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Men's ice hockey hungry to bring a national title back to Hamden

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Quinnipiac men's ice hockey enters its 51st season after a murky end to its 2025-26 campaign. Despite taking home the Cleary Cup, tying the longest streak by any men's team in history with their sixth consecutive trophy and ending the season with an overall record of 27-10-3 and a conference record of 17-4-1, the Bobcats finished on a lull for Quinnipiac ice hockey.

After getting swept by the Clarkson Golden Knights in the ECAC Quarterfinals, the Bobcats failed to make an appearance in Lake Placid for the first time since 2020. Moreover, after defeating the Providence Friars 5-2 in the NCAA Regionals, Quinnipiac would take a 5-0 blow by North Dakota in the quarterfinals.

Yet, this season isn't like the last. Quinnipiac enters with 16 returning Bobcats, three transfers and seven recruits, bringing all types of talent with them to Hamden.

RETURNING SKATERS

After a 2025-26 campaign that saw many Bobcats break records and have standout campaigns, Quinnipiac's returning squad this year was shocking, to say the least. With 10 NHL prospects this season, the future of many with Quinnipiac remained unknown at the conclusion of last season, yet all would return.

Notably, sophomore forward Ethan Wyttenbach will make his return in Bobcat blue and gold after a breakout freshman campaign.

"Getting another year where (the staffs) just really focused on my development and just making me the best hockey player I can be, it's something I didn't really want to pass up, and now that I'm back I'm just excited to continue to get better every day," Wyttenbach said.

The 144th pick by the Calgary Flames in the 2025 NHL Draft didn't hold back in his first year of collegiate hockey, tallying 59 points, on 25 goals and 34 assists across 40 games, breaking Quinnipiac's single-season freshman scoring record and tying the overall scoring record.

In his freshman campaign, the Roslyn, New York native recorded 34 games with a point, the most of anyone in the country, while his 25 goals on the season tied for second in the nation.

"Obviously the talent's through the roof … If you look at him last year it was just this steady climb the whole year and he did it again, he had a really good summer, and he looks like he's ready to take another jump this year," head coach Rand Pecknold said.

The standout also saw his fair share of accolades last season, being named the Tim Taylor National Rookie of the Year, AHCA First Team East All-American, and ECAC Rookie of the Year, while earning placements on the ECAC All-Conference First Team and ECAC All-Rookie Team.

Yet for Wyttenbach, even after a stellar freshman campaign, this is a new year full of developing his offensive and defensive game to be even stronger than the last.

"I think there's a whole other level I can be at, and last year was great but gotta move forward and focus on this upcoming year," Wyttenbach said.

Another Bobcat returning this season is junior defenseman Elliott Groenewold. In his sophomore campaign, Groenewold anchored the Bobcats' defense, leading the nation with a +39 plus-minus rating, marking the highest rating by any defenseman since 2002-03. His success last year left him questionable to return this season, but ultimately that NCAA Regional Quarterfinal loss that sent the Bobcats home, brought many back.

Across 40 games played, the Springfield, Vermont native tallied 20 points on seven goals and 13 assists, leading him to be named the 2026 ECAC Best Defensive Defenseman and earned a ECAC All-Conference First Team selection.

In his third year in Hamden, the 110th pick by the Boston Bruins in the 2024 NHL Draft will serve as an assistant captain for the Bobcats.

Serving alongside Groenewold, as an assistant captain this season is junior forward Chris Pelosi. During his sophomore campaign, the Boston Bruins 92nd pick in the 2023 NHL Draft tallied 34 points, on 18 goals, tied for fourth on the Bobcats roster, and 16 assists in 35 games played.

"(Pelosi and Groenewold) both have a real chance to play in the NHL one day and (we're) excited to have them back for this year," Pecknold said.

The Sewell, New Jersey, native played his best hockey during the first half of last season, recording a point in 15 of the first 18 games of the season before being slightly set back due to injury.

At the helm of the Bobcats' leadership this season sits senior forward and captain Mason Marcellus. In his fourth season in Hamden, Marcellus is looking to lead his fellow Bobcats by being himself and leading by example.

"I think I've grown and matured a lot in those past three years," Marcellus said. "I had like lunch with Zach Metsa a few weeks ago, and kind of picked his brain to see what he did differently, and he just harped on just like being yourself. I might not be the best motivational speaker, but I kind of lead by example on the ice and just give my effort every single time."

The Greely, Ontario native concluded his 2025-26 campaign recording 34 points on eight goals and 26 assists in all of Quinnipiac's 40 games. Marcellus' 26 assists on the season placed him second among forwards on the squad, behind Wyttenbach, while also finishing with a +20 plus-minus rating.

"I'll tell you right now the first month he looks awesome in practice," Pecknold said. "He's buzzing, he's competing, he looks really good, like he's poised to have a great season."

NEW BOBCATS

This season, the Bobcats welcome three transfers and seven recruits, bringing fresh talent to Quinnipiac.

Notably off the transfer portal, Quinnipiac picked up senior forward Jack Stockfish from the College of the Holy Cross, who entered the portal after the Crusaders were swept by Bentley in the Atlantic Hockey Tournament Semifinals.

The North Bay, Ontario native finished the 2025-26 season with a career-best 35 points, on 14 goals and 21 assists in 38 games played. Additionally, Stockfish ended the season named a Hobey Baker Memorial Award nominee and a member of the First Team All-Atlantic Hockey.

Coming into the season, Quinnipiac also boasts a talented class of incoming Bobcats, with two notable freshman forwards: Alex Kostov and Dylan Edwards.

Before Quinnipiac, the Los Angeles Kings' 177th pick in the 2026 NHL Draft competed with the Flint Firebirds of the Ontario Hockey League (OHL) since 2024, where he totaled 111 points.

Last season, the Mississauga, Ontario native recorded his highest-scoring campaign, finishing the season with 55 points on 24 goals and 31 assists.

Staying in the OHL, Edwards comes to Quinnipiac off a strong 2025-26 campaign. With the Erie Otters and Kitchener Rangers, the Scarborough, Ontario native finished the season recording 87 points on 40 goals and 47 assists in 67 games.

"(The freshmen are) all really good hockey players, especially Edwards," Wyttenbach said.

Edwards' strong performance helped lead the Rangers to the 2026 Memorial Cup and landed his place as an OHL Third Team All-Star Selection.

With all the new talent flooding into Quinnipiac this season, the Bobcats are hopefully the mix of returning and new talent will elevate their game this season.

"Our freshman class is really, really, really good, and our transfers have been fitting in really well, so I'm excited, we got a deep team this year," Marcellus said. "I think this has been one of the best teams I've been on since I've been on Quinnipiac."

GOALTENDING

After the Bobcats' netminding last year saw its fair share of back-and-forth starters in, at the time, junior goaltenders Matej Marinov and Dylan Silverstein, this year looks very different for the Bobcats.

With Marinov and Silverstein hitting the transfer portal at the end of the 2026-27 season, Quinnipiac would pick up its own goaltender in the transfer portal: junior goaltender Rorke Applebee.

The Châteauguay, Quebec native is a transfer from Lake Superior State, where he spent the first two seasons of his collegiate career.

Applebee played in 62 games with the Lakers, posting a .907 save percentage in his freshman campaign and a .914 save percentage in his sophomore season.

"(Rorke) has a little bit more college experience and obviously had an amazing season last year at Lake State," Marcellus said. "I mean, he gets up and down so fast it's crazy."

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