

Alfred University men's basketball optimistic about upcoming season

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ALFRED, NY The Alfred University men's basketball team has adopted a theme for the 2004-05 season that stresses being "tougher, resilient, together." Depth and college experience give tenth-year coach Jay Murphy reason to be optimistic about the upcoming season. All five starters return from last year's team, which went 3-22 (2-12 Empire 8), but an early injury to junior starter and captain Nick Andolina (Arkport/Arkport) has caused concern for the head coach. Andolina, a 6-4 forward who averaged 6.2 points and 3.4 rebounds last season, is suffering from an injury that could keep him sidelined for the entire season. Despite the possible loss of Andolina, Murphy is encouraged by his returnees and the group of newcomers that will join the team this season. This year's squad will provide depth and give the head coach several options offensively and defensively. "Depth and athletic ability will be our biggest strengths this season," Murphy said. "We will be able to do more things defensively, using new looks in different situations." Anchoring the starters from last year will be sophomore forward and captain Dillon Stein (North Huntingdon, PA/Norwin). A strong post presence, Stein averaged a team high 13.8 points and 8.0 rebounds his freshman season on his way to earning Empire 8 Conference Rookie of the Year and second team All-Conference honors. Senior captain, guard Bruce Nober (Lake Huntington/Narrowsburg) returns after averaging 5.3 points and 1.7 rebounds in 23 games last season. Nober handles the ball well and will be expected to be a leader for the Saxons on and off the court. Juniors Chris Lemasters (Mansfield, PA/Mansfield) and Ryan Hallett (Caledonia/Caledonia-Mumford) along with sophomore Ryan Clemenson (Ovid/South Seneca), look to step up big for AU this season. Lemasters, a guard and captain for the Saxons, averaged 12.6 points (second on the team) and 3.5 rebounds last year starting in 24 of 25 games. He provides Murphy with an excellent ball handler and jump shooter. Hallett started in 21 of 24 games last season and averaged 8.7 points to go along with 3.8 rebounds. He has a great jump shot and can make things happen on offense. Clemenson averaged 5.5 points in 10 starts last season and has the ability to play any position on the floor. Murphy feels depth will be important in keeping his players healthy for the entire year. The group of newcomers arriving this season will provide that depth along with experience at the college level. "We will have more depth at the perimeter this year," Murphy said. "Guys won't have to play more than 25 minutes per game. The key will be how quick these new guys can pick up the system." Junior Quentin Bryant (Buffalo/Seneca Vocational) is expected to be a big addition to Murphy's squad. Bryant played two seasons at Alfred State where he was a National Junior College Athletic Association All-Region performer and the MVP of Western New York Athletic Association his senior year. He is a great athlete with a quick first step who can create plays and be a force defensively. Sophomore transfer Rob McCarter (Wooster, OH/Wooster) played at The College of Wooster (OH) last season. He is a smart basketball player with a "team first" mentality. Dersham, a 6-4 transfer from Keuka College, has a good outside shot and will provide a strong presence in the post. Junior Seve Micheaux (Caledonia/Caledonia-Mumford) transferred from SUNY Canton and is a great athlete who will get after people defensively. Sophomore transfer Jermel Brown (Wolcott/North Rose Wolcott) from Cayuga County Community College looks to develop into an everyday player for the Saxons. Freshman guards Garlen Patt (Nelson, PA/Elkland Area) and Tom Cluckey (East Aurora/East Aurora) will be good additions for Coach Murphy. Patt is a good all-around basketball player. He is a strong defender and will provide the little things that don't show up in the box score. Cluckey is a smart player with a good jump shot. Alfred will run a full junior varsity schedule this year, giving young players a chance to develop and prepare for the varsity level. Patt and Cluckey, along with four other freshmen could see time in both varsity and junior varsity games throughout the season. The remaining four freshmen are two sport athletes at Alfred University. Guard Adam Long (Bath/Bath) is a starter on the men's varsity soccer team. Guard Vernon Corbin (Syracuse/Henninger) and forwards Scott Forrest (Ceres/Portville) and Ronald Smith (Lyons/Lyons) are members of the Alfred University football team. Murphy hopes that his players can stay mentally tough and focused throughout the long season. It will be important that the team remain together and not get caught up in individual stats. Based on what he has observed so far, the head coach doesn't feel this should be a problem. "We have a good group of leaders and captains that will help keep the team focused," Murphy said. "The team has spent time together during the off-season and it has become a very team oriented group of guys." This attitude and the team's theme has been encouraging for returning players. The depth and experience that was added has created optimism among the team and has everyone excited about the upcoming season. "Our returning players are excited about the newcomers on the squad this year. They are ready to get up to 17 or 18 wins with a team effort and more depth," the coach said. "I am very optimistic and excited about the

year," Murphy said. "We play in a tough conference, but if we can stay healthy and stay together, we have a chance to be a third or fourth seed."