SPORTS

Lacrosse falls in NE10, hopes for first NCAA bid





PHOTOS | JULIAN MARKESE

Midfielder Breya Montague, a sophomore, looks for a pass.

Head Coach Kevin Siedlecki walks off post-game.

By Julian Markese
Sports Editor

The lacrosse team's NE10 Tournament dreams were ruined by Bentley University on Saturday, April 25. They lost 17–12 at Jess Dow Field as hosts of their first-ever home playoff game.

The Owls could not overcome a seven-goal onslaught in the first quarter by Bentley, whom they had beaten for the first time in program history earlier in the season.

"They got some goals early, and things just did not go our way. They had a couple of second and third-chance goals that swung the momentum so heavily," Head Coach Kevin Siedlecki said.

The Owls implemented a different defense than they had been using throughout the year.

The plan was to be more compact and play with less pressure on the ball, but Bentley's early goals forced Siedlecki to pivot.

"We had to change up the defense. We had to do something to build up some confidence," Siedlecki said.

Attacker Macy Vail, a senior, scored twice to start the second quarter. The team came alive. By halftime, the Owls were within four.

In the second half, in part thanks to the effort and one-woman clearances of midfielder Breya Montague, a sophomore, the Owls came within two goals.

The score was 10–8, the closest it was all game, for four minutes in the third quarter.

"It was 10–8 for a long time. And we had a few opportunities to make it 10–9. If you get it to 10–9 after being down 7–1, it's a different game," Siedlecki said. "We just didn't get it done."

Bentley scored four straight goals. With 10 minutes left, the Owls were faced with an insurmountable six-goal deficit.

Still, the team fought to the bitter end. Midfielder Taryn Ugrin, a junior, scored with only six seconds left to cut the lead to five.

Goalkeeper Caelan Connors, a senior, made five saves on 21 shots, a slight downturn from her typical performance. In contrast, the Bentley goalkeeper saved 15.

The Owls' season may not be over just yet. They will await seeding for the NCAA Tournament.

The team is currently ranked No. 25 in the country and No. 6 in the East Region. Only six teams from the east will make the tournament.

"It's gonna take a minute to regroup, but I think we're going to get a chance to play again," Siedlecki said.

Even if their season is over, the 2026 campaign was unequivocally the most successful season in the history of the university's lacrosse program.

The team hosted an NE10 Tournament game for the first time.

They knocked off two opponents, Saint Anselm College and Bentley, whom they had never beaten before.

They won more games this season than any Owls team before them.

"We just have to be really proud," Siedlecki said. "Whatever happens on a given day does not define your identity. It's about the long-term pattern and the habits that have been developed."

Softball splits against Adelphi

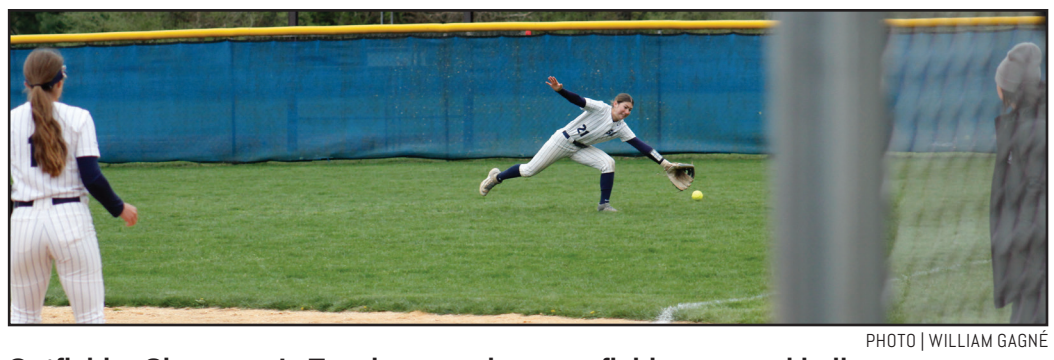

PHOTO | WILLIAM GAGNÉ

Outfielder Cheyenne LaTouche, a sophomore, fields a ground ball.

By Draven Dabrowski
Sports Writer

A late push was not enough for the Owls, who dropped a 7–6 game to Adelphi University in the second game of an NE10 doubleheader after batting back all afternoon at Pelz Field on April 22.

Adelphi set the tone early, scoring twice in the first inning, but the Owls never let the game get out of reach. The home team chipped away with timely hits and steady pressure, keeping things close into the final innings.

"The first game, we were playing good defense and getting timely hitting," Head Coach Kate Bowen said. "The second game was a close one that didn't go our way, but I am really proud of both efforts."

After falling behind early, the university responded in the second inning. With two outs, second baseman Nadia Cestari, a graduate, started the rally with a single before right fielder Cheyenne LaTouche, a sophomore, was hit by a pitch.

Third baseman Christina DeNovellis, a junior, followed with a base hit to bring home the Owls' first run, and the offense continued to roll from there.

Pitcher Olivia Young, a junior, added another RBI knock before infielder Izzy Ingersoll, a sophomore, came through with a hit to give the university a 3–2 lead, flipping the momentum.

"I think our second game was really close. We fought the whole time," Ingersoll said. "We're obviously not happy with the loss, but it was good to have a close game and keep battling."

Ingersoll also reached a personal milestone in the game, recording her 100th career hit in just 76 games.

Adelphi responded in the fourth inning. They put up five runs to take back control at 7–3. The university still fought back.

LaTouche worked a leadoff walk in the bottom half of the inning, and Young followed with another hit to keep the pressure on. With two outs, Ingersoll delivered again, lining a double to left field that scored two runs and cut the deficit to 7–5.

"If I can just continue passing the bat or even get a sacrifice fly, anything to help my team, then I trust my team to come through," Ingersoll said.

That approach showed again in the sixth.

DeNovellis opened the inning with her second triple of the game, setting the table for another late push.

After a walk put another runner on, Ingersoll lifted a sacrifice fly to bring the Owls within one.

On the mound, pitcher Giselle DeLutri, a sophomore, settled in after a tough start, keeping the Owls in the game while adding to her strikeout total on the season.

"The first inning was a little rocky, but it's good to have my teammates back, knowing we can chip away," DeLutri said. "Our team did a great job making the game tighter."

Despite the late surge, the university failed to find the equalizer, dropping the game by a run.

The Owls were able to take the opener 7–3 to split the doubleheader. The university now sits at 19–19 overall and 12–16 in NE10 play.

The Owls returned to action on Saturday, April 25 and Sunday, April 26 for a series against Bentley University. They will close out the regular season at home against Assumption University on Saturday, May 2.

Basketball Manager Dejon Knight is inspiration for team

By Avery Martin
Contributor

Sport and entertainment management major Dejon Knight, a graduate, is the manager of the men's basketball team. He used to play, but by the time he was in eighth grade, keeping up with teammates was becoming harder and harder.

When a coach recommended he make the switch from player, Knight was not thrilled.

"I think a lot of kids just want to play the sport that they want to play, and they kind of want to be involved. And I think me being a manager was a way for me to be involved, but it wasn't a way for me to be involved in the way that I wanted to, in a sense. So, it was tough," Knight said.

Knight was born with cerebral palsy, which affects his ability to walk. As he got older, the sport he loved became more difficult to pursue. Becoming a manager allowed him to still be involved with the New Haven basketball culture he had long been steeped in.

He came around to the idea, and by the time he transferred to the university from Gateway Community College as a junior in 2023, he had found his niche: he became a guide for players and a trusted source for coaches.

Knight prides himself on his work. He provides an outlet for players and coaches to discuss strategy and helps out of state athletes adjust during their first collegiate seasons.

Knight said the team coaches treat him like a player but trust him like the coaching staff. It is a dynamic that he has worked hard to balance.

"I'm pretty confident in myself and how much trust that I have with the coaches," Knight said. "I will always be validated within the team, but it means something to know that at times my word kind of means something."

Knight is close with the players, too. Connecticut's basketball community is tight-knit, and Knight is well known among his peers. He counts NBA and semi-professional players among his friends.

"Growing up when you're playing basketball in Connecticut, a lot of times, whether you're a star or just like a role player, you kind of meet a lot of different people from different towns," forward Kazell Stewart, a senior, said.

Stewart, who is also Knight's roommate, said that their relationship has taught him a lot off the court.

"He just taught me to look at things in a different perspective. Just outside of basketball, perceiving myself as who I am as a person, and coming into every situation being very humble," Stewart said. "He's a very great person. He's very outgoing. He's very kind, so he gave me a better outlook on life."

Guard Isaac Hester, a junior, is still new to Connecticut's basketball community and Knight's influence.

Even so, he also credits him for changing his outlook on life.

"Dejon has taught me to be patient even when things aren't going my way," Hester said. "He always reminds me to keep my head down and always put one foot in front of the other and keep moving forward. He sees my true potential and never fails to remind me of the God-given talent I was blessed with."

That inspiration and way of thinking is exactly what Knight has long aimed to give the players he works with. He shares his story with athletes and other students with the hopes of inspiring them to make an impact.

"I hope that I inspire them not to take every moment for granted. I hope they understand that we are on limited time, and we must make the most of what we have. We must make a lasting impression on those that we have around us," Knight said.

Knight hopes to also leave his mark on the local disability advocacy community. He has been a commencement speaker for the university's Neurodivergent and Disability Affinity Graduation Celebration.

Knight said he hopes to see people with disabilities be more visible and pursue opportunities on campus.

"I hope that when people on campus see me, especially people on campus with disabilities. If they see me, they want to go pursue a career in athletics or just be involved," Knight said.

Knight will be with the team for the 2026–27 season, but that will be his last year here. He described his last year as bittersweet, but it is clear that it will not be the end of his basketball journey.

After all, he said, he has more barriers to break. He hopes to work with an NBA or college basketball team.

"That's the ultimate goal for anyone: to explore more opportunities within basketball and hopefully break down barriers," Knight said. "Also to be an advocate for people with disabilities, to figure out ways that they could break into sport, even though they can't play."



PHOTO | SCSU ATHLETICS

Basketball manager, Dejon Knight, a graduate, poses.