

## Saxons men's soccer team loaded with veterans

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ALFRED, NY - The 2011 Alfred University men's soccer team will have no shortage of experienced players as the Saxons seek to improve on a 2010 season in which they went 5-9-3 (0-7-0 in Empire 8 play). Eight of 11 starters return and a host of sound bench players from a season ago and some talented newcomers will try to help head coach Scott Miller earn a spot in the Empire 8 Conference championship tournament for the third time in eight-year tenure at AU. Miller is optimistic about his team's chances, given the roster's healthy mix of experienced veterans and solid recruits. "This season we have one of the more dynamic teams we have had," Miller said. "The leadership, along with a hungry new class, should be the combination we need to make a statement in the conference. I really believe in the group this year, and I know they believe in each other." Junior forward Frankie Mannino (Elmira, NY/Elmira Free Academy), a two-time Empire 8 all-star, and sophomore forward-midfielder Jeffrey Thomas (Canandaigua, NY/Canandaigua) each scored three goals in 2010, tops among returnees. With seven points on three goals and an assist, Thomas was second on the team in points as a freshman. Also expected to add scoring punch for the Saxons are junior forward Rigel Johnson (Little Valley, NY/Cattaraugus-Little Valley), and a trio of returning midfielders in juniors Tony Gai (Burke, VA/Lake Braddock) (one goal, one assist in 2010) and Sam Miller (Kinsman, OH/Badger) (one assist), and sophomore Zach Kranefeld (Millville, NJ/Millville) (two goals, one assist), who may also see time on defense as well. Freshman Brendan Collins (Tompkins Cove, NY/St. Thomas More) will compete for playing time, as will a quintet of freshman midfielder-forwards: Nicholas Milliman (Randolph, NY/Randolph), Eric Deemer (Oneonta, NY/Oneonta), Pedro Wynkoop (New York, NY/Art & Design), Yvon Mercier (Rochester, NY/East) and Ian Healey (Orange Village, OH/Orange). Other Saxons looking for time at midfield will be senior Eric Lavelle (Eden, NY/Eden), a former forward who had two assists as a junior in 2010, and Uriah Kashman (Warwick, NY/Warwick Valley), who made pair of starts last season. Freshman Colby Cotton (Canisteo, NY/Canisteo-Greenwood) will compete for time at midfield and defense, and Lavelle may see time on defense as well. Defense is a position of depth for the Saxons, and will be anchored by returning starter Cory Hill (Elmira, NY/Elmira Free Academy) (one goal in 2010). Senior Aileen Bennett (Bronx, NY/Harry S. Truman) has starting experience but missed several games to injury. Other returning players hoping to contribute on defense are sophomore Thomas Esposito (Farmingdale, NY/Kellenberg) (one goal last year), senior Cory Hall (North Tonawanda, NY/North Tonawanda) (two starts last season), and a pair of converted forwards in senior Justin Shardlow (Alfred Station, NY/Alfred-Almond) and junior Stefan Nonnenmann (New Providence, NJ/New Providence). Newcomers competing for time at defense are freshmen Connor Petrauskas (Flemington, NJ/Hunterdon) and Jose Sanchez (Rochester, NY/Harley School). Senior Elliot Thorpe (Highlands Ranch, CO/Thunder Ridge) enters his fourth season as the starting goalie. He started 16 games in 2010 and had a 1.96 goals against average and a .684 save percentage with three shutouts. A pair of sophomores - Samuel Guy (Binghamton, NY/Binghamton) and Jacob Bird (Auburn, NY/Skaneateles) - will back up Thorpe. AU will look to improve an offense that tallied only 19 goals last year and a defense that allowed 40. The Saxons will need to reverse a 235-204 shots disadvantage as they try to reverse three one-goal losses (1-0 to Elmira and Ithaca and 2-1 to St. John Fisher) in conference play a season ago.