

## AU softball team picked third in Empire 8 coaches poll

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ALFRED, NY -- The Alfred University softball team has been picked to finish third in the Empire 8 Conference, according to the recently-released conference coaches poll. The poll chooses 2009 Empire 8 champion St. John Fisher to defend its conference crown. Ithaca was picked to finish second and Alfred third. Nazareth was chosen to finish fourth, RIT fifth, Elmira sixth, Utica seventh, and Stevens in its first year offering softball as an NCAA sport eighth. Alfred set a school record with 27 wins last year and made its second straight appearance in the Empire 8 championship tournament and third consecutive trip to the ECAC Upstate tournament. Senior second baseman Karen Folts (Penn Yan, NY/Penn Yan), senior third baseman Jesika LeBarron (Campbell, NY/Corning West, sophomore pitcher/utility player Nicole Hedrick (Albany, NY/Catholic Central), and junior pitcher Chelsey Cary (Corfu, NY/Pembroke) are among those who will try to lead AU to its first-ever conference title and a berth in the NCAA playoffs. Folts shared Empire 8 Player of the Year honors last season, setting a conference record with eight home runs in 12 conference games (a school record 11 in all games). Folts hit .450 with 14 runs scored, 14 RBI, four doubles, and a 1.000 slugging percentage in conference play. LeBarron, a second-team Empire 8 selection, set school single-season records for RBI (54), hits (55), and runs (32). Hedrick was named to the all-conference first team after posting a 0.71 earned run average in conference play, while Cary finished 12-3 overall with a 2.31 earned run average. Alfred opens its season March 8, when the Saxons begin a 10-game trip in Cocoa Beach, FL.