

# SPORTS

## MEN’S BASKETBALL: Rhode Island defense stifles Bulldogs in first loss

BY WALTER ROYAL  
STAFF REPORTER

The Yale men’s basketball team (3–1) lost its first game of the season to the University of Rhode Island Rams (4–1), falling 77–86 on Tuesday at the John J. Lee Amphitheater in New Haven.

The Bulldogs, who were leading the nation in three-point percentage entering the night, were unable to crack Rhode Island’s stifling defense. The Rams took possession by stealing the ball on 17.5 percent of Yale’s offensive trips. The Rams, who are currently fifth in the nation in steal percentage, scored 22 of their 86 points off Yale turnovers.

“We didn’t do a good job of staying in front of the ball. That’s true. I thought we got hurt getting to the rim that way,” head coach James Jones said in the postgame press conference.

Rhode Island rosters a suite of dynamic wings, each with specialized playstyles. The Rams’ Tyler Cochran averages 4.4 steals per game, which places him second in NCAA Division 1. On Tuesday night, Cochran’s defensive prowess paired perfectly with junior Jonah Hinton’s offense. An athletic sharpshooter, Hinton had 24 points on the night.

“The kid Hinton had a really good game on us. He makes five threes, and he was open for two of them, at least, where there was nobody in sight,” Jones said.

From the tip, the matchup was particularly close. Neither team held a multi-score lead until Mouhamed Sow gave the Rams a four-point advantage, 16–20, with a pair of free throws at the 10:58 mark. The Senegalese center, standing at a towering 7’1”, was a difference maker for

Rhode Island. In his 16 total minutes on the floor, the Rams outscored Yale by 19.

Following a Samson Aletan ’27 layup to pull the Bulldogs within two, Rhode Island hit a three and a tip-in two to stretch their lead to seven. Yale, however, answered in kind, with two Aletan free throws and a pair of three-point jumpers from Devon Arlington ’26 and Jordan Brathwaite ’27 enabling the Bulldogs to claim the pole position, albeit by a razor-thin one-point margin at 26–25.

After trading points, the teams were knotted 29–29 when Isaac Celiscar ’28 received a kickout pass from Aletan, put up a shot from beyond the arc, and drew a foul as he came down. Watching from the floor, Celiscar erupted into celebration as the shot went in. Celiscar converted the free throw after to complete the four-point play in what should have been a game-changing momentum swing.

Instead, the Rams answered back with a Jahmere Tripp three to return the game to a single-score difference, 33–32.

Yale pieced together a pair of layups and some free throws to enter the half with a 46–40 six-point lead. The Bulldogs played team basketball, with nine of their 13 field goals in the first half coming off assists.

The best assist of the night came in the second half, when Trevor Mullin ’27 dished a no-look flick to Aletan, who slammed it home to give the Bulldogs a 48–40 lead out of the break. A Mullin jump shot on the next possession extended the advantage to ten with 18:40 to play.

But that was Yale’s largest lead of the night.

The Rams scored on their

next three possessions, cutting the lead down to five by the 16:30 mark. Two minutes later, they went on a 6–0 run to reclaim the lead, 57–56.

Rhode Island’s defense then took over, holding the Bulldogs scoreless from 9:49 to 6:20. During that span, the Rams extended their lead to five. The score at the end of the stretch sat at 64–71. The Rams held their lead for the rest of the night, ending the game at 77–86.

Captain Nick Townsend ’26 led the Bulldogs in points and assists, with 18 and five, respectively. He also tied for the team lead in rebounds with six, three of which were offensive.

“We’ve just got to learn from it. We’ve got to respond. Always sucks to lose at home, and we didn’t cash in on that chance tonight, but we’ll have many opportunities the rest of the season, and we’ve got to go out there and come out with more

energy next time,” Townsend said in a postgame interview.

The Bulldogs will next take the court against the University of Wisconsin–Green Bay on Saturday at the Paradise Jam tournament in the U.S. Virgin Islands, which the team will enter as the first seed.

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YALE ATHLETICS  
The Bulldogs dropped their first game of the season against the Rams on Tuesday at home.

## FENCING: Bulldogs look to keep up strong form on road

BY AZARA MASON  
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

The Yale Fencing team will head to Long Island University for the Shark Tank Challenge/Tri-State Shark Showcase Tournament on Sunday to compete against Long Island University, New York University, St. Johns University and Wagner University.

Last winter, the men’s fencing team had a record of 18–7, and this year’s squad started with a blistering 6–0 run, walking away from Vassar Open Invitational undefeated.

The Elis began the tournament, which took place on Nov. 10, with wins against Drew University and Stevens College with scores of 25–2 and 20–7, respectively. The Bulldogs then overcame Lafayette

College 24–3 and took down Hunter College 26–1. Yale finished the day with a 27–0 victory against Yeshiva University.

“After months of preparation and long morning practices, we came in hungry to compete at a high level,” captain Jordan Silberzweig ’27 wrote in an email. “We’re really excited to have an enthusiastic class of first-years,” Silberzweig added.

Last season, the Bulldogs entered the Ivy League tournament with an 18–3 record, before losing all four matches. In the subsequent NCAA championships, the men and women combined to place 11th out of 33 teams.

This year, the men’s team has three returning NCAA championship qualifiers: Tony Whelan ’26, Silberzweig and

Castor Kao ’28, who is ranked sixth in the country in foil competition.

In their meet at Vassar, the Bulldogs showcased the positive mentality that the team has been focused on maintaining this season.

“I appreciated how focused we were not only in terms of fencing, but also hyping up and coaching our teammates when our coaches were away supporting the women’s team with their competition,” Silberzweig said.

At the Vassar tournament, the women’s team won six of seven matches, securing dominant wins over Yeshiva University and Lafayette College with scores of 21–0 and 20–1, respectively. They also took down Tufts 18–9 and both Wagner and Wellesley College 19–8, While Yale lost to Cornell by one, 14–13, the team recorded a win

against Brown, 16–11.

“The past meet went well. We beat six teams, including Brown, which set a really good tone for the rest of the season,” captain Amanda O’Donnell ’26 wrote to the News. “I’m excited to see what we can do at Ivy League Championships when we have two more of our starters back and have had more training time together.”

Last year, the women’s team had a 23–8–1 season record, remaining undefeated through the Yale Invitational and Brandeis Invitational. They only suffered two losses in their first 23 matches. While the team struggled in the Ivy League round robin tournament, they have now welcomed a strong recruiting class to complement their returners.

“On the women’s side, joining an

already strong group, we have four incoming first years that have been on a World Team, meaning they were ranked top 4 in their country for their age category at the end of the season and competed at World Championships,” O’Donnell wrote.

Additionally, the team returns six previous NCAA championship qualifiers: O’Donnell, Alexa Drovetsky ’27, Anya Mehrotra ’28, Michelle Lee ’27, Audrey Lin ’28 and Kristina Petrova ’28 — who was an NCAA all-American in 2024 and took a gap year to play for the Ukraine World Team.

The Bulldogs will head to Brooklyn for the Tri-State Shark Showcase on Sunday.

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## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL: Elis struggle against Bobcats’ sharpshooting

BY AZARA MASON  
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The Quinnipiac Bobcats opened a Tuesday evening game against the Bulldogs in the John J. Lee Amphitheater with strong energy and completed an 11–0 run to gain a 15–3 lead just five minutes into the game.

Yale attempted to disrupt the momentum by applying full-court pressure, but Quinnipiac continued to find answers and maintained control, closing the first quarter with a commanding 27–9 lead. The Bulldogs were never able to fully recover from the Bobcats’ fast start.

Though Yale ultimately did not overcome the margin, the Bulldogs still pushed. Lousia

Vydrova ’27 scored the first basket of the 2nd quarter, attempting to trim away at the Bobcat’s lead and bringing it to 29–11. However, the Bobcats’ offensive momentum continued throughout the rest of the first half.

Quinnipiac is averaging a 33.7 three-point percentage so far this season but shot 58.3 percent from beyond the arc in the first half — scoring 21 of its 43 points against Yale from deep. By halftime, the Bulldogs trailed 43–23.

“We needed to do a much better job on closeouts and making their shooters uncomfortable,” leading scorer Ciniya Moore ’28 said. “Being more locked into personnel and communicating earlier on switches would’ve

helped take away some of those rhythm threes.”

Captain Kiley Capstraw ’26 opened the third quarter with unwavering intensity. Less than a minute into the frame, she attacked the basket, drew contact and earned a trip to the line. On the following defensive possession, with Yale still in its full-court press, she secured a steal. Just a few plays later, however, Capstraw suffered a hard fall on a rebound attempt, hitting her head with a Quinnipiac player coming down on top of her, which forced her out for the remainder of the game.

“We definitely felt a drop in communication without her out there—she brings such a steady presence,” Moore said about Capstraw. “We tried to fill that

gap by really playing hard for her and stepping outside our comfort zones. Everyone made an effort to talk more, be louder, and take ownership of the little things she usually handles.”

With Capstraw sidelined, Moore kept the Bulldogs fighting. After a scoring drought of over five minutes in the third quarter, she finally knocked down a three to cut the score to 48–26. A few possessions later, she buried a deep jumper, and on a later defensive trip she came up with a steal. In the final seconds of the period, Moore completed a look to Vydrova that brought the score to 54–30 heading into the fourth.

Moore’s five points and assist accounted for all seven

of Yale’s points in the third quarter. She finished the game with 16 points.

In the fourth quarter, despite Yale outscoring Quinnipiac 16–15, the Bobcats’ lead remained out of reach. Freshman forward Dorka Kastl’ 29, standing at 6’2, made her collegiate debut and recorded two blocks, showing promise for the added interior presence she brings to Yale’s rotation.

Up next, the Bulldogs will travel to Providence to take on the Providence Friars (2–1) on Friday at 7 p.m.

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