

Saxons fall to Ithaca 42-25

11/03/07

ITHACA, NY- The Alfred University football team dropped its first Empire 8 contest of the season Saturday afternoon, falling 42-25 at Ithaca. The Bombers (7-2, 4-2 E8) racked up 517 yards of offense, with quarterback Dan Juvan throwing for 296 yards and four TDs, two to wide receiver Brian Hogan (8 catches, 147 yards). Alfred (7-2, 4-1 Empire 8) fell behind early in the contest as Juvan connected with wideout Pat Heenehan for a 68-yard touchdown pass to give Ithaca a 7-0 lead with 12:26 remaining in the first quarter. The Saxons evened things up with a little over three minutes left in the first period when senior quarterback Paul Keeley (Caledonia, NY/Caledonia-Mumford) hit junior fullback Jeff Pecoraro (Williamsville, NY/Williamsville South) with a 10-yard touchdown toss capping a nine play, 74-yard drive. In the second frame, wideout Brian Hogan grabbed a 15-yard strike from Juvan to put Ithaca back on top 14-7. After punting on their ensuing drive the Saxons took advantage of their next possession marching 53-yards in eight plays. Keeley hit senior tight end Matt Gibbins (Clifton Park, NY/Shenendehowa) with a 6-yard toss, evening things up at 14. Ithaca opened up the second half with a huge run from tailback Alex Baez, who broke free for a 71-yard touchdown run on the Bombers first play from scrimmage. Ithaca missed the extra point and led 20-14. The Saxons gave up the ball on their ensuing possession as sophomore tailback Vinson Hendrix (Rochester, NY/East) was stripped and the ball recovered by Ithaca's Phil Byers at their own 37 yard line. Five plays later Juvan hooked up with wideout Kyle Crandall on a 29 yard pass to pay dirt. Ithaca's place-kicker Dillon Dwyer rushed for the two-point conversion giving the Bombers a 28-14 lead with 10:50 remaining in the third quarter. The Saxons responded on their next possession with a 26-yard field goal from senior kicker Chris Reynolds (Pittsford, NY/Pittsford-Sutherland) cutting Ithaca's lead to 11. After Alfred's defense forced an Ithaca punt with five minutes remaining in the third quarter, Keeley and company put together an impressive 14 play 85-yard drive, which ended with a seven-yard TD grab by junior wideout Trevor Bork (Fishers, NY/Victor). Trailing 23-28, the Saxons elected to go for the two-point conversion, which was successful as Hendrix broke through the defense for the conversion cutting the Saxons deficit to three. Big plays were the story for Ithaca's offense and following Alfred's scoring drive answered with one of their own. Two plays was all it took for the Bombers to cover 60 yards. Juvan connected with Hogan for the second time for a 59-yard touchdown pass putting the Bombers up by 10 with 14 minutes to go in the fourth quarter. The Saxons next two possessions stalled and ended with a punt and a turnover on downs at their own 29-yard line. Ithaca slammed the door following the Saxon turnover as Jamie Donovan broke through the Alfred defense for a 21-yard TD run sealing the victory for the Bombers. Keeley finished the day completing 32 of 53 passes for 274 yards and three touchdowns. Bork lead AU with 11 catches wich tied a school record for the most receptions in a game, as he finished with 116-yards and a score. Hendrix was held to under a hundred yards rushing for only the second time this season as he gained 52-yards on 20 carries. Both of Ithaca's running backs broke the century mark for the day as Donovan carried the ball 26 times for 112 yards and a touchdown while Baez had six carries for 109 yards and a score. Senior defensive tackle Mike Penkin (Rochester, NY/Greece Athena) paced the defense with 10 tackles (four solo), one tackle for loss and a sack. Junior linebacker Blake Fuller (Newark, NY/Newark) and senior strong safety Dan Medlock (Garden City Park, NY/Mineola) each racked up eight tackles, with Fuller adding two tackles for loss. The Bomber defense held Alfred to 345 yards of offense on the day with Matt Scalice leading the Bombers defense with a game-high 12 tackles (5 solo). John Scanlon and Byers finished with a sack and eight and seven tackles respectively. Despite the loss the Saxons broke a 21 year old school record for the most points scored in a single season with 321. The record was previously held by the 1986 squad who put up 307 points in 10 games. The Saxons are in action next on Nov. 11, at 1 p.m. at St. John Fisher where they look to capture their first ever Empire 8 crown and earning an automatic bid to the play-offs for the first time since 1981.