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"He has brought out the best in all of us by creating a culture of hard work. He is always talking about being all bite, no bark. He wants us to work as hard as possible and let our work speak for itself."

JAXTON SANTIAGO '28 FOOTBALL

As head coach, Kevin Cahill returns to Yale with passion and discipline

FOOTBALL

BY AUDREY KIM,
STAFF REPORTER

As Kevin Cahill kicks off his head coach tenure at Yale, he is steering Team 153 with discipline and passion, both for the sport and for the team he now leads.

In his new position, Cahill will have the chance to make Ivy League history as the Bulldogs seek to win back-to-back Ivy League championships and return to the FCS playoffs for the second year in a row. For now, things are looking optimistic for Cahill: in his debut game last Saturday, he led the Bulldogs to a comeback victory against Holy Cross.

"Yale has a lot of history to it," Cahill wrote in an email to the News. "Yale Football is a tradition that is very proud. To be a small piece of the Yale Football history is pretty special. We have a lot of wonderful traditions within our program that we look forward to building this season."

In late February, Yale appointed Cahill as the new Joel E. Smilow '54 Head Coach of Football. Cahill was previously on the Elis' coaching staff for 10 seasons — from 2012 to 2022 — before leaving New Haven to become the head football coach at Lehigh.

Cahill, a former college athlete himself, is no stranger to competition. As a three-year starting quarterback for the Springfield College football team and three-year starting pitcher for the school's baseball team, Cahill made two NCAA playoff appearances and was named ECAC Division III New England Player of the Year twice.

"I have really enjoyed the competitive edge Coach Cahill has," wide receiver Jaxton Santiago '28 wrote in an email to the News. "He has brought out the best in all of us by creating a culture of hard work. He is always talking about being all bite, no bark. He wants us to work as hard as possible and let our work speak for itself."

Before returning to New Haven to become head coach, Cahill served as associate head coach and offensive coordinator for the Elis. During Cahill's 10 years on the Bulldogs' coaching roster, Yale won three Ivy League championships.

Ahead of the 2023 season, Cahill was appointed Lehigh's head coach, a position he held for three seasons. Although his first season at the helm for the Mountain Hawks ended with a 2–9 record, Cahill turned the program around in record time. In his second season, Lehigh flipped the script, finishing 2024 with a 9–4 record and a Patriot League Championship.

In his final season, Cahill led the Mountain Hawks to new heights, closing out 2025 with a 12–1 record and undefeated regular season. The team's singular loss took place in the second round of the FCS playoffs, when Lehigh fell to Villanova. The 2025 Mountain Hawks were one of only two teams to enter last year's FCS postseason undefeated and received the No. 5 seed in the tournament.

"What I enjoy most about working with coach Cahill is his passion," running back Hugo Djeumeni Kemeni '29 wrote in an email to the News. "It's truly second to none, he's fully embraced his job and does everything to make sure we stay on the path that we've chosen."

During his tenure in Bethlehem, PA, Cahill earned significant recognition for his contributions as a coach. In 2024, he was named the ECAC Coach of the Year and the Patriot League Coach of the Year, and in his record-breaking 2025 season, he was tapped the AFCA Region 1 Coach of the Year and earned the Eddie Robinson Award, the award presented to the National FCS Coach of the Year.

"Winning is very important with the history Yale has," Cahill wrote. "We are proud of that expectation; that will not change. Our immediate goal is to improve every day. We will be a work in progress all season long. The goal is to win, but the real goal is to be a much better football team later in the season than early in the season. The outcomes will take care of themselves."



LIZA KAUFMAN / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Kevin Cahill, who was on Yale football's coaching staff from 2012 to 2022, has returned to New Haven as Team 153's head coach. His efforts to infuse a winning, hard-working culture seem to have paid off in his debut victory last Saturday.

The hard-working culture Cahill has cultivated has already proven successful in the Bulldogs' season opener against Holy Cross. After going into the locker room tied 7-7, Yale scored 31 points in the second half, including 17 unanswered in the fourth quarter, to defeat the Crusaders 38-28.

"Coach Cahill is a winner. He knew exactly what we needed to do to win, even when we went down, and he put us in the best position to do so," Santiago wrote.

With one win under his belt, Cahill will now turn his attention to leading Yale football in its first season following the Ivy League's FCS Playoff debut, where the Bulldogs advanced to the second round of the tournament.

"The opportunity to coach this group is very special to me," Cahill wrote. "Learning the players' personalities and their personal backgrounds has been great. They are a great group of motivated men. It's been great to be around them and look forward to a fun season ahead."

Yale will head to Cornell for its Ivy Opener on Saturday at 1 p.m. The game will be available on ESPN+.

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Bulldogs to face Big Red on the road for Ivy opener

FOOTBALL

BY BRODY GILKISON
STAFF REPORTER

The No. 17 Yale Bulldogs (1–0, 0–0 Ivy) head north this weekend to take on the Cornell Big Red (0–1, 0–0 Ivy) in a game that will be both teams' conference opener.

Last week, the Bulldogs mounted a fourth-quarter comeback over College of the Holy Cross for their first win of the season, while the Big Red fell 20-7 to Colgate University.

Looking at Cornell

The Big Red offense left much to be desired after a meager Week 1 performance. Through the air, Cornell quarterback Garrett Bass-Sulpizio threw for just 132 yards and completed less than half of his 38 attempted passes. He was picked off three times by the Colgate defense.

Bass-Sulpizio also led the Cornell rushing attack. He accounted for nearly half of the team's yards on the ground on five carries, and the remaining 12 rushing attempts were made by five running backs.

On the defensive end, the Big Red put up a respectable effort. The team allowed just twenty points, all in the first half, and managed to rack up four sacks and eight tackles for loss — an impressive feat against a Colgate team that came in averaging just 1.3 sacks allowed per contest.

Team 153's keys to victory

Yale's offense was certainly the highlight of its first week. After getting off to a slow start, the Bulldogs put up over 500 yards of offense thanks to a strong passing game. Though averaging over 450 yards per game through the air may not be sustainable throughout the course of the season, quarterback Dante Reno '28, who was named Ivy League Offensive Player of the Week, certainly lived up to preseason expectations and will need to keep up his strong play on Saturday.

One area of improvement is the ground game of the Bulldog offense. After averaging just 3.7 yards per carry on 23 carries last weekend, Yale's young running back room is due to have a breakout game. If Hugo Djeumeni Kemeni '29 and Cuttler Adams '28 can break a few free, it will only open up the Cornell secondary even more for the dynamic Bulldog air raid.

On the other side of the ball, defensive coordinator Sean McGowan and his team put on a defensive clinic in last week's first half, allowing just seven points and doing a strong job of swarming to the football. However, in the second half, as both offenses caught fire, the Bulldogs struggled to get off the field for a bit before making adjustments in the fourth quarter.

Yale's offense will likely put up plenty of points against Cornell on Saturday, but it would be a lot easier on the fans if its defense could find a way to collapse the pocket early and often and force the Big Red offense into making mistakes. Look for an agitated defense to be flying around the field this weekend and get back to its destructive ways.

Saturday's game will kick off at 1 p.m. at Schoellkopf Field in Ithaca, and will be streamed on ESPN+.



LIZA KAUFMAN / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Coming off of a victory against Holy Cross last weekend, Team 153 is set to travel to Ithaca for its first conference matchup of the season against the Cornell Big Red on Saturday.

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STAT OF THE DAY

THE BULLDOGS PUT UP OVER 500 YARDS OF OFFENSE AGAINST COLLEGE OF THE HOLY CROSS LAST WEEKEND