# Men's basketball setting sights high despite offseason departures

By COOPER WOODWARD
Sports Editor

Losing players to the transfer portal is a reality that nearly every mid-major program has to face. Quinnipiac is no stranger to this fact, having lost eight members of the 2025-26 roster due to either graduation or the transfer portal.

Quinnipiac head coach Tom Pecora knows that's the case and has adopted a strategy he calls "finding diamonds in the rough."

"I'm a AAA baseball coach," Pecora said. "I bring them in young, I get them good and then they go off to the show if they're good enough."

With the season already underway as of publication, let's take a look at some of those diamonds, and how the Bobcats will stack up against the rest of the Metro.

**NEW FACES**

After losing eight members of last year's roster, Pecora retooled with a trio of incoming freshmen and an even greater number of transfers. Freshman forward Ali Douf has particularly caught the eye of Pecora, not only in preseason practices, but in the early slate of the young season.

"He could be a stretch four with how well he shoots," Pecora said. "Him and (junior forward Holden Pierre-Louis) are two very different five men."

Although there is a near five inch difference in height between the shortest and tallest member of the forward core, Douf and Pierre-Louis are slated to make noise in their first seasons in Hamden.

The Saint-jean-sur-Richelieu, Quebec native has already gotten off to a successful start as a Bobcat, recording 12 points across 19 minutes against Vermont Nov. 8, and a pair of crucial blocks against Bryant Nov. 5. Pierre-Louis comes to Hamden with a rather slow start scoring wise. However, he has still made his impact felt, tallying eight rebounds as of publication.

While success in the paint has yet to materialize for Pecora's squad, it's been the success of the backcourt that has gotten the Bobcats off to a 2-1 start.

In particular, senior guard Tayeshawn Cunningham-Pemberton and junior guard Lucas Sekasi have found great success as starters early in their Bobcat careers.

"(Associate head coach Umar Shannon) and I have talked at length about the idea of taking two Division II guys and asking 'can you start them on this level?'" Pecora said after the victory against the Bulldogs Nov. 5.

Sekasi comes to Quinnipiac after a National Championship with Division II Gannon University. That knowledge of winning at an elite level has earned him starting nods in each of the Bobcats' contests, with career highs in points, made field goals and rebounds coming against the Catamounts Nov. 8.

Cunningham-Pemberton showed Bobcat nation what he was made of in Quinnipiac's home opener against Bryant. In that game, he went 3-6 from range, while shooting at a 54.5 percent clip.

"They've been solid for us," Pecora added.

When asked about the adjustment between Division II and Division I basketball, Cunningham-Pemberton had one major difference on his mind.

"Speed for sure," he said. "You're pushing off misses and so to make sure that you're getting back on defense, misses and makes, right back, is something that's definitely a big change."

**RETURNERS**

While the Bobcats will return seven members of their 2025-26 roster, there is no name that will garner more attention from that group than sophomore forward Keith McKnight.

"Keith's the man," Pecora said.

Out of the group of returners, McKnight is the only one who put up sizable minutes last season, averaging 11 points and eight rebounds per game across 794 total minutes and four starts. With a team that is full of youth and new faces, Pecora acknowledged the fact that McKnight will need to step up and become a leader on and off the court.

"Keith has got to be a leader and he's got to fill up the box score," Pecora said. "He can play anywhere on the baseline depending on who we're putting on the floor and what we want to accomplish."

Sophomore guard Tai Turnage also returns for his second season in Hamden, having produced a solid freshman campaign. In his latest appearance against Vermont, he exploded for 17 points on perfect 5-5 three-point shooting.

That performance, in addition to his preseason efforts, has him well on his way to a larger and more involved role this season.

"He's gotta be a little Pitbull," Pecora said. "He's moving in that direction and that's a really good thing."

While McKnight and Turnage only accounted for a small portion of the offense from last year's campaign, it will be on them to be the leaders that this team needs in order to break through their glass ceiling, win a Metro title and punch their ticket to March Madness.

The next chapter of that journey will be written Thursday, Nov. 12 as Quinnipiac faces Monmouth, aiming to start the year 3-1 for the first time in three seasons. Tip-off from Hamden is slated for 7 p.m.

# Cass Turner records 250th win with women's ice hockey

By COOPER WOODWARD
Sports Editor

Quinnipiac women's ice hockey head coach Cass Turner recently recorded her 250th and 251st wins against Cornell Nov. 6 and Colgate Nov. 7. The milestone extends her record as the winningest head coach in program history.

"I have nothing but great things to say about her," senior forward Kahlen Lamarche said. "She's an incredible coach, but she's just an awesome person and she just cares about everyone she brings into the program."

In her 12 years as head coach, Turner has completely turned around the program. In her first season, she took the Bobcats to their first ECAC Championship. A decade later, she brought the ECAC Title back to Hamden with her Bobcat squad.

"Those wins are always a body of work," Turner said. "You know the things that went into getting to that place and the development, the growth that the individuals and the team had."

Looking back, it's those two wins that stick out to Turner the most out of all 252.



LILY ZAHKA/CHRONICLE

**Women's ice hockey head coach Cass Turner speaks to media March 3.**

# Despite a disappointing finish, men's soccer takes massive strides in 2026

By RYAN SMITH
Staff Writer

With Saturday's defeat against Merrimack in the Metro playoffs, Quinnipiac men's soccer season has officially come to a close in Hamden; a season filled with triumphs, challenges and everything in between.

Entering the season, the Bobcats were picked to finish fifth in the Metro Preseason Coaches' Poll, similar to their sixth seed from 2025, a season that ended with a 5-0 defeat in the MAAC (now Metro) playoffs against Iona.

The non-conference season was an up and down one for Quinnipiac. The schedule featured dramatic victories over Providence and Yale, but also frustrating defeats to New Haven and Stony Brook.

The Bobcats would kick off Metro play in dominant fashion, with three straight victories against Rider, Manhattan and Canisius by a combined score of 9-1. The victories put the Bobcats at the top of the conference and set the stage for a massive matchup against the Fairfield Stags, who were also undefeated entering the contest.

That matchup marked the end of the hot streak for the Bobcats. Two Fairfield goals in the first 52 minutes left Quinnipiac scrambling to try and break through the stout Stags' back line, and even though sophomore forward Taeyeon Lim scored his seventh goal of the season, Quinnipiac came up short 2-1.

After the result, the Bobcats would go on to draw their next two games against Saint Peter's and Sacred Heart. However, Quinnipiac then rattled off back-to-back victories against Mount Saint Mary's and Iona.

Even though Fairfield was running away with the regular season title, the Bobcats had put themselves in a great position to secure the No. 2 seed and a first-round bye.

The second-to-last game was against Siena in Loudonville, New York. Lim converted a penalty three minutes in for his 11th goal of the season and began a flying start. After a Siena equalizer 10 minutes into the second half, it looked like the Bobcats would come home with a point. But with less than a minute remaining, disaster struck when the Saints found a winner and sent the Bobcats to Hamden empty-handed.

Despite the loss, a win against Merrimack would still be enough to secure the bye, and when the Warriors picked up a red card five minutes into the match, it seemed as if the Bobcats could cruise to victory and a first round bye. However, despite controlling a majority of the ball, Quinnipiac had no way of breaking through the Merrimack defense. One opportunity was all the visitors needed to stun the Bobcats. To add even more drama, the win clinched Merrimack a spot in the playoffs and a rematch was in store in the first round of the Metro Tournament.

Much like the first matchup, the Bobcats controlled possession. Quinnipiac generated multiple scoring chances but still couldn't find a way to beat the Merrimack defense and its fantastic goalkeeper Matteo Malaguti. In 180 minutes of play over two games, Merrimack would not concede, and a pair of goals by junior forward Jonathan Kratz brought an emotional end to the season.

Although the season finished in disappointing defeat, it was still a year of success for Quinnipiac. The Bobcats posted their best record and conference finish since 2022.

Several freshmen also made immediate impacts, most notably goaltender Alexander Hansen, defenseman Giovanni Corsetti and midfielder Cameron Brooks who all started in the playoff game.

Hansen helped provide stability to a goalkeeping room that severely lacked a consistent starter last season. His 66 saves also put him 28th in the nation. Although the number is impressive, the Bobcats hope they won't need as many saves from him as sophomore Didac Glories, as well as freshman Niels Van Haren and Corsetti, get another year of experience.

Furthermore, Lim took a massive leap in his sophomore season. After a quiet and injury-riddled freshman season, Lim found the back of the net 12 times, putting him good for seventh in the country.

Despite the steps forward, next season may bring challenges with Quinnipiac losing a great senior class.

"They've helped build and helped us to reinforce," head coach Eric Da Costa said following the post season loss. "We are proud of everything they have contributed over the course of their careers. Today I want to make sure it's completely about those guys and what they gave us."

Two specific seniors, forward Benjamin Telle and midfielder Francisco Ferreira, played a huge role, with both playing over 1000 minutes played this season.

"We'll reflect on next season in due course," Da Costa said. "Today is just about getting over not the loss, just getting over the fact that we lose some really good people."



GABI BOURDON/CHRONICLE

**Junior defender Fynn Ost looks up the field against Merrimack Nov. 8.**