

## **AU softball team ranked third in Empire 8 Conference preseason poll**

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ALFRED, NY The Alfred University softball team is ranked third in the Empire 8 Conference coaches' poll, released this week. AU, which finished fifth in the conference last year, narrowly missing out on a berth in the four-team conference championship tournament. Despite fielding a starting lineup that included eight freshmen, last year's squad won a school single-record 23 games and ended a 23-16 campaign with a loss in the title game of the ECAC Upstate Championship tournament. AU returns nine of 10 starters and has added several solid freshmen to the team. The Lady Saxons are ranked behind number one Ithaca, the defending conference champion, and number two St. John Fisher. Utica is the coaches' choice to finish fourth, just ahead of fifth-ranked RIT and sixth-ranked Nazareth. Elmira is picked to finish seventh. Alfred begins its 2008 campaign with a 12-game trip to Fort Myers, FL, March 9-15. After returning home, the Lady Saxons will play a doubleheader at Pitt-Bradford March 25 at 3 p.m. before opening conference play April 2 with a 3 p.m. doubleheader at Elmira. Alfred plays its home opener April 6, with a 1 p.m. doubleheader against Ithaca.