Fall sports non-conference check-in

Preparing for Metro and NEC play

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With non-conference play coming to a close and conference play's opening weekend wrapped up, Quinnipiac fall athletics is in full swing. What worked or what didn't, and what will help the Bobcats capture Metro gold? Let's take a look back at Quinnipiac's fall athletics play so far.

CROSS COUNTRY

Quinnipiac women's and men's cross country opened the 2026 season in very different spots; the former poised as the four-time reigning conference champions, while the latter is struggling to climb up the conference.

Both Bobcat squads opened their season Sept. 5 at the Stony Brook Invitational. Women's cross country Bobcats would do what they do best, placing first in the race with a team score of 31 points. Senior Zoe Merryman would take gold in the race, finishing first with a 14:27.9 finish.

Following behind her was junior Madeleine O'Neill, recording a 14:28.3 second-place finish. Following Merryman and O'Neill at the top were junior Alexa Ciccone and senior Avery Palmucci with top-10 finishes.

Quinnipiac men's cross country would end the race with a third-place finish with a team score of 85 points. Junior Alex Saldana (13th) and sophomore Tyler Deme (14th) would be the Bobcats' highest finishers, with a 20:05.6 and a 20:10.0 finish, respectively. Sophomore Shepard Livingston followed Saldana and Deme closely, with a 20:15.6 16th-place finish.

Both Bobcat squads would also represent in the Manhattan Invite, with Quinnipiac women's cross country finishing 2nd, while men's cross country ended in 5th.

For women's cross country, O'Neill (2nd) and Merryman (5th) took top-10 finishes once again, finishing with a time of 21:24.1 and 21:38.0, respectively. On the contrary, men's cross country's 5th place finish would be fueled by a 9th place finish from Saldana, finishing as the only Bobcat in the top-10.

One squad has experienced success, while the other has lacked it due to one aspect of cross country: pack-running.

Quinnipiac women's cross country has been able to utilize pack-running flawlessly throughout the beginning of the 2026 season. Take the Stony Brook Invitational, for instance, where the Bobcats' top five runners in the race all finished in the top 15. With only about 33 seconds separating Merryman and sophomore Natalie Crocker, this squad has been able to use pack running to their advantage.

On the contrary, Quinnipiac men's cross country has struggled to execute pack running. Looking at the Jasper Fall XC, Saldana finished in 9th place, while the lowest-scoring Bobcat finished in 52nd. Additionally, Deme, the nearest Bobcat, finished 41 seconds behind Saldana. By focusing on pack-running, Quinnipiac men's cross country would effectively be able to raise their team score throughout competition.

FIELD HOCKEY

Quinnipiac field hockey starts the season back in the Northeast Conference, returning after competing in the Big East Conference since 2016.

So far, the Bobcats have posted a 4-3 overall record and 1-0 conference record, fueled by the offensive power of returning talent in sophomore forward Rozemarijn Van Keulen.

Despite only appearing in five games for the Bobcats, Van Keulen leads the squad in scoring, with four goals on the season, while also leading the Bobcats in points (10). Just one game into conference play, Van Keulen is already halfway to her freshman year point total.

Van Keulen played a key role in the Bobcats' first NEC victory in 13 years against the Sacred Heart Pioneers, tallying an assist in the Bobcats' 2-1 overtime win.

Holding it down in net for the Bobcats this season is freshman goalkeeper Meike van Schoot. The Amstelveen, Netherlands native has played in all of Quinnipiac's seven games so far, posting a 0.797 save percentage on 64 shots faced.

After the departure of goalkeeper Cristina Torres '25 heading into this season, van Schoot has stepped into big shoes and is making a name for herself in Hamden with a 1.83 goals-against average.

SOCCER

For Quinnipiac women's and men's soccer, both squads enter the 2026 season after suffering the same season-ending fate in 2025: being sent home from the MAAC Tournament in the quarterfinal round.

Just over a month into the season and three weeks into conference play, Quinnipiac women's soccer finds itself with a 4-2-1 overall record and a 2-1 conference record, as of publication.

The Bobcats started non-conference play with a 2-2 tie against The College of the Holy Cross, followed by an 8-0 loss to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Yet, going into a local matchup against Yale, the Bobcats needed to prove themselves with only two more matches until conference play; ultimately coming out on top in a 1-0 victory.

"This is the type of game we have to win, you know, with next week and the week after especially," head coach Dave Clarke said after the game.



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Couple that victory with a 2-1 win over the University at Albany, and it looked like the Bobcats were beginning to get their footing correct at just the right time.

However, to start conference play, the Bobcats would fall to the Niagara Purple Eagles for the first time since 2016. Despite the loss, Quinnipiac claimed its following two matchups against Mount St. Mary's and Marist College, putting them in fourth place in the Metro.

To understand the Bobcats' start to the season, it's crucial to bring one Bobcat into the conversation: graduate student forward Morgan Cupo.

In her fifth season in Hamden, Cupo has not taken her foot off the gas, leading the Bobcats in scoring with eight goals. For reference, Cupo's scoring makes up 61.5% of the Bobcats' scoring this season, with only five other Bobcats having scored a goal.

For Quinnipiac men's soccer, the squad posts a 3-3 overall record and a 1-0 conference record.

The start of the season for the Bobcats has looked rocky, with losses to the University of New Haven and Stony Brook, coupled with victories against Yale and Rider.

Yet, despite the Bobcats' record so far, their 4-3 comeback win against Yale showed exactly the assets the team has, when used correctly, that can set them up for a successful season.

"I think the team showed a lot of grit, certainly a lot of resiliency to get into the game, get out of the game, get back into the game, and then not settle for 3-3; you just push and pump and see if we can win the game," head coach Eric Da Costa said.

This season for Quinnipiac, two Bobcats in particular have stood out as impact players: sophomore midfielder Taehyeon Lim and freshman goalkeeper Alexander Hansen.

After being sidelined for most of his freshman campaign due to injury, Lim has started the season making impact after impact for the Bobcats. Currently leading the squad in goals, with four, and tied in assists, with two, Lim has shown out thus far, leading the Bobcats in points with 10.



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"He's done exactly what everyone here knows he's capable of doing," Da Costa said.

As for goaltending, Hansen has held down the fort for the Bobcats, after last season saw three different goalkeepers take the net for Quinnipiac. To start his collegiate career, Hansen has started in all of the Bobcats' six matches, posting a 0.714 save percentage on 73 shots faced.

VOLLEYBALL

Quinnipiac volleyball has started off the 2026 season on a struggling note. After losing nine players from last season due to graduation and the transfer portal, boasting a younger roster made up of five freshmen, six sophomores and two juniors, the Bobcats are looking for anything.

With only competing in non-conference matchups thus far into the season, the Bobcats post a 1-10 record. The squad's lone win came against the New Jersey Institute of Technology at the Delaware State Invitational.

To understand what is not working for the Bobcats this season, one needs to turn their attention to their statistics thus far, highlighting where the Bobcats are falling short.

Quinnipiac is making too many errors on the attack, costing them a majority of its sets played. Compared to its opponents' 174 on the attack, the Bobcats have made 304 errors, a nearly 58% differs in errors made.

Additionally, the Bobcats are getting crushed at the net by their opponents, with 68 blocks compared to their opponents' 164. In order to generate offense, defense is crucial to a team's success, especially at the net.

Yet, Quinnipiac's biggest necessity this season is experience. With a young roster, experience competing at the collegiate level will ultimately allow this team to find its rhythm. For starters, freshman outside hitter Giulia Ragusa has helped the Bobcats gain offense, leading the squad in kills, while freshman setter Sophia Gisslen has set up chances for the Bobcats, leading the team in assists.

Experience will only allow these young athletes to continue growing individually and as a team, as conference play kicks off at 5 p.m. Friday, Sept. 25, against Iona.