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"As a kid from Philadelphia, becoming captain of such a historic program is something I never could have imagined. I hope to set a standard for young student-athletes from my neighborhood to follow."

ABU KAMARA '27 CAPTAIN OF TEAM 153

Defensive star captains Team 153 in bid to clinch consecutive Ivy title

FOOTBALL

BY AUDREY KIM
STAFF REPORTER



LIZA KAUFMAN / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Abu Kamara '27, a consistent playmaker who was elected captain of Team 153 at the end of last year's historic season, looks to lead Yale to another Ivy League title and FCS playoff berth this season, which will continue when Yale hosts Brown on Saturday.

Following the outstanding 2025 season that won him Ivy League Defensive Player of the Year, defensive back Abu Kamara '27 has stepped into his role as captain of Team 153.

Kamara was elected captain at the end of last season by team vote in Yale football's longstanding tradition. He hails from Prospect Park, Pa., where he was a decorated football player at Interboro High School. Last year, he received national recognition after helping Yale clinch the Ivy League's first playoff win over Youngstown State University in a November showdown.

"I'm honored to be named captain of Team 153 and excited to begin this journey," Kamara told Yale Athletics. "As a kid from Philadelphia, becoming captain of such a historic program is something I never could have imagined. I hope to set a standard for young student-athletes from my neighborhood to follow."

While playing for Interboro High School, he was named first team all-state as both running back and defensive back and shattered school records for interceptions, rushing yards and touchdowns.

"Abu is a very talented football player, but off the field he is a far more impressive person," Yale football head coach Kevin Cahill, who returned to Yale Football as head coach this season, wrote in an email. "He sets a high standard for himself, and he holds his teammates to the same high standard. That accountability really shows up on and off the field."

Kamara finished his 2025 season at Yale with 76 total tackles, was unanimously voted the Asa S. Bushnell Defensive Player of the Year and was also unanimously named to the All-Ivy First Team.

Wide receiver Jaxton Santiago '28 called Kamara an "absolute playmaker" in an email to the News.

"Whenever the team needs him, or a big play needs to be made, we all know Abu will find a way to make it happen," Santiago wrote. "He's also one of the hardest workers I've ever been around. As someone who has played with him for a few years now, it motivates me to work even harder myself."

At the end of the season, Kamara was named a finalist for the Buck Buchanan FCS National Defensive Player of the Year Award and was selected for the AP FCS All-America Second Team.

"Abu is a natural leader. We have faced adversity both on the field and off the field this season. He is consistent with his approach day to day," Cahill wrote. "The team feeds off that approach."

This season, Kamara has recorded 28 total tackles and one interception, which he returned for a gain of 14 yards against Dartmouth during Yale's dominant win on Oct. 10. He has led the team to four total wins so far, including two conference wins and two hard-fought comebacks against Merrimack College and College of the Holy Cross.

"My favorite moments with Abu are on the practice field. Whenever we get the chance to line up against one another, it's always a battle. He normally gets the better of me, but I love the challenge," Santiago said.

The Bulldogs currently sit in the middle of the Ivy League standings with a conference record of 2–2, barely trailing Dartmouth, Harvard and Princeton, who all sit at 3–1.

The remainder of Yale's regular season will be spent facing Ivy League opponents, meaning that every game will have playoff implications. The Bulldogs will host both Brown and Princeton before traveling to Boston for The Game, which will be held at Fenway Park for the second time in history.

"Abu has been my right-hand man in a lot of ways," Cahill said. "Some ways that he knows and many ways he has no idea. He has helped my transition back be as smooth as possible. His personality, his drive and willingness to be a team first player is contagious. It is motivating for the players, but also for the coaches."

Cahill and Kamara will be looking to help Team 153 write history as the Bulldogs aim to overtake their conference opponents and clinch the Ivy League title and the FCS postseason automatic bid once again.

"Abu is extremely selfless. He is willing to do whatever it takes to make sure the team succeeds," Santiago wrote. "Football is a difficult sport with many ups and downs. When you see a guy like Abu bringing consistent energy, hard work, and support for others, it makes it a lot easier on everyone else. We look up to him and the example he sets."

Kamara will lead the Bulldogs on Saturday, when they host Brown at the Yale Bowl. The game will kick off at noon with video coverage available on ESPN+ and radio on WYBC.

Contact **AUDREY KIM** *at audrey.kim.ajk234@yale.edu.*

Yale to face Penn in season's last game, with senior pride on the line

WOMEN'S SOCCER

BY GIAN LOMBEYDA
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

The Yale women's soccer team (5–10–0, 0–6–0 Ivy) will face the University of Pennsylvania Quakers (6–5–4, 1–2–3 Ivy) this weekend as the Bulldogs look to end the season on a high note.

In an up-and-down season that saw spirited counterattack goals and disciplined defending, as well as miscommunications and lapses in concentration, the Bulldogs are eager for a favorable result mirroring their season-opening win 11 weeks ago against Vermont University (5–5–7, 3–1–4 AmEast). Saturday's home game will also be Senior Day.

The emotional stakes are only heightened when considering the history between the two sides. Yale has not been able to beat Penn since 2022, with the last three matches ending in draws. A win would change this narrative and set the tone for the Yale women's soccer program going forward.

"Obviously, from a results standpoint, this season has been disappointing, and I think we all recognize that we haven't been as consistent as we would have liked in bringing the same intensity and level of performance to every game," Abigail Solomon '26 wrote in an email to the News. "That's why it's so important for us to finish the season strong on Saturday, not only for us as seniors, but also for the pride of our program."

A victory won't be an easy task, as Penn in recent weeks has managed to earn hard-fought draws against top-half teams Harvard (9–4–2, 3–2–1 Ivy) and Brown (10–3–2, 4–1–1 Ivy), while the Quakers have also beaten defending champions Princeton (7–5–2, 3–2–1 Ivy). They have not been shut out of a game since a 4-0 loss to Dartmouth (10–3–2, 4–2–0 Ivy) in September.

However, the Bulldogs feel they have the pieces to challenge Penn on Saturday.

Yale has shown moments of class throughout the season under the leadership of head coach Sarah Martinez and an experienced senior class, featuring the likes of Solomon, Addison Bray '27, Alex Chang '27, Kyla Holmes '27, Andie Miller '27, Anita Thorvaldsdottir '27, Amelia Warren '27 and Karoline Hernes '27, the team's captain.

While the Bulldogs will be missing center-back stalwart Chang due to a late red card last match, certainly the seniors' leadership presence will be felt on Saturday both on the pitch and on the sidelines.

"It's also a very special day because it's Senior Day, so it's an added motivation to play for our Seniors and to make it a final game they can be proud of," midfielder Cindy Yang '30 wrote in an email to the News. "They've all given YWS so much, and I think everyone wants to make the most out of the opportunity to share the pitch with them one last time."

Solomon pointed out the personal significance this match will have for her after years of commitment to the team and the school.

"On a personal level, this game means a lot because it's the last time I'll get to represent Yale and play alongside this group of girls," Solomon wrote. "This program has given me some of my closest friendships, memories, and experiences that I'll carry with me long after my Yale playing career is over. I'd love to be able to look back on my final game with pride and finish this chapter with a win alongside the people who have made these four years so special."

The Bulldogs will face the Penn Quakers at 6 p.m. on Saturday at Reese Stadium to end the season.

Contact **GIAN LOMBEYDA** *at gian.lombeyda@yale.edu.*



ALYSSA CHANG / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

With a core senior class playing their last match for Yale, the Bulldogs look to reward their side with a long-awaited victory on home turf. Although Yale has not beat Penn since 2022, the eight seniors will look to end their college career with a bang.

STAT OF THE DAY ABU KAMARA '27 FINISHED HIS 2025 SEASON AT YALE WITH 76 TOTAL TACKLES.