

## Alfred University football camp draws 267 high school players

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ALFRED The Alfred University Football Camp, held July 16-20, drew 267 players from seven high schools. The annual camp, in its ninth year under head AU head football coach Dave Murray, has grown steadily over the years and has consistently drawn praise from participating high school coaches. Players from Raritan, NJ (51 campers), Victor (Rochester area, 44 campers), Central Square (Syracuse area, 45 campers), Corning East (19 campers) and Jamestown-area schools Cassadaga Valley (38 campers), Maple Grove (37 campers) and Frewsburg (33 campers) attended the five-day camp. Attendance this year was slightly less than the 300 who attended last year, when an eighth school, Monmouth ((NJ) High School, participated. Coaches attending this year's camp agreed there are many benefits to their players and the coaching staffs as they prepare for the upcoming seasons. "This gives us a great start to our season. We get a lot of our offense and defense installed here so when we get back home, we just need to brush up on things," commented Curt Fischer, Maple Grove head coach, who has been bringing his teams to the AU camp for eight summers. "The most important thing is, it's a team-building experience. The kids really get to know each other and the coaches." Bob Generelli, head coach at Raritan, has brought his teams to Alfred for camp seven years. He agreed with Fischer's assessment of the importance of developing team chemistry. "It's only us up here. We lean on each other and the older players assert themselves as leaders. From a team unity standpoint, the time we spend here is invaluable." Terry Gray, head coach at Frewsburg, agreed. "The team-bonding and team-building is huge. You really develop a rapport with the kids and the kids learn to become a team," said Gray, who has been bringing his players to the AU camp the last three years. "This really helps to create team unity," said Jim Haugh, Victor head coach. "Our district is so spread out geographically. This is a great opportunity for the players to get to know each other. And there are a lot of distractions when you're working out back home. This gets them away and allows them to really concentrate on football." Coaches also cited the benefit of being able to formulate their game plans well in advance of when regular preseason camp starts at their respective schools, usually around mid-August. With the team practicing and running drills two and three times a day at AU, coaches are free to spend more time in their own preseasons refining schemes and game plans they developed at Alfred. "What we learn here, we take home and work out the kinks. It just helps us become better prepared," commented Bert Conklin, Central Square head coach. Randy Holden, Corning East head coach, first brought his players to the Alfred camp last summer. He returned because of the effectiveness of participating as a team, rather than having players attend different camps to hone their individual skills. "Unlike individual camps, we're in an environment segregated by team," Holden said. "We can develop our team chemistry in July, rather than August or September. We get to see a lot of different offenses and defenses (while scrimmaging other teams at the camp) and it helps when our staff starts to develop our schemes. It gives us a head start on our competition." "We're ready to play football when we break camp. This saves us a tremendous amount of teaching when we're in camp back home," added Mark Petersen, Cassadaga Valley head coach. "By coming here and working out three times a day, we cut down on the practice time back home." Coaches agreed that the quality of coaching at the camp whether it be from the high schools in attendance or the AU coaching staff as well as the facilities, make the camp attractive. "I know I learn a lot just by talking to the other coaches," Petersen commented. "We've turned our program around since we started coming here." "There are great coaches here. You pick something up every day," said Fisher. "As coaches, we have a chance to see how other teams do things," added Generelli. "There are a lot of good coaches here so there is an exchange of ideas. The coaching staff here is a class operation, from top to bottom. It's hard not to come back." Murray attributes the camp's success to a number of factors. Because it is a team-oriented camp, it offers numerous benefits to participating high school coaches and players, most notably the chance to be together in an instructional atmosphere away from home. "The (participating) high schools see Alfred University as a great place to go for a summer football camp," Murray said. "It's a huge benefit for the teams to have their programs at camp, learning as a team and competing against other schools. It's a very productive week because it's like starting preseason early." "There is great camaraderie between the players and the coaches," Murray continued. "The coaches learn a lot from each other, and the players from different schools form friendships. Murray added that over the last nine years the camp has helped the AU programs efforts to attract players to the University. "The camp has become a great recruiting tool," he said. "We're very fortunate in that the high schools have found (the camp) to be very productive. They like our facilities, the AU staff and the way the camp is run."