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SPORTS

"I've genuinely never been part of a group with this level of togetherness."
ANDREW MYERSON '27 MEN'S SOCCER

Bulldogs earn postseason berth, aiming to repeat 2023 championship

MEN'S SOCCER

BY ELI RATNER
STAFF REPORTER

The Yale men's soccer team (4–6–5, 2–1–4 Ivy) is headed to the postseason for the first time in three years after a 1-1 draw against the Brown Bears (7–5–4, 2–3–2 Ivy) on Saturday afternoon in Providence.

Heading into the matchup, the Bulldogs were tied for second in the Ivy League with the University of Pennsylvania (7–3–5, 3–1–3 Ivy), behind Cornell (11–3–1, 6–0–1 Ivy), who had clinched the first seed and home field for the playoff tournament. The Elis needed either a tie or win to guarantee a playoff berth.

"It was far from a great performance from an overall execution standpoint, but we did work extremely hard, we stuck together, and we defended our box incredibly well down the stretch when Brown was providing immense pressure," head coach Kylie Stannard wrote in an email to the News. "We approached this last game like it was a playoff so it is nice to have that behind us and we know that we are ready for a tournament feeling that is officially a knockout round game."

On a dreary rainy day in Providence, the game started off with strong offense from the Bears, who recorded eight shots in the first half, including four on goal.

In the 34th minute, the Bears drew first blood. A free kick into the box by Lorenzo Amaral connected with James Snaith, who netted the first goal.

Although it was an offensively stagnant half, the Bulldogs were able to strike back. With only two shots, one of them found gold.

In the 43rd minute, the Bulldogs earned a throw-in from outside the box. Daniel Grumann '30 connected with Owen Bull '28, who headed the ball to Ryder Mills '27. Mills fired a header into the right side of the net to equalize.

The rest of the game remained a stalemate, due to the strong defensive Yale presence, which has been crucial to the team's success this season.

In the 81st minute, goalie Josh Linebaugh '29 capped off his dominant performance with a save from a shot within the 6-yard box. He recorded seven saves on Saturday, anchoring a strong defensive effort that held the Bears to only one goal.

"We always say, 'Bend, don't break,' as in, we can suffer, we can defend for long periods, and embrace the hard aspect of the game, in order to get tough results like this one, where we knew, at halftime, that it was a really poor first half, but we needed to turn the page, and suffer in the second half," star defender Andrew Myerson '27 said.

The past two "rough" seasons have taught the team "what it takes to win," he added.

Although the Bulldogs had hoped for a win on Saturday, the draw was sufficient for the team to qualify for the conference postseason tournament, which will be a full-circle moment for the current senior class, who were first years when they last played in the tournament. That year, Yale became the inaugural champion of the Ivy League tournament.



LIZA KAUFMAN / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

After securing a 1-1 draw against the Brown Bears on Saturday, the Yale men's soccer team clinched a berth to the Ivy League playoffs for the first time since 2023. With the tie, the Bulldogs finished the regular season with 10 points, good for the third seed.

Myerson, who transferred to Yale from Duke University last season, wrote in an email to the News that he is proud to have helped the team return to the tournament and pointed to a strengthened team chemistry that has contributed to the team's success this year.

"What makes this year different is our culture," Myerson wrote. "I've genuinely never been part of a group with this level of togetherness. We'd run through a wall for each other, and that chemistry shows every time we step on the field. Everyone is completely bought in, and I think that's been the difference."

Stannard also lauded the senior class for putting team performance over playing time and individual records.

"This humility goes a long way for our younger players in showing what great leadership looks like," he wrote.

The Bulldogs will now travel to Ithaca to compete in the Ivy League tournament semifinal, where they will face the No. 2 Penn Quakers. With a spot in the championship game on the line and ultimately an automatic berth to the NCAA tournament, the Bulldog seniors will seek to repeat history and return to New Haven with some new hardware.

Kickoff is slated for 7 p.m. on Thursday in Ithaca. The game will be live streamed on ESPN+.

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In overtime win, Yale secures first road victory at Harvard since 2017

MEN'S HOCKEY

BY ELI RATNER AND LUCY BENJAMIN
STAFF REPORTER AND CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

The Yale men's hockey team (2–1–0, 2–1–0 ECAC) took down Harvard (2–2–0, 1–1–0 ECAC) in style on Saturday, picking up 4-3 in overtime for their first away victory over the Crimson since 2017.

After defeating Brown (0–3–0, 0–3–0 ECAC) 2-1 in its home opener last weekend at Ingalls Rink, the Bulldogs hit the road looking to pick up wins against two top teams. Although Yale lost 3-2 to No. 12 Dartmouth on Friday, the Bulldogs returned home after securing a major comeback victory over longtime rival Harvard.

"This win means a lot to our team and our program, especially given the history of the rivalry and how long it's been since we won at Harvard," Ronan O'Donnell '28, who scored the game-winning goal, wrote in a text message to the News. "We're really thankful for all the support we've received from our alumni, and it feels great to get a big road win like this for everyone involved with Yale hockey."

Although the Bulldogs ultimately fell to the Big Green, they put up a strong fight against the nationally ranked opponent. Yale battled back from one-goal deficits on two separate occasions, with goals from Will Richter '27 and Kyle O'Leary '30, keeping the game tied until Dartmouth secured the win late in the third period. Goaltender Noah Pak '28 also recorded a notable 43 saves.

After the heartbreaking defeat at Dartmouth, Yale rallied against Harvard to split the weekend and pick up its first road victory against the Crimson in nine years.

The first period started off with intense offensive pressure from both teams, with four goals. Harvard opened the scoring just over four minutes into the game when Alex Huang found the back of the net, giving the Crimson an early 1-0 lead.

Yale quickly responded just over two minutes later as Iisai Pesonen '27 scored a power-play goal with assists from Zach Wagnon '28 and captain Rhys Bentham '27.

After a second score from Harvard's Aidan Lane, the Bulldogs bit back to close out the period with yet another power-play goal in the last three minutes by Donovan Frias '28 to tie the game 2-2.

Early in the second period, Harvard retook the lead for the third time after Ben MacDonald put it for Harvard goalie Ben Charette, who failed yet again in the net for the Crimson. In February, O'Donnell potted the game-winning goal against Charette as well. Harvard's coach put Charette in for the final 1:13 of overtime in the hopes of redeeming himself but instead repeated history.

"It felt great to score the OT winner again, and this time I was glad to see it go in without needing a review," O'Donnell wrote. Last year, his overtime goal landed on the goal line and was initially waived off before a video review ruled in Yale's favor.

O'Leary, who has started the season off red-hot with three consecutive scoring games, wrote in a text message to the News that he is grateful for his team's support.

"My teammates have made the adjustment to college hockey very easy from day one and have put me in some great spots through the first few games," O'Leary wrote. "This is a tight knit group that competes every day and we're determined to get better as a group."

O'Leary also highlighted the Bulldogs' strong goaltending.

home. Refusing to let the Crimson pull ahead once again, rookie standout O'Leary answered with a shot assisted by Dylan Hunt '29 and Hudson Miller '29. With the goal, O'Leary has now scored in each of the three games to start his collegiate goal on a hot streak.

With the score knotted at 3-3, the Bulldogs entered the third period hungry to take the lead.

But neither team found the net in the third period, as goaltender Jack Stark '27 stood tall between the pipes, making 10 saves to keep the Bulldogs in contention and force the game to overtime.

With 31.3 seconds remaining in overtime, O'Donnell intercepted the puck from a Harvard defenseman, sending the shot straight into the net to secure a 4-3 win for the Bulldogs.

O'Donnell's game-winning overtime goal must have been deja vu for Harvard goalie Ben Charette, who failed yet again in the net for the Crimson. In February, O'Donnell potted the game-winning goal against Charette as well. Harvard's coach put Charette in for the final 1:13 of overtime in the hopes of redeeming himself but instead repeated history.

"In both games this weekend our goalies played unreal and gave us chances to win," he wrote. "After falling just short on Friday and dealing with a lot of adversity over the weekend, we were determined to not let it repeat Saturday vs another good team."

Stark, who was named as Saturday's recipient of the Tim Taylor Cup, recognizing the game's most valuable player, finished with 29 saves.

The Tim Taylor Cup is "definitely a huge honor, given the history and significance of the Yale-Harvard rivalry," Stark wrote in an email to the News. "It's something I'm really grateful for, but finding a way to win that game and enjoying that moment with my teammates is what made it such a special night."

Stark praised the team's resilience but recognized that consistency — "putting together a full 60 minutes" — is an area for improvement.

"If we can continue to build on that, I think we'll put ourselves in a good position moving forward," he wrote.

Additionally, he highlighted composure as a necessary skill on the net.

"My biggest focus was just staying in the moment and taking things one shot at a time. In a game like that, it's easy to get caught up in the emotions, especially with how much the rivalry means to everyone," he wrote. "I just wanted to stay composed, give the guys a chance to win, and trust that we'd find a way to get it done."

The Bulldogs will look to pick up two more wins as they return home to Ingalls Rink to face Colgate University (2–8–0, 1–1–0 ECAC) and Cornell (2–2–0, 1–1–0 ECAC).

Puck drop will be at 7:00 p.m. at The Whale on Friday and Saturday, respectively.

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LIZA KAUFMAN / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

The Bulldogs overcame three separate deficits to defeat longtime rival Harvard 4-3 in overtime on Saturday in Cambridge, securing their first road victory against the Crimson since 2017 following a 3-2 loss to Dartmouth on Friday night in Hanover.

STAT OF THE DAY

THE YALE MEN'S HOCKEY TEAM BEAT HARVARD 4-3 ON SATURDAY.