

AU football team looks to get back on winning track against Utica

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ALFRED, NY The Alfred University football team will try to get its first Empire 8 conference win of the 2002 season when the Saxons entertain Utica College at 1 p.m. Saturday at Merrill Field. Alfred (2-4, 0-3 Empire 8) looks to bounce back from last weekend's 38-27 loss at Hartwick, while Utica (1-4, 0-1 Empire 8) will try for its second win of the season. The Pioneers defeated Mount Ida, 22-6, last Saturday for the first win ever in the school's two-year-old varsity football program. Utica comes into Saturday's game averaging 209 yards of offense per game (122 rushing; 87 passing) through five contests. Aaron Rogers and Emilio Gigliotti have shared most of the playing time at quarterback, with each throwing for about 200 yards. Wide receiver Matt Connors and tailback Joe Dattellas are the top receivers, with 13 and 12 catches, respectively. Connors has 241 receiving yards and has caught his team's only touchdown pass. Utica has given up 15 sacks through five contests and their quarterbacks have thrown seven interceptions. Dattellas is also the Pioneers' leading rusher, with 322 yards on 88 carries (61 yards per game) and two TDs. Fullback Paul Hart has run for 143 yards and a pair of scores. Alfred will look for its defense to get back on track after allowing 520 yards in offense to Hartwick. AU is allowing 374 yards of offense per game (152 rushing; 222 passing). The Saxon defense is paced by senior linebackers Will Till (Forestville/Forestville) and Colin Murphy (Manchester, NH/Central), with 56 and 53 tackles, respectively. Murphy has a team-high three sacks. Sophomore Joe Pereira (Rochester/Greece Athena), moved from strong safety to linebacker two weeks ago, has 38 tackles, while sophomore tackle Louie Pereira (Rochester/Greece Athena) has a team-high seven tackles for loss. Senior cornerback Gabe Bouthillier (Bridgeport/Cicero-North Syracuse) has both Alfred interceptions. The AU offense will again take the field without senior tailback Jesse Raynor (Weedsport/Weedsport), who has missed the last two-plus games with a toe injury. Sophomore Cory Raner (Locke/Moravia) has run for 61 yards in two games since being inserted into the starting lineup. The Saxons have been successful throwing the ball of late. Sophomore quarterback Ron Duliba (Forestville/Forestville) has passed for more than 500 yards and four touchdowns in the last two contests. In last weekend's loss at Hartwick, he was also Alfred's leading rusher with 92 yards on 14 carries. Junior wide receiver Nick Coleman (Waverly/Waverly) has a team-high 23 catches for 281 yards and a score. Fellow starting wideout Jake Sprague (Johnsonburg, PA/Johnsonburg), a sophomore, has 19 catches for 282 yards (14.8 yards per reception) and one touchdown. Freshman wide receiver Horace Betts (Lyons/Lyons) has 16 catches for 232 yards and a touchdown. The Saxons face a Utica defense is allowing an average of 326 yards of offense per game (135 rushing; 191 passing). Outside linebacker Michael Romandetti leads the team with 44 tackles, including a team-high five for loss and a sack. Middle linebacker Jason Colunio also has 44 tackles, including three for loss and a sack. Cornerback Jon Klosner has intercepted six passes in five games while chipping in with 24 tackles. As a team, the Pioneers have picked off nine passes. In the only previous meeting between Alfred and Utica, AU won, 47-22, last season at Utica.