

Alfred University football team holds awards banquet

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ALFRED, NY The Alfred University football team held its 2004 awards banquet Saturday evening on the AU campus. Brenton Brady (Rochester, NY/Marshall), a junior outside linebacker, was named the team's Most Valuable Player. The 2004 Empire 8 Conference Player of the Year and the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) Northwest Region Player of the Year, Brady helped lead the Saxons to an 8-3 record and a win in the ECAC Northeast Championship game. Brady led AU with 96 tackles, including 14 for loss and seven sacks. He also had a team-high four interceptions (one returned for a touchdown), a forced fumble and three fumble recoveries. The Saxons' short-yardage run specialist on offense, he scored four rushing touchdowns. He was named a Football Gazette First Team East Region All Star and a D3football.com honorable mention All-American. Bill Battaglia (Cheektowaga, NY/JFK), a senior defensive end, was given the Alex Yunevich Award as Defensive MVP. Battaglia, a First Team Empire 8 All-Star and a First Team All-ECAC Northwest Region selection, had 47 tackles, including a team-leading 16 for loss and 11 sacks. He added a forced fumble, three fumble recoveries and a blocked kick. Senior wide receiver Jake Sprague (Johnsonburg, PA/Johnsonburg) was named winner of the Hal Brown Award as Offensive MVP. Sprague, a three-year letterwinner and two-year starting wideout, led the Saxons with 47 pass receptions and 498 yards receiving. He caught one touchdown pass and averaged 11.7 yards per punt return and 14.6 yards per kick return. Other team awards given Saturday included: Special Teams MVP Senior wide receiver/kick returner Chris Sargent (Ogdensburg, NY/Ogdensburg). A two-year starting wide receiver after transferring to AU from St. Lawrence, Sargent averaged 10 yards on 33 punt returns and 21.3 yards on 19 kickoff returns. His 330 punt return yards are a new AU single-season record. On offense, Sargent caught 42 passes for 447 yards and a team-leading five touchdowns. Gene Castrovillo Award Senior quarterback Ron Duliba (Forestville, NY/Forestville). The award is given to a player who exhibits perseverance, hard work and dedication. Duliba was honored for coming back from a severe knee injury suffered in the preseason. He started every game and threw for 1,851 yards (the fourth-most for a single season in school history) and 15 touchdowns. He finished his career with 4,626 yards passing, fourth most all-time at AU. Bob Carley Memorial Award Sophomore defensive end Andy Rantz (Montandon, PA/Milton Area). The award is given to a player who displays a positive attitude and exceptional work ethic. Rantz had 44 tackles (including 5.5 for loss and two sacks), a fumble recovery and a forced fumble. His 24-yard interception return for a touchdown in the fourth quarter secured Alfred's 36-17 win over Norwich in the ECAC Northeast title game. Pete DeRose Memorial Award Sophomore strong safety Aaron Meyers (Delevan, NY/Pioneer). The award recognizes character, heads-up play and scrappiness. Meyers, the Empire 8 Conference Defensive Rookie of the Year last year, had 78 tackles in 2004, including 3.5 for loss, and a team-leading 10 pass breakups. Saxon Club Award Winners (given to players who had at least seven outstanding games during the season) Battaglia, Brady, Meyers, Rantz, Sargent, Sprague, senior free safety Kiel Liddell (Bemus Point, NY/Maple Grove), freshman defensive tackle Don Miller (LeRoy, NY/LeRoy), senior cornerback Joe Nigro (Seneca Falls, NY/Mynderse Academy), senior cornerback Ray Sawner (Sylvan Beach, NY/Oneida) and sophomore offensive tackle Mike Yokopovich (Webster, NY/Webster-Schroeder). Liddell had 42 tackles, a forced fumble and three pass breakups. Miller had 33 tackles (including 3.5 for loss and two sacks) and forced a fumble. Nigro had 33 tackles (one for loss) two forced fumbles, a fumble recovery, an interception and six pass breakups. Sawner had 35 tackles, two forced fumbles, a fumble recovery, two interceptions and five pass breakups. Yokopovich anchored a line that led the Saxons to 310 yards in offense per game, including 141 on the ground. Fred Yanni Award Freshman linebacker Blake Fuller (Newark, NY/Newark). The award is given to a freshman who shows great enthusiasm and love for the game and is a team player. Fuller, who came into preseason camp as a safety, wound up playing linebacker and was one of the top young players in the Empire 8. He ended his freshman year with 49 tackles (including 3.5 for loss and two sacks), three forced fumbles and three fumble recoveries. Purple and Gold Awards Given to top players on the scout teams. Freshman tight end Travis White (Carthage, NY/Carthage) won the award for offense and freshman defensive end Travis Cox (Bradford, RI/Westerly) won for defense.