SPORTS

"You can learn many things from children. How much patience you have, for instance."
FRANKLIN P. ADAMS COLUMNIST

FOOTBALL: Bulldogs to play No. 8 Lehigh on the road Saturday

BY BRODY GILKISON
STAFF REPORTER

The football team will be back in action Saturday when they travel to Lehigh to take on the Battle Hawks in the Bulldogs' first away game of the year.

Yale (2–0, 1–0 Ivy) enters the matchup with two well-earned victories against Holy Cross and Cornell under its belt. Lehigh (5–0) comes into Saturday's bout as the eighth-ranked team in the Football Championship Subdivision, the second highest level of Division I football, after picking up five straight victories to begin the year.

Suppress the ground game

Part of the reason why Lehigh has had such a successful start to the season is due in large part to their ferocious rushing attack. In five games, the Battle Hawks have gained over 1,200 yards on the ground. Leading the way with 596 yards and four touchdowns is standout junior Luke Yoder, and he is supplemented by Jaden Green, who has accumulated 449 yards and five scores.

They will square up against a Yale defense that has proven itself to be capable of making bigtime plays and shutting down opponents. Led by defensive backs Inumidun Ayo-Durojaiye '26 and Abu Kamara '27, both of whom received national recognition for their outstanding games last week, Yale's playmakers will need to come out swinging in an attempt to stop the Battle Hawks. The team should also look to stack the box early on to try and prevent Lehigh's ground game from dictating the game.

"This is about running to the ball and playing to our standard," Ayo-Durojaiye said. "There are no individuals on this team who make plays by themselves."

Collapse the pocket

In their first two games, Yale's defense showed a knack for stopping opposing quarterbacks and disrupting plays. Mack Johnson '28 has two sacks so far this season, and five other Bulldogs have also added sacks in the first two games.

However, Lehigh's offensive line has proven stout. They have only given up two sacks of their own through five games, so creating pressure and collapsing the pocket will be no easy task for the Elis.

The Bulldogs have also been successful this season with stunts at the line of scrimmage — when the Yale defensive tackles create havoc with misdirection — which opens up gaping holes in the opposing quarterback's protection. While it did not always result in sacks last week, the strategy pushed Cornell quarterback Devin Page out of the pocket and led him to throw four interceptions.

On Saturday, the Yale coaching staff will look to draw up similar schemes in hopes of throwing Lehigh quarterback Hayden Johnson off his game and causing turnovers.

"As a defense, we like to play hard," Kamara said. "Whenever our back is against the wall, we find a way to make a play."

Protect the ball

With four fumbles on the year, the Bulldog offense needs to do a better job at protecting the ball to stand a chance in the matchup with Lehigh. The Battle Hawks have shown the ability to jump on teams early in games by capitalizing on their opponents' mistakes, so it will be imperative that Yale finds a way to eliminate turnovers in order to stay in the ballgame.

The Yale defense generates plenty of turnovers that lead to more drives for the offense, and this may be a reason why Lehigh is only a 3.5-point favorite despite the home-field advantage and high ranking. For the Elis, winning the turnover battle against the Battle Hawks will be crucial if they not only want to cover the spread but come back to New Haven with a big-time victory.

Yale kicks off against Lehigh this Saturday at 12 p.m. at Goodman Stadium in Bethlehem, Penn.

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Three alumni over 80 to compete at Head of the Charles Regatta

BY AUDREY KIM
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In mid-October, three Yale alumni will participate in the world's largest three-day rowing competition: the Head of the Charles Regatta.

DeLane Anderson Jr. '66, Peter McGowan '65 and Bill Becklean '58 are members of the Octogenarian 8, a coed team of rowers all over the age of 80. This year, the team will make their fourth appearance at the Head of the Charles Regatta, and they are set to row the 4,800 meter course.

"It's certainly the feeling of accomplishment when you successfully complete an event like the Head of Charles," McGowan said about rowing with the Octogenarian 8. "They always say it attracts about 250,000 people, and so it's pretty exciting to be rowing that race with crowds all along the riverside. And so that really keeps your energy up doing it."

McGowan competed on the Timothy Dwight College intramural crew team during his time at Yale and has since been rowing with Community Rowing, Inc., the organization that started the Octogenarian 8.

Anderson, a sweep rower alongside McGowan, recently got involved with Community Rowing in 2024 and joined the Octogenarian 8 last year.

"There are a lot of private rowing clubs on the Charles River, and a lot of prep schools and universities have boat houses on the Charles River, but there's no place for the average citizen that wants to row, to go row," Becklean, a coxswain for the Octogenarian 8, said. "The people that started Community Rowing said, 'Hey, there ought to be a place that people can sign up to row that don't belong to a club or go to one of these schools.'"

At Yale, Becklean was a coxswain for the heavyweight team, and he coxed the team to a national championship and Olympic gold medal in 1956.

Originally from Kansas City, Mo., Becklean began his journey as a rower at 14 years old. He was a coxswain for the crew team at Phillips Exeter Academy before competing as a Bulldog for four years. Becklean has remained heavily involved with the rowing community since graduating, and his passion for the sport eventually led him to join the Octogenarian 8.

"First off, no one else was doing this. Secondly, when people get older their worlds tend to shrink and I'm just facilitating their worlds growing," Catherine Saarela, coach and founder of the Octogenarian 8, said in a phone interview. "They get to meet a bunch of new people and expand their networks at an age when people tend to lose friends. It makes them so happy, and it makes everyone else around them happy when they see this going on."

Saarela coaches at Community Rowing and said that she got the idea for the Octogenarian 8 a few years ago when she saw how many 80-year-olds were on her roster.

Since founding the Octogenarian 8, Saarela has seen interest for the team grow at an exponential rate and said she now gets calls from rowers interested in joining the team instead of having to recruit herself.

"What's cool is that they're the last race of the day. Everyone is waiting for them and they get cheered on from their walk to the start until the finish," Saarela said.

The team, coached by Saarela, will compete on Oct. 19 at the Head of the Charles Regatta in Boston.

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COURTESY OF CATHERINE SAARELA

This month, three Yale alumni will row with the Octogenarian 8 team in their fourth appearance at the Head of the Charles Regatta.

SWIM AND DIVE: Bulldogs to hold intrateam exhibition meet Friday

BY CAROLINE LEE
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

The Yale swim and dive team is set to hold their annual Blue and White Exhibition Meet on Friday at Paine Whitney Gymnasium.

The event will mimic a typical intercollegiate meet and include a packed slate of events — including dives, distance races, and sprints. The intrateam competition will offer Yale's swimmers and divers a chance to showcase their training and strengthen camaraderie ahead of the season.

"The focus is more so on getting points for your team versus getting a specific time," senior Noah Millard '26 said. "It's really fun seeing who can be the toughest."

Arshak Hambardzumyan '28, from Budapest, Hungary, recalls his teammates cheering one another on during last year's Blue and White Exhibition — which was his first American competition.

"Meets in Hungary usually are just concentrated on you. It's more the individual performance, the whole team aspect of it is not that important as it is here," Hambardzumyan said. "Here people actually really care about how you're going to do and really try to get the best out of you."

Jumping into the pool on Friday will also mark the unofficial collegiate debut as Yale athletes for the team's new members. At Friday's races, new Bulldogs — three transfers, six first-years on the men's side and eight on the women's — will reveal what they will contribute to the team.

"Every year I find myself saying we have the strongest team yet, but this season truly feels special," Millard said. "With only a small graduating class last year we didn't face the same gaps other Ivy programs did so we've been able to build upward rather than just replace."

In the locker room, the team captains have worked to center team culture around collective success. Women's captain Jessey Li '26 pointed to upcoming beach days and an Outdoor Education Center trip as two examples of team bonding.

For her, this year's squad already seems to be forging the tight-knit bonds that have helped the team succeed in recent years.

"Every year the team evolves, and I love seeing how each group of newcomers brings fresh energy," Li said. "This year, the team feels incredibly determined and unified."

Last February, the men's team sent six athletes to the NCAA Championships and finished in 20th place overall, making Yale the only mid-major school to make the top 25.

Millard, who made the 2025 All-American first team in the 1,650 meter freestyle and All-American honorable mention team in the 500 freestyle, envisions reaching new heights at this year's NCAA championship.

"Continuing to compete with the top programs and establishing Yale as a serious and respected contender would be a lasting legacy I want to be part of," Millard said. "The thought of going back to NCAA with my teammates and reaching our true potential is what fuels me most."

The women's team — bronze-medalists at last year's Ivy League championship — has an equally ambitious outlook. Sophomore Mabel Koff '28, who broke Yale's school record in the 200 meter backstroke (1:54.79) last season and has been passionate about the sport since kindergarten is excited to see what the team has in store for their 2025-26 campaign.

After a stellar first year, Koff is also eager to help her new teammates adjust to collegiate life, both in and out of the pool.

"I look forward to stepping into a new role on the team and becoming a person of support for our freshmen to look for," Koff said.

Meanwhile, her teammate Li looks forward to "one more ride with this amazing group of teammates," this time as she leads as captain.

The simulation meet will take place at Kiputh Exhibition Pool on the west wing of Paine Whitney Gymnasium.

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YALE ATHELTICS

The Yale Swim and Dive team will hold their annual Blue and White Exhibition Meet on Friday.