference rival Hartwick College this Saturday, Oct. 6, at 1 p.m. in Alfred's annual Homecoming game. Hartwick stunned fifth-ranked St. John Fisher on Saturday to set up this weekend's showdown at Merrill Field. With and with a 2-0 conference record, the Hawks (3-1 overall) sit atop the Empire 8 standings with Alfred. The Saxons possess one of the most potent offenses in the country, averaging 512.5 yards per game (282.5 passing, 230 rushing) while scoring 41.3 points per contest. Senior quarterback Paul Keeley (Caledonia, NY/Caledonia-Mumford) is coming off a game in which he completed 23 of 28 passes (a new school record for single-game pass completion percentage, 82.1 percent) for 290 yards and three touchdowns. In that game, Keeley established a new AU career record for passing yardage, with 5,722. Sophomore tailback Vinson Hendrix (Rochester, NY/East) is one of the top rushers in Division III, averaging 140.8 yards per game on the ground to go with six touchdowns. Junior wide receiver Trevor Bork (Fishers, NY/Victor) and senior wideout Saucobie Riley (Rochester, NY/Marshall) average 91 and 80 yards receiving per game, respectfully, and have each caught four scoring passes. Senior placekicker Chris Reynolds (Pittsford, NY/Pittsford-Sutherland) has made three of five field goal attempts and all 22 of his extra point tries. Hartwick is solid on offense as well, particularly in its passing game, which averages 289.5 yards per contest. Junior quarterback Jason Boltus has thrown for 1,144 yards, nine TDs and only one interception. Junior wide receiver Jack Phelan and senior tailback Lindy Crea each average nearly 100 receiving yards per game. The Alfred defense allows 310 yards of offense per game (184.8 passing, 125.2 running) while holding opponents to only 13.5 points per game. Sophomore linebacker Chad Pieri (LeRoy, NY/Caledonia-Mumford) has a team-leading 28 tackles (19 solo), three sacks, two forced fumbles, and an interception, while junior cornerback Ron Smith (Lyons, NY/Lyons) has 21 tackles and a team-high two interceptions. Hartwick allows more than 400 yards of offense per game (233 rushing, 169 passing) and for the year has been outscored 133-119. Boltus threw for 336 yards against Fisher last weekend, while the Hawks were held to 33 yards on the ground. Alfred leads the all-time series against Hartwick, 16-6-1. The Saxons have won the last four meetings, including last year's 41-21 decision in Oneonta. The last time these two teams met at Merrill Field, in 2005, The Saxons won, 49-19.