

Saxons beat Fisher, 31-28, strengthen conference lead

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PITTSFORD, NY Sophomore placekicker Eric Rockwood (Allegany, NY/Allegany-Limestone) booted a 31-yard field goal with 12 second left in regulation, giving the Alfred University football team a 31-28 victory over host St. John Fisher Saturday afternoon. With the win, Alfred improves to 6-0 overall and 3-0 in the Empire 8 Conference. A win by the Saxons at conference rival Ithaca on Nov. 7 would clinch Alfred's first-ever Empire 8 crown and the conference's automatic bid to the NCAA Division III championships tournament. Special teams proved to be the difference in Saturday's contest. With the game tied 21-21 with 5:17 left, AU sophomore cornerback Roland O'Brien (Hoosick Falls, NY/Hoosick Falls) forced a fumble on an AU punt at the Fisher 2-yard line, recovered the loose ball and ran into the endzone for a touchdown, putting the Saxons up 28-21. Fisher returned the ensuing kickoff to midfield and the Cardinals marched 50 yards in eight plays, knotting the game at 28-28 on a seven-yard scoring pass from Tim Bailey to wide receiver Paul Deckard with 2:13 left. After the ensuing kickoff, AU took over at its own 39-yard line and went 47 yards in 11 plays, setting the stage for Rockwood's winning kick. AU sophomore quarterback T.J. Kilcarr (Naunet, NY/Clarkstown South), playing in place of injured starter Tom Secky (Bemus Point, NY/Maple Grove), completed three passes for 19 yards and had a 17-yard run on the winning drive. Fisher got two plays off after the field goal, including a 44-yard Hail Mary attempt in which Bailey just missed connecting with Deckard on the game's final play. Kilcarr completed seven of 18 passes for 104 yards and a 36-yard TD pass to junior wideout Ryan Thon (Victor, NY/Victor) 1:05 before halftime that gave Alfred a 21-14 lead at intermission. Kilcarr took over a series after Secky who completed 10 of 12 passes for 99 yards had given the Saxons a 14-7 lead on a five-yard touchdown run with 8:34 left in the second quarter. Alfred scored on its opening possession, driving 71 yards in 12 plays with senior tailback Vinson Hendrix (Rochester, NY/East) scoring on a two-yard run with 8:48 left in the period. Fisher answered on the Cardinals' ensuing possession, as Bailey capped a 12-play 69-yard drive with a 27-yard scoring pass to Deckard with 4:02 left in the opening quarter. After Secky's TD run, Deckard caught a four-yard TD pass from Bailey with 4:44 left in the first half to tie the game at 14-14. Fisher (43, 2-1 Empire 8) tied the contest at 21-21 when tailback Brad Carlton scored with 9:22 left in the third, capping a nine-play, 49-yard drive. Fisher outgained the Saxons, 417 yards to 345, but turned the ball over twice while Alfred finished the contest with no miscues. Hendrix finished with 79 yards on 22 carries before leaving the game midway through the third quarter. It marked the first time this year Hendrix had failed to rush for at least 100 yards. His replacement at tailback, freshman Chris Lopez (Rochester, NY/Pittsford Sutherland) ran for 20 yards. Senior wideout Milton Harding (Binghamton, NY/Johnson City) had a team-high six catches for 54 yards. Thon and senior wideout Jared Manzer (Johnson City, NY/Johnson City) each caught five passes. Bailey threw for 315 yards with an interception and three touchdowns, all to Deckard, who finished with 10 catches for 147 yards. Tailback Christian Zemaitis ran for a team-high 66 yards on 21 carries. Sophomore linebacker Wes Smith (Turbotville, PA/Muncy) had a game-high 11 tackles (10 solo) to lead the AU defense. Junior linebacker Chad Pieri (LeRoy, NY/Caledonia-Mumford) had seven tackles and a sack and sophomore linebacker Nick Clark (Canisteo, NY/Canisteo-Greenwood) had six tackles, including two for loss and a sack. Senior linebacker Marc Mangovski (Kirkville, NY/East Syracuse-Minoa) had five tackles and an interception. Cornerback John Sheridan had eight tackles to lead the Fisher defense. Linebacker Andy Episcopo had seven tackles and a pass break-up. Alfred is in action next on Saturday, Oct. 31, at 1 p.m. at home against non-conference foe Rochester.