

## **Saxons fall at Utica, 31-7**

10/27/12

UTICA, NY -- The Alfred University football team dropped a 31-7 decision to host Utica College Saturday, in a key Empire 8 Conference matchup.

With the win, Utica improved to 4-1 in the Empire 8 (6-2 overall) and took over sole possession of second place in the conference behind first-place Salisbury. The Saxons fall to 3-2 in the conference and 4-3 overall.

The host Pioneers jumped to a 14-0 lead, courtesy of two long touchdown passes from quarterback Andrew Benkwitt, who finished with 364 yards passing. Alfred cut its deficit in half with 5:27 left in the half on an eight-yard pass from junior quarterback Joe Enslin (Blairstown, NJ/Belvidere) to junior wideout Jonathan Ruffin (Copiague, NY/Copiague), before Utica took a 17-7 lead into intermission on a field goal as time ran out in the first half.

Utica would tally a touchdown in the third and another in the fourth the second on Benkwitt's third TD toss of the game to close out the scoring.

Alfred came into the game averaging more than 200 yards rushing, but was held to just 38. Freshman tailback Malcolm Downey (Greenburgh, NY/Woodlands) led the team with 34 yards. Alfred's leading rusher, junior tailback Chuck Beckwith, who came in averaging more than 90 yards per game, was held to one yard on four carries before leaving with an injury on Alfred's opening drive. Junior tailback Austin Dwyer (Hornell, NY/Hornell) was also lost to injury on the second drive.

Junior quarterback Zach Sopak (Falconer, NY/Southwestern) started for AU and completed seven of seven passes for 71 yards on Alfred's opening drive before leaving with an injury. He returned briefly during Alfred's second drive but was eventually replaced by Enslin, who finished completing 11 of 18 passes for 128 yards with a touchdown and an interception. AU freshman wideout Maleke Fuentes (Olean, NY/Olean) caught six passes for 80 yards.

Benkwitt completed 26 of 37 passes for 364 yards, with two receivers surpassing the 100-yard receiving mark. Tight end Matt Dunn caught eight passes for 105 yards and wideout Jeremy Meier caught seven for 135 yards and two TDs. Tailback Jesse Baldassare ran for 107 yards on seven carries.

Senior tackle Mike Raplee (Dundee, NY/Dundee) led the Saxon defense with eight tackles (2 ½ for loss) and two sacks. Senior cornerback Andy Ruddock (Attica, NY/Attica) had a team-high 10 tackles; senior end Chris Steeves (Rochester, NY/Gates-Chili) had a sack; and senior free safety Jon Jackson (East Amherst, NY/Bishop Timon) had an interception, his team-leading fifth of the year.

Jon Treen had a game-high 11 tackles for Utica. Genaro Scampos had four tackles and a sack and Shawn Mitchell

had two interceptions.

Alfred is in action next on Saturday, Nov. 3, at 1 p.m., when the Saxons host visiting Empire 8 foe Frostburg State in the team's regular-season home finale.