

A season coming down to the wire

Previewing Quinnipiac women's lacrosse versus Sacred Heart with a trip to the MAAC playoffs on the line

By COOPER WOODWARD
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Control your own destiny.

It's a message that the Quinnipiac women's lacrosse team is taking to heart as all of the hard work it's put in for the entirety of the 2026 season comes down to one game — Saturday, April 18, versus Sacred Heart on the Campus Field turf in Fairfield.

The winner punches its ticket to the MAAC Tournament, while the loser will see its season end with a 4-4 or 3-5 conference record. The stakes truly don't get much higher than this in mid-major lacrosse.

The Bobcats are entering the game with the same mentality they have had for the entire year: belief in themselves.

"Reaching game 17 will be really special for this group," senior attacker Cate Bendowski said. "It would say a lot about this program and how far we've come."

SCOUTING QUINNIPIAC

When looking at the grand scheme of the Quinnipiac women's lacrosse season, one sees a lot of inconsistencies. However, one of the biggest and most impactful forces on this team comes from the offensive end.

Looking up and down the roster, this team is full of stars. At the top, you have the two-headed monster of Bendowski and senior attacker Mia Delmond, who have combined for 34% of the Bobcats 328 total points. The pair have also become the two latest members of the 100-point club.

Bendowski has had a stellar senior cam-

paign, leading the team in scoring with 69 points, which puts her two points shy of setting the Quinnipiac single-season point record, which is currently held by former attacker Katie Latonick '10.

Looking further down the roster, the Bobcats have gotten consistent contributions from the fresher faces, with sophomores midfielder Emma Miller-Ayala and attacker Peyton Choma currently ranking within the top five in goals scored.

But that's about where the consistency ends, as the rest of the team has struggled to find stability from the rest of the lineup.

Last year, the Bobcats benefited from a stellar rookie season from sophomore goaltender Shannon Alden to get them to the semifinals of the MAAC Tournament. This season, however, Alden has had her fair share of struggles, seeing a drop in total saves and save percentage.

To punch their ticket to the MAAC Tournament for the second year in a row, the Bobcats will need to capture a vintage Alden performance while getting a consistent game from their defensive core. It's a tall order, but head coach Jordan Solari is continuing to preach a belief in the team that can propel them past the Pioneers come Saturday.

"They just have a belief that they are destined to do something great," Solari said. "It's going to take every one of us to do it but they're ready to do it."

SCOUTING SACRED HEART

While the Bobcats' consistency struggles

begin at the bottom of the lineup, the Pioneers' consistency problems begin at the top.

The Sacred Heart offensive group has struggled all year against MAAC competition. As of publication, the Pioneers rank at the bottom or near the bottom in goals (6.36), assists (3.29) and shots on goal (14.57) per game.

But despite this, the Pioneers rank sixth in the conference and will be in the playoffs if the season ended today. Why? A stellar defensive core anchored by a netminder making her mark in her debut year.

Freshman goaltender Madalynn Eder-Linell got the reins as the primary goalie during the Pioneers' March 14 matchup versus the Monmouth Hawks. Since that date, she has averaged a 44% save percentage with a 9.18 goals against average. It's a stat line that put her second and third in the MAAC, respectively. Her performances have been the difference maker in all four of the Pioneers' MAAC wins, having all come by less than five goals.

Their defensive group has also been steadily productive. Leading the way is senior defenseman Brooke Gyllenhaal, forcing the second most ground balls in the entirety of the MAAC with 41 and junior defensemen Madelyn Breitbeil with 27.

It's a timeless battle of the unstoppable force versus the immovable object. The latest chapter of that matchup will be written Saturday, April 18, with a spot in the MAAC Tournament on the line. Face-off from Fairfield is scheduled for 1 p.m.

QU Athletics demotes rugby team, adds men's distance track team

By LILLIAN CURTIN
Opinion Editor

Quinnipiac Athletics announced Tuesday morning that women's rugby will move from varsity to club level after 15 years as a Division I program.

"Following a comprehensive review of varsity participation, conference affiliation, department resources, and gender equity considerations, Quinnipiac will add a men's indoor and outdoor distance program enhancing participation opportunities within the existing track and field structure and will transition women's rugby from varsity to club status at the conclusion of the current competitive cycle," Quinnipiac Athletics wrote in a press release.

With 15 years of history, the program was one of the first of its kind in the nation for women's rugby and won three consecutive Division I National Championships in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

Additionally, the university will add a men's indoor and outdoor distance program. This is the first time this program will return to Hamden since they folded after the 2008-09 season.

Both changes will take place after the current competition cycle.

"These decisions are never easy, but they are essential to ensuring that Quinnipiac Athletics remains equitable, competitive, and sustainable for the long term," wrote Director of Athletics Greg Amodio.

Women's rugby will remain a "well-resourced" and "organized" club, per the university's press release.

Is it time to panic yet?

Men's and women's basketball experiencing drastic roster changes since the conclusion of the 2025-26 season

By CLAIRE FRANKLAND
Sports Editor

Quinnipiac women's basketball has found itself in quite a predicament since the conclusion of its 2025-26 season.

Since the Bobcats lost to Stanford in the second round of the Women's Basketball Invitational Tournament 81-69 — despite ending the season with a strong 27-7 record and a MAAC record of 19-1 — the Bobcats are dropping like flies.

Currently, only three rostered Bobcats remain who haven't graduated out or entered the transfer portal. Those three Bobcats are rising senior guards Maria Kealy, Paige Girardi and Ava Solenne.

To say the program will be experiencing a major roster turnover is an understatement.

With key players from this season hitting the transfer portal almost as soon as it opened, including standout rising sophomore guard Ella Ryan and rising senior forward Anna Foley, the Bobcats will need a major rebuild going into next season.

Foley's departure from Hamden would be confirmed April 13, as she announced her transfer to Villanova University.

In her junior campaign, the Andover, Mass. native aver-

aged 10 points and 5.5 rebounds per game, while leading the Bobcats with 36 blocks across 34 games. She was also named to the All-MAAC Third Team.

Ryan would also confirm her departure from Hamden April 13, announcing her transfer to Arizona State University via Instagram.

In her lone season in Hamden, the Brentwood, Tenn. native averaged 10.4 points and 4.1 rebounds per game. She further earned herself a spot on the MAAC All-Rookie Team.

With junior guard Karson Martin entering the transfer portal April 4, only to announce her commitment to Tennessee Tech University a week later, the Bobcats are experiencing one major punch to the gut after another.

Additionally, sophomore forward Emma Lizotte announced her commitment to the College of Holy Cross March 11, after seemingly never announcing her planned departure from Hamden.

Amidst all the roster chaos, the program can look for light at the end of the tunnel with the arrival of new head coach Roman Owen, who boasts a long and successful coaching resume behind him.

Going into next season, the Bobcats await four commits in Imani Mullings, Mya Alston, Uliana Doronina and Ava Thomas. These commits will bring in three strong combo guards, paired with a strong shooting guard, to a Bobcat squad that needs to rebuild its depth before next season.

Yet, everything comes in pairs, doesn't it?

With all the roster turnarounds women's basketball is experiencing, men's basketball is right alongside them, with some of its most influential players hitting the transfer portal.

Sophomores guard Jaden Zimmerman and forward Grant Randall both announced their decisions to enter the transfer portal after both having fantastic seasons for the Bobcats.

Zimmerman finished his season second on the Bobcats squad in points per game with 15.1, while Randall finished in fourth with 11.4, and both ending with 393 points and 365 points, respectively.

Zimmerman's agency, 3v Group, announced his commitment to Grand Canyon University April 14.

Partner those departures with the exit of senior forward Amarri Monroe, and Quinnipiac will lose some of its most influential Bobcats.

Despite Monroe graduating, rumors have circulated that he may be able to appeal for an extra year of eligibility, yet many expect him to enter the transfer portal if he is given another year.

Looking at the incoming Bobcats, Quinnipiac can find hope in six-foot-four commit Malik Fields from the Bronx, N.Y. Fields has been a standout athlete at

Cardinal Hayes High School.

On April 13, the Bobcats also saw their first transfer into the program from Assumption University: rising senior guard Tayshawn Cunningham-Pemberton.

In his junior campaign with the Greyhounds, the New London, Connecticut native averaged 14 points and 4.4 rebounds per game.

He was also named to the Northeast 10 All-Conference Second Team.

With all the movement, transfers and commits on the line, the question still stands: is it really panic time just yet?

