

SPORTS

“My actions will speak louder than words.”
RON DESANTIS '01 AMERICAN POLITICIAN



GYMNASTICS

BY LIZA KAUFMAN
SPORTS EDITOR

From their first time on the mats, the five members of the gymnastics team's class of 2026 made an impact. In her debut collegiate meet, Hana Strause '26 shined on floor and beam, while Gigi Sabatini '26 posted the second-highest score among all vault competitors in her second meet.

After Yale finished second at the 2023 GEC Championships, the team saw continued success. In 2024, Sabatini was one of

Yale's most reliable all-around competitors, regularly leading the Bulldogs on vault and beam, while Megan Brueck '26, Meredith Donovan '26, Lauren Holt '26 and Strause consistently contributed across events.

The class of 2026 started off their junior campaign strong. In the season's opening meet, Holt emerged as Yale's top performer on bars, Strause and Sabatini led Yale on beam and Brueck was the top finisher for Yale on floor. The team ended the season with its highest score at the Ivy League Championship.

The most recent season proved no different as the five seniors continued to raise the bar. The team made history in its opening meet at Pennsylvania State University, finishing with 193.850 points — the program's highest-ever overall score. Led by Sabatini, the squad continued to redefine success, closing out the season with a score of 194 points or more in nine meets. At the seniors' final collegiate meet, Holt earned the competition's third-highest score on beam to contribute to the program's fourth consecutive runner-up finish at the GEC Championships.



WOMEN'S ICE HOCKEY

BY AUDREY KIM
STAFF REPORTER

The eight seniors on the Yale women's hockey team leave their program after cementing it as one of the top in the ECAC.

The class of 2026 capped off their Yale career with a historic senior season, securing the program's second ECAC regular season title ever and advancing to the quarterfinals of the NCAA tournament.

The first time the program won the ECAC title was during the 2022–23 season, the seniors' first year, which was also the year they last appeared in the NCAA playoffs. This year's success gave the class of 2026 a full-circle moment on both the regional and national stages.

“The senior class was crucial to our success this year,”

Sophia Levering '28 wrote in a text message to the News. “While some players played statistically large roles, the class as a whole set a culture rooted in dedication and commitment. They leave big shoes to fill but have also given us a great example of how to lead.”

This year, the seniors led the team through a remarkable midseason turnaround. The Bulldogs struggled with early losses and fell in the national poll and conference standings. However, in December, the Elis began a 14-game win streak that helped clinch the ECAC regular season title.

Yale's national ranking secured the team an at-large bid as the eighth seed in the NCAA tournament. The Elis defeated ninth seed University of Minnesota Duluth before falling to first seed Ohio State University in the quarterfinals.



FENCING

BY LIZA KAUFMAN
SPORTS EDITOR

Throughout four seasons of steady growth, Yale fencing's class of 2026 has built a nationally competitive record in both the women's and men's programs.

The women, led by Amanda O'Donnell '26 and Olivia Ren '26, improved from an 18–13 finish in the class's first season to a 23–6 record last winter. The Bulldogs opened the 2025–26 season with a 6–1 performance at the Vassar Open Invitational before sweeping the Tri-

State Shark Showcase, Sacred Heart Tradition Meet and Yale Invitational en route to an eighth place finish at the NCAA Championships, the program's strongest result during the seniors' four years.

O'Donnell's impact extended beyond the piste. The captain earned the Amanda D. Walton Award after persevering through injuries following a car accident three days before the Ivy League Championships in her first year. She also received the Delaney Kiphuth Student-Athlete Distinction Award, which honors student-athletes with the highest cumulative GPA during their four

years at Yale. Ren made an early impact as a first year, placing fifth at the Garret Penn State Open, and she also earned the Kiphuth distinction this year.

On the men's side, Jack Pan '26 established himself as one of the nation's top sabre fencers, capturing bronze at the NCAA Championships and earning First Team All-American honors his first-year season. Meanwhile, Tony Whelan '26 finished 16th at the NCAA Championships his junior year, while Vinni Yu '26 closed his collegiate career with an 18th-place finish in foil this season.



HEAVYWEIGHT CREW

BY AUDREY KIM
STAFF REPORTER

Heavyweight crew's eight seniors have left their mark on one of Yale's oldest athletic programs.

“The Class of 2026 has been a tremendous asset to our team over the past four years,” head coach Mike Gennaro wrote in a text message to the News, adding that the seniors “will always be remembered for their loyalty, their perseverance, and their selflessness.”

The Bulldogs opened the 2026 season at the IRA Sarasota Invitational, where they defeated Brown to win the Albert Cup and propelled their IRA ranking to No. 6. Since then, Yale has continued racing the best boats in the nation and retained a top 10 rank in the IRA polls.

The graduating Elis were also part of the highly successful 2023 crew, which claimed the Albert Cup over Brown, the Olympic Axe against Dartmouth, the Carnegie Cup at Princeton, the Snider

Cup from Harvard and the Blackwell Cup versus Columbia and the University of Pennsylvania. The 2023 crew was named the Ivy League Champion and Eastern Sprints Champion crew, capturing Yale's seventh consecutive Eastern Sprints title.

Gennaro also emphasized that the seniors follow a tradition of sportsmanship, writing that his time with the class of 2026 has been an “absolute pleasure.”

“Yale Heavyweight Crew has been around for over 150 years and each graduating class of seniors have written a chapter in the proud history of our program,” he wrote. “Over time, those stories become less about results and more about the commitments, sacrifices, and companionship of the individuals that came through our program.”

After a competitive spring season, the team, led by its eight seniors, now prepare to race the top crew teams in the country at the Eastern Sprints on May 17 and IRA National Championships from May 29 to May 31.

MEN'S ICE HOCKEY

BY LIZA KAUFMAN
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The six seniors of Yale men's hockey have much to celebrate.

They are the first in recent program history to defeat every ECAC opponent at least once during their four years. In the 2025–26 season alone, the team earned its first win over Quinnipiac University in seven years and first victory over Harvard since 2018.

From their first season, the class of 2026 made an immediate impact on the ice. Captain David Chen '26 played in all 32 games in the 2022–23 season, finishing with the second most goals on the team, while Bayard Hall '26 and Kalen Szeto '26 each scored their first two collegiate goals in back-to-back games.

In the 2023–24 season, Jojo Tanaka-Campbell '26 scored his first collegiate goal in a game-winning shot against Sacred Heart University, and Elan Bar-Lev-Wise '26 potted his first, a shorthander, against Colgate University.

The two senior defensemen excelled in their junior year. Hall blocked a season-high three shots against Quinnipiac, while Tucker Hartmann '26 blocked four against Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute before netting his first collegiate goal the next night against Union College.

This season, the team had its strongest start since 2010, upsetting Quinnipiac and Princeton, with Chen netting the game-winning goal in the War on Whitney. In his final career game on Senior Day, Bar-Lev-Wise recorded his first collegiate goal.

For Bar-Lev-Wise, belonging to the team extends beyond the ice — and beyond graduation.

“We are more than just friends, we genuinely have a brotherhood,” Bar-Lev-Wise wrote in a text message to the News. “I truly believe they will all be my best friends for life.”

The seniors' team spirit, in turn, has proved to be inspiring for underclassmen.

“Their work ethic and passion for the game pushes our team every day,” Hudson Miller '29 wrote in a text message to the News. “They bring out the best in everyone and set the standard for what it means to play for Yale.”



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