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"Every Ivy game is mentally tough. The margins between teams are so small, and there is no room for error,"

HETTIE WHITTINGTON '27

Undefeated Bulldogs aim to maintain perfect streak in Cornell matchup

FIELD HOCKEY

BY VINCENT HUANG
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

The No. 15 Yale Bulldogs (5–0, 1–0 Ivy) will play their second Ivy contest of the 2026 season against the Cornell Big Red (2–4, 1–0 Ivy) this Saturday at Johnson Field.

Yale currently sits atop the Ivy League as the sole undefeated team and is one of only four undefeated teams in Division I. The Big Red will arrive in New Haven after defeating Columbia (3–3, 0–1 Ivy) 3-2 last weekend to snap a four-game losing streak.



LIZA KAUFMAN / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

The No. 15 Yale Bulldogs will seek a second straight Ivy victory against Cornell this Saturday. A win would mark their best season start in over thirty years.

"Every Ivy game is mentally tough. The margins between teams are so small, and there is no room for error," captain Hettie Whittington '27 wrote in a statement. "In the Ivy League, every game comes down to which team shows up on the day, not which team looks best on paper. On Saturday, we want to be on them from the first whistle and play like we did the last time."

The match will mark Cornell's first visit to Johnson Field since 2024, for a game that Yale won in a 5-0 rout. The Bulldogs will be hoping to replicate that dominating performance to make two victories in two Ivy games.

Yale ranks ninth in the nation for scoring offense — 3.60 goals per game — and have allowed no more than a single goal in any of their opening five contests. In the NCAA's Ratings Percentage Index ranking, the Bulldogs ranks second in the conference behind only No. 8 Harvard (5-1, 1-0 Ivy).

A key contributor to Yale's success this season has been the offensive consistency and chemistry of Chiara Picciafuoco '28 and Issy Baileff '28. Both players have had stellar starts to their 2026 campaigns and rank nationally in multiple offensive metrics.

Picciafuoco, who changed positions from midfielder to forward, has mounted a stunning performance this season and leads the entire NCAA in assists per game — with 1.20 — while simultaneously sitting second for goals per game — with 1.40. Baileff is ninth in the country for goals per game — with 1.00 — and has scored in each of the last four games.

"As with Chi and I, we've played together for a while now and I think the position change for Chi has really allowed her to thrive," Baileff wrote in a statement, referring to Picciafuoco. "Chi and I work well together as she knows where I want to play the ball and I know where she wants it and these connections really help when playing in conference games."

Midfielder Emma Ramsey '27 is also having a career year, ranking fifth in the country for assists per game — with 1.00. The star performances from Picciafuoco, Baileff and Ramsey as well as the general chemistry of Yale's offense places the Bulldogs fifth in the country for team assists per game — with 3.80.

By any available metric, the Bulldogs have had a spectacular start to the season. If they win this Saturday, they will be off to their second best start in program history, trailing only the 7-0 launch of their historic 1995 campaign.

Yale will host Cornell at Johnson Field on Saturday at noon, in what will be the last of their six opening home games.

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Bulldogs prepare for home opener after mixed results at season debut

MEN'S TENNIS

BY REMI CLARK-REDSTAR
STAFF REPORTER

With the first matches of the season complete, the Elis are set to make their home debut this Friday.

After kicking off the season to mixed results last weekend, the men's tennis team took to the court this week in preparation for the Yale Invitational, which they dominated last season. In the 2025-26 campaign, the team had a strong showing at this first home game, winning 11 out of 17 matches played. This year, they are looking to replicate those results.

"We need more match play," head coach Benjamin Johnson said in an interview. "Thankfully, it's September, and we have a lot of room to grow. We had a couple of good showings; we looked good in the doubles, but our singles was not what I was hoping for. We have a lot of fall left, and we are certainly looking forward to getting back on the court this weekend."

In the team's last outing, the doubles racked up four wins out of six matches played across the three days of the Invitational. The dynamic duo of Jason Shuler '27 and Dylan Tsoi '27 did not drop a single set all weekend. Jim Ji '27 and Edward Liao '28 started off rough with an 0-6 loss but found their footing on the second day with a 6-7 tiebreak loss, ultimately breaking through on the final day with a handed 6-3 win.

In the singles department, the team walked away with only three victories out of 12 total matches. Two of their losses went down to the wire, decided by third sets. Overall, five of the losses included sets that went to seven points, with three being tiebreaks. Of the wins, two were earned by Liao, including a triumph over Harvard's Nathan Blokhin, the ITA's No.44 ranked player.

In preparation for their home opener, the team is looking to strengthen its abilities both on the offensive and defensive sides.

"Our ability to attack and defend," Coach Johnson said, "is an area we are looking at: finishing at the net and looking for openings, recognizing weaker balls so we can attack. We spent the week in practice trying to implement those, being aggressive with the ball and taking it on the rise."

The team conducted focused practices for other aspects in need of improvement, tailored to individual duos and players.

"We have a very structured week. We come in knowing what we are doing each day," Krish Gupta '28 said. "One day, we are hitting baskets of balls; another day, we have singles and doubles play."

In preparation for the debut of the team's new recruits, the Bulldogs paid particular attention to practice set play. None of the three new players competed in the earlier invitational.

"We are being much more competitive and simulating match play in practice," Gupta said. "We are getting the freshmen ready for their first match and are really trying to simulate the match environment for them and us."



ALYSSA CHANG / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

After the season opener at Chowderfest, the Yale men's tennis team is taking the lessons from their first competition and readying themselves for the Yale Invitational. Three rookies are also set to make their college debut.

At this weekend's competition, the new recruits will make their Yale tennis debut.

"I am looking for my guys to be tough, enthusiastic, disciplined and selfless," Johnson said. "You put them in a certain environment; the goal of any coach is to create an environment for any player to learn from, learn to succeed and fail and have growth from both."

The three-day Yale Invitational will kick off this Friday, Sept. 26, at the Cullman-Heyman Tennis Center.

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Yale looks to stay hot in first Ivy League match against Cornell

WOMEN'S SOCCER

BY GIAN LOMBEYDA
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

The Yale Bulldogs (5–4–0, 0–0 Ivy) will play their first conference match of the season against the Cornell Big Red (3–3–2, 0–0 Ivy) on Saturday.

Yale has not beat Cornell in five years, but the team will seek to change the narrative this weekend in Ithaca. With strong performances against Fordham University (3–4–1, 0–1 A-10) and Sacred Heart University (7–2–0, 2–1 MAAC) over the last two weeks, the Bulldogs have exceeded expectations so far this season, surpassing last year's win count before conference play even begins.

"Our attack is getting better and better and our defense has been physical and organized as we've continued to ask of them," Head Coach Sarah Martinez wrote in an email to the News.

Results on the road will be crucial for a potential Ivy title push this season. That begins with this weekend's tough matchup.

Cornell has historically proven to be a difficult opponent, with Yale's last win against the Big Red coming in a tight 1-0 match in 2021. Although goals have been in short supply for the Big Red this season, the team has been solid defensively, recording three clean sheets in their last four matches.

Yale will need experienced forward Abigail Solomon '26 and Ivy League Athlete of the Week Honor Roll recipient Anita Thorvaldsdottir '27 to step up and break down Cornell's back line.

"Cornell is a solid team," defender Alex Chang '27 wrote in an email to the News. "However, I have full belief in our team and all the work that each and every one of us, from the coaching staff to the players, has put in."

Chang, who was also on the league's honor roll this week, anchored Yale's defense and notched her second assist of the season last Sunday. She will look to continue contributing in both defense and attack.

Yale's defensive personnel have been strong across the board. Fellow defenders Andie Miller '27, Tana Sands '29 and Hope McMillin '30 have had strong seasons, while first-year goalkeeper Isabel Willems '30 has blown away all expectations, already garnering Ivy League Defensive Player of the Week recognition in her short time at Yale.

The Bulldogs will need their defenders to stay disciplined from the first minute to the last on Saturday. Last year, Yale's 0-1 loss to the Big Red was decided by a goal in the first minute.

The goalscorer in question, Cornell senior Alanna Colbert, has scored in the last two matches between Yale and Cornell. She already has a goal and two assists this season.

Even as Cornell has struggled for wins as of late, the team is reinforced by the experience of upperclassmen leaders like Colbert who make up a majority of the starting lineup.

"Every team in the Ivy League is very strong, and there's never an 'easy to win' game as results depend on who's ultimately better on the day," Chang wrote.

A win would go a long way in addressing Yale's early season consistency woes, especially ahead of a tough fixture against defending Ivy League champion Princeton next week.

"There's obviously more pressure added now that Ivy Conference play begins," Chang wrote, "but we won't let that take away the joy that we play with."

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ALYSSA CHANG / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The Bulldogs will face Cornell on Saturday in their first conference match of the season. Yale has not beat Cornell in five years, and the Bulldogs enter the game with a disciplined squad that will seek to change that narrative.

Stat of the Day

THE BULLDOGS ARE THE SOLE UNDEFEATED TEAM IN THE IVY LEAGUE IN FIELD HOCKEY, AND ONE OF FOUR UNDEFEATED TEAMS IN DIVISION I.