Volleyball serves up victory



PHOTO | LILY RAND

Right Side Hitter Sydney Bennett, a graduate, jumps to spike the ball over the net as two Pace University defenders block the attack.

By Valentina Toro
Managing Editor

The Owls defeated Pace University in straight sets on Nov. 3, at Pelz Gymnasium, clinching the No. 4 seed and a home quarterfinal match in the NE10 Conference tournament.

The university won 25–7, 25–19 and 25–17. The Owls established an early lead behind their serving and maintained pressure at the net as Pace attempted to respond in the final two sets.

"We really wanted to be able to keep them out of system on serve," Head Coach Lisa Barbaro said. "I think early on, that really worked for us."

The university took the opening set 25–7, recording 14 kills and one attack error. Setter Katie Bardak, a junior, had five kills in the set, while Pace struggled to put together scoring runs against the university's offense.

Pace stayed within two points late in the second set, trailing 18–16 before the Owls finished on a 7–3 run. The 25–19 result put the university one set away from completing the sweep, after a closer stretch of play than in the opening set.

The Setters led 4–1 early in the third set and held an 11–9 advantage before the Owls scored six consecutive points with outside hitter Victoria Pascual, a senior, serving. The university kept the lead and closed the match 25–17.

Setter Kimi Mitchell, a sophomore, said communication and fewer unforced errors contributed to the result. The team had focused on those areas during practice as it prepared for the final stretch of the regular season.

"I think tonight we did a great job just playing together as a team and limiting our errors, our unforced errors," Mitchell said. "We did a good job communicating and just finding ways to score."

Mitchell finished with 27 assists, seven kills and eight digs. Bardak recorded 10 kills, and middle blocker Sarah Stark, a senior, contributed seven blocks. The Owls totaled 41 kills compared with Pace's 26, according to the university's athletics recap.

Barbaro said the team worked on using its middle hitters and maintaining offensive pressure throughout the match.

She said those priorities would remain important as the Owls prepared for the conference tournament.

The game also served as the first "Serve and Honor Night" recognizing military veterans and first responders.

The team visited the Veterans Affairs Hospital in West Haven earlier in the week as part of a community service initiative. Several veterans who met the players during that visit traveled to campus to attend the match.

"I think it's great that we get to be here and support and honor them," Mitchell said. "We're very blessed to have people who go out and serve for this country."

The victory reflected the team's progress heading into postseason competition. Barbaro said maintaining offensive pressure and team energy would remain priorities as the Owls prepare for the playoffs.

"We're in a good place right now as we head into playoffs and stuff next week," Barbaro said. "Just about keeping high energy, staying within ourselves, continuing to attack and using all of our offensive threats."

Football falls short in home finale



PHOTO | WILLIAM GAGNÉ

The university offense lines up against Franklin Pierce University's defense as the quarterback prepares to make a play.

By Noah Nunez
General Reporter

The Owls ended their final home football game this season on Saturday, Nov. 7 with a 14–34 loss to Pace University, with only one more game to be played.

Going into this game, Head Coach Joe Loth felt the team was in a position to win, believing their offense would outclass Pace's defensive measures and let them take a lead and carry it throughout the game.

"I thought we had a chance to compete against these guys. And I thought we came out in the first quarter, competed okay, but obviously we did not compete as well as we needed to," Loth said.

The Owls opened with the first touchdown of the game, scoring only two minutes in by wide receiver AJ Robinson, a senior, leading them to feel confident throughout that first quarter.

However, this confidence only brought them so far as they found themselves unable to break past Pace's defense and ended up with them being unable to make any more pushes throughout the game.

"We gotta play more confidently as an offense and help our defense," Robinson said. "Like complementary football, both sides of the ball"

While offensive play may be part of the reason for the Owls performance during the game, their defensive plays also can be cited for the large gap in points Pace was able to secure.

The Owls often found themselves unable to take down runners during the game, letting Pace slowly make their way across the field before it was too late, and the point had been scored.

With this being the Owls' last home game of the season, many of the players reflected on how they played with linebacker RJ Faessler, a freshman, finding his time with the team something positive to think back on.

"I felt we had a good season, coming four and one. Exiting it took a bit of a dip, but overall, I'm happy with all the guys. I love all these guys, we're a great family," Faessler said.

The dedication present within this team is clear as each player tries and plays their best throughout each game, showing true dedication where it matters the most for them.

"I think it was a success. I love the seniors. I tried to ball out for them. We all put our heart, sweat and tears into this program; it's just that we gotta execute more and just win this last game" Robinson said

With the position the team is in now, all eyes seem to be pointed at their next game and how that will play out as they try to break the losing streak the Owls seem to find themselves in right now.

"We started off okay, and then obviously we've been disappointed the last three or four games, and we've got one game left; we're trying to rectify it with a win the last week," Loth said.

Owls extend winning ways



By Draven Dabrowski
Sports Columnist

Winning a conference championship is difficult enough. Making it a yearly tradition is another challenge, but for the university's men's and women's cross country teams, Saturday Nov. 7 proved that winning has become the expectation.

Both programs captured NE10 Conference Championships on Nov. 7 at Bethpage State Park in Bethpage, New York, continuing their dominance in conference competition.

The women's cross country team secured its second consecutive NE10 title and third in four seasons, finishing with 25 points. All five scoring runners placed inside the top 10.

PJ Dauphinais, a senior, led the Owls with a second place finish in the 6K race, recording a personal-best time of 21:42.4. Mckenzie David, a junior, followed closely behind in third, also setting a personal best at 21:48.7.

Erin Sola, a junior, finished fifth in 22:18.1, while Kaylee Gravel, a graduate, placed sixth in 22:32.5. Michelle Blackburn, a freshman, rounded out the teams scoring five, finishing ninth in 22:49.1 in her first conference championship appearance.

The victory continued the program's success following its NE10 Triple Crown during the 2025–26 academic year.

The men's cross country team extended its championship streak to five consecutive seasons, capturing its sixth NE10 title in program history with 41 points.

Colton Sallum, a sophomore, led the university by winning the individual 8K championship in 25:00.3, improving on his runner-up finish from last season.

Hayden Burke, a freshman, finished sixth in 26:10.1, followed by Dominic Lombardo, a freshman, in ninth at 26:17.5 and Breckin Burke, a freshman, in 12th at 26:22.1.

Dominic Tartarelli, a senior, completed the teams scoring five with a 13th place finish in 26:24.3, a significant improvement from his 109th place finish as a freshman.

Both cross country programs will compete at the NCAA Division II East Regional Championships on Nov. 21, looking to defend their regional titles.

Back at home, the volleyball team closed its regular season with a 3–0 sweep of Franklin Pierce University on Senior Night at Pelz Gymnasium.

The Owls improved to 17–7 overall and 6–3 in conference play, winning 27–25, 25–20 and 25–15 to secure the fourth seed in the upcoming NE10 Championship.

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