

AU comeback falls short as Saxons fall to Carnegie Mellon, 26-21

9/23/00

In a wild game at Merrill Field Saturday afternoon, Alfred University's comeback against Carnegie Mellon fell just short as the Saxons lost, 26-21. Alfred (2-2) appeared finished when an errant snap into the AU endzone with 1:44 left in the contest resulted in a safety and a 26-21 Carnegie Mellon lead. Alfred earned a second chance by recovering the ensuing onside kick at its own 41-yard line. But after driving deep into Carnegie Mellon territory, the Saxons turned the ball over on downs at the Tartan 11-yard line. Carnegie Mellon (3-1) then ran out the clock to secure the victory. Alfred opened the scoring on a 20-yard touchdown run by senior tailback George Eason (Oswego/Oswego) 58 second into the game. The four-play 58-yard drive was set up when senior free safety Nick Selig (Hamburg/Hamburg) intercepted a pass by CMU quarterback Eric Zimpfer on the game's first play. Carnegie Mellon scored 17 unanswered points in the second quarter, on a one-yard run by fullback Adam Urbanczyk, a 21-yard field goal from Mike Palmer and a 67-yard bomb from Zimpfer to senior wideout Mike McLaughlin. Alfred scored on a 12-yard pass from junior quarterback Todd Zandrowicz (East Aurora/East Aurora) to sophomore tailback Jesse Raynor (Weedsport/Weedsport) with just under two minutes left in the half to go into intermission down 17-14. After a scoreless third quarter, Carnegie Mellon boosted its lead back to 10 points, 24-14, when Urbanczyk capped a 16-play 64-yard drive with a one-yard plunge into the endzone. Alfred closed the gap to three when Raynor caught a 15-yard TD pass from Zandrowicz with just over four minutes to go to set up the wild finish. While Alfred gained more net yards of offense than CMU (357-319), the visitors held a decided edge in rushing yards, 208 to 81, which resulted in a nine-minute advantage in time of possession. Alfred came into the game giving up less than 60 yards on the ground. Zandrowicz threw for 276 yards and a pair of scores. Junior tailback Chuck Fortuna (Allegany/Allegany-Limestone) caught six passes for 82 yards while Raynor also had six catches for 63 yard and a score. Junior flanker Jason Slagle (Celoron/Southwestern) caught three passes for 82 yards. Eason led Alfred's ground attack with 66 yards on 15 carries and a TD. Zimpfer led CMU in rushing with 88 yards on 14 carries. His 24-yard run on third-and-17 kept the Tartans' first scoring drive alive. Zimpfer threw for 102 yards; McLaughlin finished the contest with four catches for 80 yards. Senior strong safety Brian Keefer (Jamestown/Maple Grove) led the AU defense with 10 tackles and recovered the Saxons' onside kick, while senior linebacker Aaron Rounds (Celoron/Southwestern) had eight stops. Senior safety Matt Noretto led the Tartan defense with eight tackles and an interception. Senior nose guard Brian Lenhart had five tackles, including two for losses and a sack. The Saxons are in action next on Saturday, Sept. 30, at 1 p.m. at Union.