

## AU men's soccer team loaded with depth

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ALFRED, NY Depth and a wealth of returnees mark the 2010 version of the Alfred University men's soccer team, which is poised to improve on a 2009 season marked by inconsistent play from a young Saxon squad. A season older, the 2010 team should benefit from the continuity that comes from returning 10 of 11 starters and 14 of 18 letterwinners. And while the Saxons scored only 14 times in 16 games last year finishing 5-10-1 (0-6-1 Empire 8) nearly all the team's goal-scoring returns intact, as does most from a solid defense that allowed only 27 goals all year. Head coach Scott Miller, who recently returned with his team from a week-long offseason trip to England, is optimistic about his team's chances this year. He points specifically to a solid mix of experience and veteran leadership and young talent. "It's nice to have so many quality returning players. The program really builds from the leadership they bring. Adding a great group of incoming players just adds to that momentum. The team just came off a fantastic trip to England which fueled our passion for the game. We are going to enjoy success this season." The AU offensive attack, looking to improve on last year's scoring output (.85 goals per game), is led by sophomore forward Frankie Mannino (Elmira, NY/Elmira Free Academy) and sophomore midfielder Tony Gai (Burke, VA/Lake Braddock). Mannino netted a team-leading eight goals as a freshman in 2009 en route to being named an Empire 8 Conference Second Team All-Star. Gai had seven points on a goal and team-best three assists. In addition to Mannino, juniors Eric Lavelle (Eden, NY/Eden) and Justin Shardlow (Alfred Station, NY/Alfred-Almond) and sophomore Rigel Johnson (Little Valley, NY/Cattaraugus-Little Valley) return at forward. Each saw meaningful minutes last season, with Johnson tallying a goal and an assist. Sophomore Stefan Nonnenmann (New Providence, NJ/New Providence) also returns at forward. Newcomers Ean Kelleher (Plattsburgh, NY/Plattsburgh), Jeffery Thomas (Canandaigua, NY/Canandaigua) and Chun Hei Yip (Hong Kong, China) will add depth to the forward position and also compete for time at midfield. The Saxon midfield is experienced, with four returning letterwinners (three starters). Senior captain Kevin Morgan (Budd Lake, NJ/Mt. Olive) will anchor the midfield. A four-year starter, Morgan tallied two assists in 2009 and will be looked upon to control the midfield and help initiate the Saxons' attack. Senior Mark Nesbitt (Nunda, NY/Keshequa) (one goal) and sophomore Sam Miller (Kinsman, OH/Badger) are also returning starters at midfield, although Miller could see time on defense as well. Senior Neill Bower (Trumansburg, NY/C.O. Dickerson) adds depth to the midfield. The AU defense returns three of four starters from a season ago: juniors Cory Hill (Elmira, NY/Elmira Free Academy) (one assist), juniors Aileen Bennett (Bronx, NY/Harry S. Truman) and Cory Hall (North Tonawanda, NY/North Tonawanda). Other returnees to a defense that helped hold opponents to 1.65 goals per contest include senior Nick Schneider (Liverpool, NY/Liverpool) and juniors James Chrabaszcz (Elmira, NY/Elmira Free Academy) and Cole Boje (Warren, PA/Warren). New players who will compete for time on defense include freshmen Kieran Bourgeois (Goshen, NY/Northampton), Uriah Kashman-Myrow (Warwick, NY/Warwick Valley) and Zachary Kranefield (Millville, NY/Millville). Kranefield could also see time at midfield. The backbone of the Saxon defense will be junior goalkeeper Elliot Thorpe (Highlands Ranch, CO/Thunder Ridge). A starter since his freshman year, Thorpe posted a 5-9-1 record in 2009 with four shutouts, a .747 save percentage and 1.64 goals against average. Newcomers vying for time in net include freshmen Jacob Bird (Auburn, NY/Skaneateles) and Samuel Guy (Binghamton, NY/Binghamton). Alfred opens its 2010 season on Wednesday, Sept. 4, at 7 p.m. at home against Hobart.