

Saxons fall to Grove City, 28-21

11/01/03

ALFRED, NY -- The Alfred University football team fell to Grove City College, 28-21, Saturday afternoon in the Saxons' 2003 home finale. The loss spoiled a terrific performance by AU senior tailback Jesse Raynor (Weedsport/Weedsport), who rushed for 227 yards and a pair of touchdowns in his final home game. Raynor got things going early, running for an 84-yard touchdown on Alfred's first offensive play, just 4:39 into the game. His extra point attempt failed and the Saxons led 6-0. Grove City (4-5, 2-4 PAC) scored two unanswered touchdowns in a four-minute span of the first and second quarters, both on passes from quarterback Sam Mowrey to split end Dave DiDonato, and took a 14-6 lead into halftime. Alfred (4-5, 2-2 Empire 8) tied the game on the opening drive of the second half. With 11:36 left in the third, junior quarterback Ron Duliba (Forestville/Forestville) hit junior wide receiver Jake Sprague (Johnsonburg, PA/Johnsonburg) with a 35-yard touchdown pass. Duliba then connected with freshman wide receiver Paul Torrey (Niagara Falls/Niagara-Wheatfield) for the two-point conversion to make it 14-14. Grove City recaptured the lead with 8:27 left in the third when halfback Adam Wargo scored on a 14-yard run. Raynor's second score of the game, on a 39-yard run with 3:43 left in the third, brought the Saxons back even. Grove City scored the winning points with 7:52 left in the fourth on a one-yard plunge by fullback Brandon McGlothlin. Alfred drove deep into Grove City territory late in the game, but Duliba's fourth-down pass was intercepted in the Wolverine endzone with 45 seconds remaining.--more--Duliba finished the contest with 165 yards passing and 27 yards rushing, while Sprague had four catches for 98 yards. Senior wide receiver Nick Coleman (Waverly/Waverly) had three catches for 19 yards. Raynor's 227 yards on just 22 carries gives him 1,136 yards for the season. With one game left, he has a chance at breaking the AU single-season rushing record (1,289 yards, Rashaan Jordan, 1993). Grove City rushed for 285 yards, helping the Wolverines to 26 first downs and a huge advantage (40 minutes to 20 minutes) in time of possession. McGlothlin finished with 112 yards on the ground, while Wargo rushed for 92. DiDonato caught a game-high nine passes for 89 yards to go with his two touchdowns. Senior linebacker Erich Ely (Jordan, NY/Jordan-Elbridge) had a game-high 18 tackles to pace the AU defense. Sophomore linebacker Brenton Brady (Rochester/Marshall) had 11 tackles, including two for loss, while freshman linebacker Nick Gatto (Bemus Point/Maple Grove), freshman strong safety Aaron Meyers (Delevan/Pioneer) and senior end Jeremy Batt (Gowanda/Gowanda) each made eight stops. Junior cornerback Ray Sawner (Sylvan Beach/Oneida) picked up his fifth interception of the season. Linebacker Mike Choby led the Grove City defense with 12 tackles, including three for loss and a pair of sacks. Linebacker Mike Prioletti had six tackles and forced a fumble, while cornerback Dan Roseum and free safety Chris Schwamberger each had an interception. Both teams are in action next on Saturday, Nov. 8, at 1p.m., with Alfred playing at Thiel College and Grove City hosting King's Point.