

SPORTS

Egyptology alum found his way back to Yale through sports photography

BY LIZA KAUFMAN
STAFF REPORTER

When Dave Rudin GRD ’85 first approached Yale Athletics Director Vicky Chun on the sideline of the 2018 Yale football game against the University of Maine, he wasn’t sure what to expect.

“I thought, instead of sending an email and getting it bounced around the athletic department, let me go straight to the top. So, I found Vicky Chun on the field,” Rudin said in a phone interview. “The worst they could say was no.”

They said yes, and now, seven seasons later, Rudin, whose photographs have been published in the News, has become a fixture on Yale sidelines at football, volleyball and women’s lacrosse games as a volunteer photographer known for his detailed sports photography that captures both the triumph and the struggle of athletes. His path to Yale games, however, winds back through ancient languages, high school newspapers and even the ruins of Egypt.

From The Vanguard to Washington Square News

Rudin picked up a love for journalism in high school, when he wrote for his high school newspaper, The Vanguard.

“I liked to write. That’s one way to put it,” Rudin said with a laugh. “One of my English teachers even commented on my rambling style of writing. I guess I’m someone who writes by the pound.”

After graduating from John Dewey High School in Brooklyn in 1977, Rudin went to New York University from 1977 to 1981 and studied Near Eastern Languages and Classical Civilization.

At NYU, Rudin joined Washington Square News, the student newspaper, working first as a reporter and then as sports editor in his sophomore and junior years. He covered basketball, volleyball, wrestling, soccer, tennis and wrestling, while also experimenting with layout and photography.

“Laying out the paper taught me a lot about framing an image. I learned to always position a photo so people are looking into the page, not off it,” Rubin said. “That’s something that still affects how I frame a picture today.”

Rudin’s passion for photography came from his father, Sidney, who taught him how to use his Minolta SR-1 camera.

“I thought the ‘SR’ on the model stood for ‘Sidney Rudin,’” Rudin joked, “but it was just the model name.”

Besides his sports photography, Rudin also does fine art and travel photography in black and white. A series of his photos taken at the annual Carnevale in Venice won the top prize last year in the non-professional category of the Pollux Awards, a major international photography competition.

Yale, Egypt and a detour into finance

After graduating from NYU in 1981, Rudin came to Yale to delve into Egyptology. A linguaphile, Rudin studied French, Egyptian and Akkadian at Yale, adding to a language repertoire that already included Spanish, Hebrew, German and Japanese.

Though he earned a master’s degree in Ancient Egyptian and Near Eastern Studies, Rudin left Yale before completing his dissertation.

“I felt isolated in a small department,” he said. “I saw the same handful of people every day and basically there was no opportunity to meet new people.”

Rudin decided to leave New Haven and return home to New York City, where he obtained what he called a “practical degree” — an MBA from NYU’s Stern School of Business. Rudin has worked for the New York City Department of Finance for most of his career, according to his LinkedIn profile.

In 2025, Rudin enrolled at a University of Edinburgh virtual program to pursue a master’s degree in Ancient Worlds, looking to reconnect with his academic passions.

Returning to Yale through the camera lens

Rudin first returned to Yale after his days at the Graduate School in 2016, when a friend, whom he had met at a Doctor Who convention, invited him to see a performance of Othello at the School of Drama.

“Even though I’m a photographer, I purposely left my camera at home,” he said. “I wanted to experience Yale and New Haven directly through my eyes.”

As Rudin strolled past the Humanities Quadrangle, where he had taken many classes, and walked along York Street, he said he was flooded with memories and became emotional.

“I thought to myself, maybe it’s time that I tried to reconnect with the University.”

The next year, in 2018, he approached Chun and Ann-Marie Guglieri, who also works in the athletic department, on the field.

They gave him credentials, and by the end of that season, Rudin had shot multiple football games.

“Anne-Marie wrote back saying, ‘Dave, your pictures are great. You can photograph whatever you want,’” Rudin said, and from there, his journey taking pictures of Yale athletes officially began.

Rudin also reconnected with Yale by joining the Graduate School Alumni Fund. Since 2019, he has volunteered as a funding agent, writing letters and emails to fellow alumni.

As a first-generation student, and having been the recipient of a full fellowship and stipend, Rudin said he believed strongly in paying it forward.

“I have always felt I should give back so that other future

students get the same benefit,” Rudin said.

Rudin’s new role on the Alumni Fund brought him to New Haven in 2019 for the annual Alumni Assembly, held the Thursday and Friday before the final home football game, which was the annual Yale-Harvard Game that year. Although he wasn’t sure he was going to be permitted field access at The Game, Rudin brought along his camera equipment.

While he was eating lunch at the Omni on Thursday afternoon before The Game, he received a call granting him permission to take photos at the 136th playing of the Yale-Harvard game. However, Rudin woke up next morning to find that he had a posterior vitreous attachment on his left eye, the eye he uses to take pictures.

Despite describing it as an “amoeba” floating on his eye, Rudin did not let it stand in his way of photographing this historic game.

In the 2019 game, which went down in history for a student protest at halftime that delayed play for almost an hour, the Yale team was down by 17 in the middle of the fourth quarter. The Bulldogs made a historic rally and threw the game into double overtime, a moment Rudin said he will never forget.

“If someone had told me that one day I would be attending the Yale Alumni Assembly and the next day I’d be photographing the Yale-Harvard game on the field, I would’ve told him that they were crazy,” Rudin said. “When I was a student, I felt isolated. Now, through the alumni community and photography, I feel more a part of Yale than ever before.”

Rudin has since photographed at all eight Ivy League football stadiums and created photo books of Yale-Harvard games. He has expanded to women’s sports, photographing volleyball since 2023 and women’s lacrosse since 2024.

His commitment to photographing Yale athletes often takes him far beyond New Haven. In 2023, when Yale football played at Brown and volleyball competed at Harvard on the same day, Rudin made the trek from New York to photograph both games in Providence and Cambridge.

“I photographed two Yale sporting events on the same day in two different states,” he said with a laugh.

Two years ago, when he drove to Princeton for a Friday volleyball match and then to Penn for Saturday’s game, his car broke down and he had to pay his own money to fix it, Rudin said. The same thing happened again over the weekend after he traveled to Lehigh University for a football game.

Parents like Maggie Yang, mother of defensive lineman Dylan Yang ’26, have noticed that dedication.

“Dave is just so committed. Literally, he’s always there, camera in hand, capturing every moment at home or away games,” Yang wrote to the News. “It shows that



COURTESY OF DAVE RUDIN

Dave Rudin GRD ’85 has become a fixture on Yale sidelines.

he cares about the players and what this team stands for and that means a lot to us parents. To have these moments captured in a photo is precious and timeless.”

Reflecting on his decision to expand his photography to women’s sports, Rudin said he wanted to highlight the grit of female athletes.

“I photograph big strong men with football, so maybe I should photograph some big strong women,” Rudin said.

Capturing the human condition

For Rudin, sports photography is not just about victories.

“Sports are about the human condition,” he said. “It’s not just happy people celebrating. You have to show the bad with the good sometimes.”

He recalled one photo of quarterback Griffin O’Connor ’22 sitting hunched over on the sideline during a difficult game, “looking like what more could go wrong.”

Rudin posted the photo on Facebook, and O’Connor’s grandmother messaged him, expressing appreciation for Rudin’s authentic portrayal of athletes.

Athletes also notice Rudin’s dedication.

“I think he does a great job capturing our emotions,” volleyball player Betsy Goodenow ’27 wrote to the News. “Every picture tells a story. We really appreciate the support we get from Mr. Rudin—he travels to away games and comes to lots of home games. To have a dedicated person like that in your corner means a lot.”

Although NCAA regulations prevent Rudin from sharing his photos directly with the athletes because it could be considered a form of payment, Rudin shares his photos with Yale parents and online through his Instagram page.

Yang said Rudin’s work offers parents a glimpse into the spirit of the team that they rarely get to see from the stands.

“His pictures capture the emotion of the players regardless of where they are positioned on the field or sideline throughout the entire game,” Yang wrote. “Some of the pictures are not about the big plays, he catches those little moments of mental toughness and connection that make this team so special.”

Yang’s favorite picture Rudin has captured is one of her son kneeling and praying at the 50-yard line, in memory of his high school teammate Steven Sanon, who wore the number 50 and passed away.

“I even made a sticker emoji out of it,” she said.

A quiet, constant presence on the sidelines

Despite his long tenure, Rudin is careful not to overstep boundaries.

“I try not to get too personal with players,” he said. “But when I get to know someone a little bit, it makes my pictures more meaningful. They’re not just names anymore.”

Rudin’s presence has made him a fixture on Yale sidelines.

“Whether we’re at the Bowl waiting for the players to run out or at the tailgate lot watching families and friends interact, Dave captures it all,” Yang wrote. “His photos bring players who come over, families, and friends together.”

On any given weekend, Rudin will be on the sidelines with a camera in hand and eyes focused on the story unfolding in front of him.

“I feel more like a Yalie now than I did when I was a student,” Rudin said. “This is my way of supporting the athletes and giving back to the University.”

Yale Athletics is headquartered in Ray Tompkins House, at 20 Tower Parkway.

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MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY: Bulldogs go the distance at Paul Short Run

BY INEZ CHUIDIAN
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The men’s cross country team competed at their second meet of the season at Lehigh University for the annual Paul Short Run on Friday.

Named after the late Paul Short, who served as Lehigh’s assistant director of athletics for 29 years, the Paul Short Run is one of the largest meets in the country — hosting over 7,000 athletes from more than 600 high schools and colleges every year.

The Bulldogs competed in the 8K Gold Race and scored a total of 308 points across their top five runners, Owen Karas ’26, Kenan Pala ’26, Daegan Cutter ’27, Braden King ’26 and Guy Stevens ’27.

On average, Yale’s top five runners finished the 8K in 24 minutes and 7 seconds, combining for a team time of 2 hours and 36 seconds. Karas led the squad with a final time of 23:31.

“Most of the guys improved their times from last year’s race,” Cutter wrote in a text to the News. “Of the 6 Ivys that ran, we beat all but Harvard. This race gave us a lot of confidence moving forward.”

The team’s 11th place finish out of 40 competing programs was a strong start for the Bulldogs and hints at a competitive season that

will culminate with the NCAA Cross Country Championships in November.

“It was a great fall day for cross country,” Ronan Luff ’27 said in an interview Monday. “There wasn’t too much of an emphasis on this race or where we placed as a team, as the real part of the season is just getting underway now.”

Sophomore Seb Sutch ’28 described the weekend as “fair but not outstanding.”

“We’ve been in a big block of training for the last month so our bodies aren’t quite in tune for a fast race yet,” Sutch said. “In the next few weeks, as training decreases and the weather cools down, we should see a big step up in terms of performance.”

Endurance sports, such as cross country, frequently schedule practice regimens for athletes to peak in performance at certain intervals. Often, high volume training pays off once the season reaches its final stretch.

The Bulldogs will next race in New Jersey for the Princeton Fall Classic on Oct. 17.

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YALE ATHLETICS

On Friday, the men’s cross country team took home 11th place at the Paul Short Run.