

AU men's basketball team falls to Nazareth in Empire 8 conference opener

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PITTSFORD - The Alfred University men's basketball team came up short in a second-half comeback attempt and dropped a 83-72 decision at Nazareth College Friday night. It was the Empire 8 conference opener for both teams. AU (3-8, 0-1) led 33-31 at intermission, but Nazareth (7-2, 1-0 Empire 8) went on a 25-5 run to open the second half and pushed its lead to 20 points with 6:39 to play. Alfred went on a 19-7 run to cut the deficit to eight points with 1:20 left but could draw no closer. Senior forward Bryan Crandall (Andover/Canisteo) paced Alfred with a career-high 25 points, eight rebounds and four steals. Sophomore guards Doug Baker (Waterloo/South Seneca) and Gavin Backus (Mt. Upton/Gilbertsville-Mt. Upton) scored 15 and 13 points, respectively, while senior center Jeff Hopkins (Caledonia/York) had nine points and a game-high 13 rebounds. AU was hurt by poor shooting as the Saxons made only 38 percent of their shots, including 20 percent from three-point range. Nazareth, meanwhile, made 53 percent of its shots, including 46 percent from behind the arc. Jimmy Evans led four Nazareth players in double figures with 18 points. Dave Gary and Lawrence Maroney netted 16 and 14 points, respectively, while Fran Zablocki added 13 points and 10 rebounds. Alfred will try to halt a seven-game losing streak when the Saxons play at Empire 8 rival RIT at 4 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 11.