NEW HAVEN



Chloe Edwards, Senior Photographer

Public safety workers prepare for The Game

BY REETI MALHOTRA AND KAMALA GURURAJA
STAFF REPORTER AND CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

University, city and state police officers and emergency responders will ramp up operations in a joint public safety effort for the Yale-Harvard game in New Haven on Saturday.

Nearly 90 New Haven Police Department personnel are scheduled to report to the Westville Music Bowl at sunrise on Saturday, according to an internal planning document. Alongside Yale police officers, they will patrol parking lots, manage traffic and provide safety and awareness procedures for some 40,000 or 50,000 attendees.

"The University's top priority is the safety and security of everyone attending The Game," Duane Lovello, Yale's head of public safety, wrote in a statement. "The Yale Police Department is working closely with the New Haven and West Haven Police Departments, Connecticut State Police, and other public safety partners to maintain a safe and well-managed environment at the Bowl and surrounding areas."

Yale last hosted The Game in 2023, when some 70 spectators began to wave Palestinian flags and 300 walked out of the Yale Bowl. New Haven police assisted Yale police officers in managing the demonstration. No arrests were made, according to New Haven Police Chief Karl Jacobson.

The incident was not without precedent — in 2019, hundreds of students and alumni across both universities stormed the field after halftime, urging Harvard and Yale to divest from fossil fuel companies. 50 protestors were forcibly removed from the premises and received misdemeanor summons for disorderly conduct.

For the following Yale-Harvard game hosted by Yale in 2021, officials newly prohibited "large banners or signs" and specified the possible arrest of spectators who tried to storm the field. These regulations were reaffirmed in an email to students from Dean of Student Engagement Burgwell J. Howard on Thursday.

Public safety incidents have also affected and increased police activity. In 2011, a U-Haul truck driven by Brendan Ross '13, struck and killed a 30-year-old Massachusetts woman, Nancy Barry, during a pre-game tailgate. A School of Management student and Harvard employee were also injured in the accident.

Referring to the incident, Jacobson explained that "there's a real need for the public safety aspect."

"We're out there, West Haven's out there as well, doing traffic control, and parking lot safety and awareness and protection," Jacobson said.

An unfounded bomb threat to Harvard amid global terrorist attacks also resulted in increased police presence and security procedures in and around the Yale Bowl in 2015.

Per Yale's safety information for the game, tailgating on Saturday will begin at 9 a.m., when parking lots open. Each person is permitted to bring in one clear bag up to 12 inches by 12 inches by 6 inches large and a small, handheld purse. All bags brought into the tailgate and stadium are "subject to search," the official webpage says. The Yale Bowl does not allow reentry.

Emergency and Yale Public Safety staff will also be present at a relief tent.

Alongside emergency service activity at the Bowl, American Medical Response, or AMR, will provide "uninterrupted 911 coverage" and "hospital transport services" for attendees.

"For Saturday, we have increased staffing and confirmed communication plans with our public safety partners to support efficient response and high-quality patient care," Michael Turcio, the operations manager for AMR New Haven, wrote in a statement. "We anticipate an increase in alcohol-related activities this weekend and encourage everyone to make responsible choices."

Increased ambulance activity is expected due to excessive alcohol consumption among spectators, Jacobson said. The New Haven Fire Department and Yale New Haven Health have aligned response plans accordingly, according to Turcio.

All Yale University students are provided with one complimentary ticket to the Game, available for pick up at Payne Whitney Gymnasium with a valid student ID. Yale employees receive one complementary General Admission ticket.

Omar Sekkat SOM '26 will be attending the game for the first time.

"The only safety concerns I would have are just related to the weather. It's going to be cold and it might be raining," he said.

Many Yale student organizations hold mixers with Harvard students the night before the game.

"There's a culture of going hard the night before," Jarvis Xie '26 said, emphasizing the importance of being responsible. "It's easy to get lost before and after the game."

Carolina Melendez Lucas '27 has attended the game as a first year and a sophomore, at Yale and Harvard respectively.

"I think everyone should be prepared that cell reception doesn't work. It was hard to find my friends and find my parents at the end. After the game with your friends, have a plan about where to meet up, when to meet up, because it will be hectic when you're actually at the game," she said.

Lance Joseph Anthony, a student at Harvard, expressed a similar concern, saying, "I'm honestly really excited. I don't think I'm really scared for any safety reasons."

He added: "The only thing is that I heard that the Yale Bowl doesn't really have good service, so that's probably the only thing I'm a bit concerned about, making sure my friends get to and from the Bowl together and don't lose each other."

Harvard's coach strangled a paper mache bulldog during his pregame pep talk in 1909.

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Local businesses plan for weekend sales boost

BY OLIVIA WOO AND HARI VISWANATHAN
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This Saturday marks the 150th anniversary of The Game, a football rivalry between Harvard and Yale that was first played in 1875.

A number of New Haven businesses are expecting large increases in revenue at the time of the Yale-Harvard game, with some stocking additional merchandise or increasing staffing to take advantage of the crowds of fans flocking to New Haven.

Islam Alzhougi, a server at Burgerway on Whitney Avenue, said that on the Yale-Harvard game day in 2023, the restaurant experienced a 47 percent increase in sales from those of an average Saturday. Burgerway will hire one extra chef and extend its opening hours this Saturday in anticipation of The Game, Alzhougi said.

Good Nature Market, a longtime student haunt on Broadway, experiences a 50 percent increase in sales on Harvard-Yale gameday, according to Tae Park, the store's manager. The market has stocked 50 percent more goods than usual to prepare for the upcoming weekend, Park said.

"Visits to the Shops at Yale have increased by 15 percent in the past week alone, indicating strong interest in planning ahead for the weekend," Alexandra Daum, the associate vice president for New Haven affairs and University Properties, wrote to the News.

According to Victoria Verderame, the communications director at the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce, families who live across Connecticut come to The Game as a regular tradition.

It costs the University money in order to pay for tailgates, student events, food and security measures in the hours and days surrounding The Game, according to Yale College Dean Pericles Lewis..

When asked whether or not Yale experiences greater costs than revenue generated by the Game, Associate Vice President of Student Life Burgwell Howard said, "my supposition is that it costs us money to host The Game."

"Yale College has spent somewhere in the neighborhood of $100,000 to feed everybody and make certain things available, add additional shuttles and the like," Howard said. "It's money that I think we have been willing to and are glad to spend because it's important to our community."

According to Howard, Yale College has changed spending allocations from 2023 in order to prioritize student health, safety and transportation, while eliminating costs on spirit merchandise and complimentary food at Saturday's tailgate.

This year, dining halls will be open for hot breakfast on Saturday for all Harvard and Yale students, regardless of their meal plans. Howard said that the change was implemented in order to ensure that students have food in their systems on the morning of The Game.

The tailgate lunch typically provided to students at the Bowl, however, will no longer be offered due to a lack of student demand in recent years.

More food will be available for purchase from tents at Saturday's tailgate than in past years. According to Howard, tailgate tent rentals contribute little to University revenue.

"If the School of Management wants to host an event or the Alumni Office wants to bring in a tent, we might charge $2,000 or something like that for a rental site, but that requires a tent, that requires chairs, electricity, all these things," Howard said. "So in the end, it's a negligible profit that's made when you rent out these because there are many other expenses."

In addition to tent rentals and ticket sales, Yale Athletics collects revenue by charging for parking, which costs $20 per car, as well as for alcoholic beverages. This year, Yale Athletics has expanded its ability to serve alcohol, which will be available for purchase in four locations this year compared to the two offered in 2023, Howard said.

According to Howard, Yale College will also be spending more money on shuttles than in previous years and has worked with the city to plan an efficient route to the Bowl.

Despite these expenses, administrators expressed confidence in its ability to cover future game day expenses.

"Yale Athletics maintains a consistent fiscal approach, preparing effectively for both years when Yale hosts and years when it does not," assistant athletic director Colleen Murphy wrote to the News.

Saturday's game will be the 141st iteration of The Game.

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