



The making of Cate Bendowski

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It’s a warm, windy day on the Mount Carmel Campus of Quinnipiac University, where Quinnipiac women’s lacrosse is in the midst of a duel with the Niagara Purple Eagles. With five minutes remaining in the third quarter of that contest, senior attacker Cate Bendowski etches her name into Quinnipiac lacrosse history, becoming the latest Bobcat to achieve 100 career points.

“I couldn’t have done it without my teammates,” Bendowski said. “It’s cool to see how that moment has come from all these years of trying to find myself as a lacrosse player.”

That milestone was just the first part of a season that has been her best by a wide margin. With one game left in the regular season, Bendowski has achieved career highs in points, assists and ground balls. She is also within the top 15 in career points and within the top two in points within a single season in program history.

But the player who is on the doorstep of Quinnipiac immortality, got her start in a small Long Island suburb, 30 miles outside of New York City, in Rockville Center, N.Y.

Bendowski’s start in lacrosse didn’t come with her being the first in her family to pick up a stick, but rather the latest in a long line of Bendowskis to take the field. Her father, Christopher, played club lacrosse in college while her great-grandfather was a captain on the team at Syracuse University.

“It’s really always been engraved in my family,” she said.

After splitting her time between lacrosse, soccer and field hockey for the majority of her childhood, Bendowski decided to commit to lacrosse in her high school career and didn’t look back.

While at Sacred Heart Academy, Bendowski lettered all four years, leading the team in scoring with 18 goals and 11 assists in her shortened junior season, captaining the team for her final two years in Hempstead, N.Y., and earning the Spartan Award and Spring Athletic Director Award during her senior season.

While Bendowski was tearing up the field, she came to a realization that would change her life. College lacrosse was no longer something in the distant future, but something that

she could obtain.

“When I made varsity for lacrosse in high school, I thought ‘Oh this could be a real thing,’” she said.

A stellar college career meant that Bendowski had all of the options in the world on where she wanted to pursue college lacrosse. But it was a visit during the COVID-19 pandemic that made Hamden feel like the place to be for the Long Islander.

“I couldn’t meet them in person for the longest time,” Bendowski said. “I don’t know if (head coach Jordan Solari) made them do this but the entire freshman class was waiting for me outside of CCE to give me my own personal tour ... I felt so welcomed by everybody.”

Landing in Hamden after the pandemic promised a return to the status quo for Bendowski. A return to the reality that she knew for her entire childhood. That return was going to have to wait, as an injury sidelined her for the entirety of the 2023 season.

Season-ending injuries are heartbreaking for any athlete, regardless of the sport. But Bendowski took that devastation and turned it into an opportunity to reevaluate who she was on and off the field. What she found was something that resonated with her forever: the ability to lean on others when you need it.

“I wouldn’t have been able to become the player and the person that I am without the people who supported me through that time,” she said. “Just finding and adapting to a new role.”

When she finally got to the turf in Hamden, her presence was felt immediately, starting off with a late February game against the Bobcats’ rivals from down Whitney Ave., the Yale Bulldogs. Five minutes into the second frame of the matchup, Bendowski found the back of the net for the first time in her collegiate career. It was a moment that she described as “awesome.”

“It didn’t really hit me until after I picked up my stick and lined up for the draw,” she said. “I was like, ‘this is a really cool moment.’”

That performance was the catalyst for a

season that saw seven multi-point games and an 18-point debut year. Was it solid? Sure. But deep down, Bendowski knew that both she and the team were destined for more. In her junior season, that reality came to be.

Bendowski saw statistical increases in nearly every major offensive stat. She netted 30 goals and 19 assists, upping her shot total from the year prior while starting all 18 games for the Bobcats. The team jumped from two wins to ten, making it to the MAAC Tournament and even defeating the Sacred Heart Pioneers in round one of the tournament before falling to the Siena Saints in the ensuing game.

“I am so proud of that season,” Bendowski said. “Beating (Niagara) on their home turf was an amazing feeling and that eight-hour bus ride home with that winning feeling was awesome too.”

With a significantly improved junior season in her rear view, it came time for Bendowski and the Bobcats to gear up

for the 2026 campaign. Now with one game left on the schedule, Bendowski has left a history-making season in her wake.

As of publication, Bendowski has found the back of the net 26 times, adding 43 assists — good enough for second on the team at the time — to the tune of a 69-point senior season, putting her two points shy of breaking the single-season point record.

One of those most important points came against Niagara, as she joined lifelong teammate and best friend senior attacker Mia Delmond as the only active Bobcats to hit the century mark. For Bendowski, it’s the latest edition of the gift that keeps on giving.

“It’s an awesome feeling and I love playing with her,” she said. “We went to kindergarten through sixth grade together. It’s crazy that we get to play lacrosse at the same college. She’s an amazing athlete through and through and an amazing human being.”

Bendowski has one more year left in Hamden, but she’s already feeling grateful for the fellow seniors who won’t get the privilege of taking the Quinnipiac turf next spring.

“I love my grade,” she said. “Even though the grade has changed dramatically throughout my four years here, I couldn’t have done it without them.”

Her senior teammates aren’t the only ones Bendowski has expressed gratitude for.

“I want my teammates to know that if they need anything from me at any point of the day, I will come drop everything from them,” she said. “They mean so much to me and They’ve supported me through good times and bad times. So I just want them to feel the same support from my end.”

With a career filled with history, highlight reel plays and win after win as a Bobcat behind her, she has a simple message to the version of Bendowski who stepped onto the lacrosse field for the very first time.

“Have fun.”

When Bendowski steps off the turf for the final time, she will be leaving a legacy of positivity, determination and joy behind, forever leaving her mark on Quinnipiac women’s lacrosse.

