

## **Deep AU volleyball team looks to make strides in 2007**

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ALFRED, NY If the Alfred University volleyball team is to improve on last year's record, it will do so without three of its best players from a season ago. Fortunately, a foundation of solid returnees, along with a host of talented newcomers, give the Lady Saxons improved depth and optimism for 2007. A young Alfred team struggled to a 4-20 mark in 2006 (1-6 in Empire 8 Conference play). While Alfred will miss the contributions of Sarah Berry, Meg Barry and Shannon Mather, the Lady Saxons return four players from a year ago junior Katie Lane (Edison, NJ/John P. Stevens) and sophomores Danielle Van Cott (Rochester, NY/Webster Schroeder), Janelle Brandow (Dolgeville, NY/Dolgeville) and Kailey Vandeyar (Clinton Corners, NY/FDR). Lane, a right side hitter, had 68 kills and 25 blocks in 2006 (tops among returnees). Brandow, an outside hitter, had 85 kills (tops among returnees); and Van Cott, a setter in 2006 who will play right side hitter, had a team-leading 198 assists. Lane, a captain, "is a leader on and off the court," said fourth-year head coach Kathy Dyring. "She's physically stronger than last year and I anticipate good blocking and attacking numbers from her." Brandow "is a strong returner who will be a key attacker for us," Dyring said. Van Cott "has show dramatic improvement since her freshman year. She is solid in all areas." Vandeyar will see time as a right side hitter and looks to build on her freshman year, when she joined the team mid-season and finished with seven kills and five blocks in 16 games. The Lady Saxon roster is bolstered by the return of senior outside hitter and captain Stephanie Troiano (Clifton Park, NY/Shenendehowa). A letterwinner in 2004 and 2005, she did not play last fall. In her first two seasons, she had a combined 268 kills, 347 digs, 45 service aces and 31 blocks. "She gets the job done," Dyring said of Troiano. "She's a strong hitter who sees the court well." A deep group of new players, including eight freshmen, join the AU roster, giving the Lady Saxons the most depth they've had in years. Newcomers include sophomore Emily Steen (Bethlehem, PA/Purnell School) and freshmen Franchesca Arroyo (Queens, NY/Info Tech), Lauren Hartnett (Queens, NY/St. Saviour), Tara Quigley (Bluepoint, NY/Bayport-Bluepoint), Karen Sill (Kendall, NY/Kendall), Erica Huyck (Forestville, NY/Forestville), Ashley Denio (St. Marys, PA/Elk County Catholic), Brittany Caldwell (Kansas City, MO/Lincoln Prep) and Liz Yerico (Forestville, NY/Forestville). Steen, a backup guard-forward on the AU women's basketball team last year, will step into a prominent role as a middle hitter this fall. "She's a natural athlete who will start for us in the middle. She's a strong hitter and defender who brings a lot of intensity to the team," Dyring said of Steen. Yerico has "great communication skills to go with quick hands and feet," which will serve her well in her role as starting setter, Dyring commented. Quigley, who is expected to see significant time in the middle, "is intense and physical and a great communicator on the court." Sill and Arroyo provide depth at outside hitter. Dyring said Sill will be key as a strong side defender and Arroyo continues to improve as she works her way into the rotation. Denio, a right side hitter, is a strong hitter with one of the best serves on the squad. "She will be a big part of the team," Dyring commented. Hartnett, Huyck and Caldwell will see time at the libero position, with Huyck having earned a starting role. "She's a quick, athletic defender," Dyring said of Huyck. Alfred is in action next on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 7 and 8, at the Elmira College Tournament. On Friday, AU plays Allegheny College at 4:30 p.m. and York College at 8:30 p.m. Alfred's Saturday matches are against Elmira at 10 a.m. and Manhattanville at 2 p.m. All matches will be played at Horseheads (NY) High School.