

## Experienced Alfred University men's soccer team looks to build on success

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ALFRED The Alfred University men's soccer team enters the 2001 season with a heightened sense of confidence and pride after completing a compelling 2000 campaign. The Saxons return 15 players, including eight starters, from last year's squad, which posted an overall record of 11-5-1 and finished with an Empire Eight conference mark of 3-3. The 2000 campaign saw the Saxons break the AU record for goals scored in a single season (51), win four more games than the previous season (11), place three players on Empire Eight all-conference teams, and average an impressive three goals per match. However, despite the noteworthy achievements of the 2000 team, head coach Ken Hassler firmly believes that this year's squad possesses the potential to be even better. "I'm very excited about this year after the successful run we had in 2000," stated Hassler. "The work ethic of the returning players, the chemistry of the team, and the skill level of the freshman class all combine to make this year's team better than last." Hassler is confident that victories and success will come with his team's ability to fully maximize a complete attacking philosophy. The Saxons will once again look to capitalize on their signature brand of attacking finesse soccer. "Our goal is to get the ball forward quickly with everyone involved and create quality scoring opportunities," Hassler stated. "We plan to play an exciting, attacking style of soccer that is both fun to watch and play." Leading the Saxon attack will be senior Guy-Robert Desir (Queens Village/Springfield Gardens), who finished the 2000 season with six goals and five assists, and junior Andy Gennarini (Monroe, CT/Masuk), who posted five goals and one assist. "Both Guy and Andy are excellent, creative players who are extremely dangerous with their backs to the goal." Senior Kevin McGee (Seaford/St. Anthony's) and freshman Neil Walsh (Grand Island/Canisius) are also expected to provide explosive offensive power up front for the Saxons. McGee finished the 2000 season with two goals and one assist, while newcomer Walsh is expected to see a significant amount of playing time as a member of the front-line attack. Other players competing for time at forward will be sophomore Ian Hoffman (Halifax, PA/Halifax) and freshman Brendan Rice (Schenectady/Niskayuna). In the midfield, senior captains Karl Gnann (Holley/Holley) and Jon Bridges (Topeka, KS/Topeka) will once again be called upon to maintain the tempo and flow of play. Bridges tallied a team-high seven assists and five goals and was named all-region and all-conference in 2000, while Gnann led the Saxons offensively with a team-high eight goals and three assists. Hassler also anticipates that freshman Ethan Weikleget (Amherst/Amherst) will make an immediate impact in the midfield as a compliment to Gnann's strong offensive presence and Bridges' skillful distribution and vision. Additional players returning from the 2000 roster to add depth, experience and leadership to the midfield positions are junior Shane Donahoe (Syracuse/West Genesee) and sophomore Andy Kernahan (Rushford/Cuba-Rushford). Rounding out the Saxon midfield will be junior Brad Sussman (Great Neck/Great Neck), sophomores Jared Branfman (Thayer, MA/Thayer) and Ian Edmonds (Telford, England/Adams) and freshmen Salvatore Tornabene (Staten Island/Monsignor Farrell), Stephen Robin (Foster, RI/Ponaganset), Brian Donahoe (Elmira/Elmira Free Academy), and Kris Bean (Yarmouth, ME/Yarmouth). In the backfield, senior captain Scott Wallace (Wayne, NJ/Wayne Valley), senior Dale Owen (Endicott/Union-Endicott), junior Pat Mancini (Endwell/Maine-Endwell) and freshman Randy Clukey (Bath, ME/Morse) have been assigned the task of reducing the number of goals allowed by the Saxon defense. According to Hassler, all four players are tough individual defenders and are critical to the development of the Saxon offensive attack, but as a whole they must reduce the number of goals allowed for the team to be truly successful. Other players battling for time in the backfield include juniors Jim Carroll (Buffalo/Bishop Timon) and Greg Betts (Cicero/Cicero-North Syracuse), and sophomores Mike Ilecki (Scottsville/Wheatland-Chili) and Chris Dionne (Marbledale, CT/Shepaug). Dionne was the team's Rookie of the Year in 2000. Junior goaltender Kevin Ball (Wheeling, WV/Linsly School) is set to return to the nets for the Saxons after a remarkable 2000 campaign. Ball posted a record of 10-5-0 with 73 saves and three shut-outs in 15 starts for the Saxons. "Kevin has the potential to be the top keeper in the conference or even the region," stated Hassler. "When he's focused, he is exceptional." Backing up Ball at the goaltender position will be junior Oliver Chapman (Detroit, MI/Cranbrook) and freshman Michael Wanberg (Tualatin, OR/Westside Christian). "Having three solid keepers makes our training more effective. The trio really push themselves and each other," claimed Hassler. With a strong core of returning players and solid group of recruits, the Saxons are anxiously awaiting the start of the 2001 season. The combination of seasoned veterans and aspiring new recruits should produce one of the most memorable Saxon seasons to date. "We're entering the season with high expectations," stated Hassler. "We have a lot of experience and leadership. We also have a very strong recruiting class. Any one of the freshman are capable of stepping on the field

and playing very good soccer."