

Late field goal gives RPI win over Saxons

10/16/10



TROY, NY - Peter Nilson's 37-yard field goal with six seconds left in regulation gave host RPI a 27-24 victory Saturday afternoon over the previously unbeaten Alfred University football team. The loss spoiled Alfred's comeback from a 24-point first quarter deficit in which the Saxons scored 24 unanswered to tie the game late in the third. With the loss, AU ranked 19th and 21st, respectively, in the D3football.com and American Football Coaches Association national polls falls to 5-1 on the season. It looked like the host Engineers would run away with the game early, as they scored on each of their first four possessions to take a 24-0 lead with 28 seconds left in the opening stanza. A field goal and a touchdown during the outburst came after Alfred fumbles in Saxon territory. Nilson booted a 21-yard field goal to open the scoring and RPI scored on three on Mike Herman-to-Austin Caswell touchdown passes. Alfred got on the board with 59 seconds left in the second on an eight-yard run by freshman tailback Austin Dwyer (Hornell, NY/Hornell) that capped a nine-play, 67-yard drive. Dwyer, Alfred's leading runner, finished with 160 yards on 26 carries. A 33-yard field goal by Eric Rockwood (Allegany, NY/Allegany-Limestone) midway through the third made it 21-10, RPI. Two TD passes by junior quarterback Tom Secky (Bemus Point, NY/Maple Grove) to senior wideout Ryan Thon (Victor, NY/Victor) with 4:46 and eight seconds left in the third knotted the game at 24-24. Neither team mounted much of a scoring threat throughout much of the fourth. Alfred punted on each of its fourth-quarter possessions, while RPI punted once and turned the ball over on downs on its first two possessions of the final frame. But the Engineers made good on their final drive, taking over at their own 49-yard line after an AU punt with 42 seconds left. On third-and-four from the Alfred 45, Hermann found Pat McCarthy for 25 yards to the AU 20, setting up Nilson's late-game heroics. Alfred dominated statistically, tallying 21 first downs to RPI's 11; holding a 381- to 299-yard edge in total offense; and possessing the ball 33:09 to 26:51 for RPI. But turnovers hurt AU, as the hosts scored 10 points off two Alfred miscues. AU, meanwhile, failed to capitalize on two RPI turnovers. Secky completed 28 of 45 passes for 246 yards and two scores. Freshman wide receiver Josh Phillips (Syracuse, NY/West Genesee) caught nine passes for 126 yards and Thon finished with seven catches for 67 yards and two scores. Hermann passed for 182 yards and three TDs and was also RPI's leading rusher, with 51 yards on 11 carries. McCarthy (60 yards) and Steven Burpoe (74 yards) each had four receptions for RPI (3-2). Sophomore strong safety Reggie Pressley (Rochester, NY/Gates-Chili) had eight tackles and a fumble recovery and junior linebacker Nick Clark (Cainsteo, NY/Canisteo-Greenwood) had seven tackles (two for loss) to lead the AU defense. Junior cornerback Roland O'Brien (Hoosick Falls, NY/Hoosick Falls) had four tackles and an interception; junior linebacker Wes Smith (Turbotville, PA/Muncy) had six tackles and forced a fumble; and senior linebacker Chad Pieri (LeRoy, NY/Caledonia-Mumford) had five tackles (one for loss). Jeff McCormick had a game-high 18 tackles to lead RPI. Colin King (eight tackles) and Ray Pasco (seven) each had a sack. Alfred is in action next on Saturday, Oct. 23, at 1 p.m. at home against St. John Fisher.