SPORTS

"We have been through a lot of adversity over the past few seasons, and I think it has brought out team much closer together..."
WILL RICHTER '27 MEN'S HOCKEY

Yale dominance interrupted by renewed Quakers with fresh coach and star

MEN'S BASKETBALL

BY WALTER ROYAL
STAFF REPORTER

The Yale men's basketball team (24–7, 11–3), despite a heartbreaking Ivy League tournament final loss, posted its highest win total of the James Jones era en route to a second straight Ivy regular-season title in the 2025-26 season. While last year's gaudy 13–1 conference record may seem to dwarf this season's 11-win performance, this season's Bulldogs faced a newly minted contender in a stronger Ivy League.

The Penn Quakers (18–12, 9–5) posted a five-win increase in their conference record from last season to this year. Fueled by new head coach Fran McCaffery and junior transfer TJ Power, Penn was able to end Yale's run of consecutive NCAA tournament bids.

Jones, Yale's head coach, recognized the significance of the Quakers' rapid rise to power.

"Fran has done a great job with that team and that program in his first year to get them back to the NCAA tournament. I think this is his fourth or fifth team that he's brought to the NCAA tournament," Jones said in a press conference following the Ivy tournament.

Penn has a storied history as an Ivy basketball powerhouse. With a Final Four run in 1979 and AP poll rankings as high as second in 1971-72, the Quakers have reached levels of success unknown to the rest of the Ancient Eight. That success, however, started fading in 2008. While a Penn squad coached by Steve Donahue won both Ivy trophies in 2018, the other 16 seasons preceding this year ended without hardware for the Quakers.

After Donahue's dismissal, Penn hired McCaffery, a Quaker alum and former coach for Lehigh, UNC Greensboro, Siena and Iowa. The swap bore immediate fruit, with this year's Penn squad scoring six more points per game and allowing three fewer per game than last season's Quakers.

McCaffery was able to attract Power, a high-profile forward and former top-25 recruit, in the transfer portal. By Power's own admission, he would not have been a Quaker had McCaffery not been the coach.

"I came to play for Coach McCaffery. That was the bottom line. Wherever he was going, I made the mistake twice saying no to him. I didn't want to make that the third time," the Ivy tournament MVP said following his otherworldly 44-point championship performance.

Richard Kent, an Ivy League basketball commentator, underscored Power's importance to the team in an interview.

"Penn doesn't go to the Ivy tournament without Power, for sure. So, in the Ivy League — and I'm not singling out the Ivy League, in a lot of one-bid conferences — one guy can make a huge difference. And that guy is Power," Kent said.

Kent, however, did not minimize McCaffery's impact.

"He also instilled the winning attitude in the rest of the team. I think that they were beleaguered last year," he said, when Penn won only four Ivy League games.

Jones no doubt has a similar effect. His eight regular-season crowns and four tournament titles both lead among active coaches in the Ivy League and have come with varied rosters.

Penn graduates three key contributors this spring. Ethan Roberts, the Quakers' leading scorer, will receive his diploma alongside starting guard Michael Zanoni and late-season emergent star Cam Thrower. Still, with Power back for his second season in the Ivy League, the Quakers will look to defend their title next season with their star at the helm.

The Quakers lost to the University of Illinois in the first round of March Madness. Yale defeated Auburn 78-76 and lost to Texas A&M in its past two NCAA tournament first rounds.


YALE ATHLETICS
The Penn Quakers, who defeated Yale in the Ivy League tournament final this month, returned to relevance this season following a program overhaul.

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Bulldogs to face Cornell on the road, seeking first conference win

MEN'S LACROSSE

BY LIZA KAUFMAN
STAFF REPORTER


LIZA KAUFMAN / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR
Yale will play the No. 9 Cornell Big Red in the Bulldogs' first away conference game of the season.

The Yale men's lacrosse team (3–4, 0–2 Ivy) will travel to Ithaca, New York, this weekend to face off against No. 9 Cornell on Saturday afternoon.

The game will mark Yale's first conference game on the road after the Bulldogs opened Ivy League play at home at Reese Stadium against then-No. 3 Princeton (5–2, 1–1 Ivy) and then-No. 19 Penn (4–4, 1–1 Ivy).

In the March 14 Ivy home opener, the Bulldogs nearly upset the Tigers when a four-goal fourth quarter by the Bulldogs brought Yale within one of evening the score. However, despite a Dylan Blekicki '29 goal in the final seconds of the game, the Tigers edged out the Elis 11-10.

Although the game ended in a heartbreaking loss, Yale's ability to push Princeton to the edge proved that this Yale squad can compete with any team in the country.

Now, the Bulldogs prepare to take on the Big Red, the defending NCAA champions. Led last season by powerhouse senior attackman CJ Kirst, Cornell defeated Maryland to win its first NCAA title in 48 years. Kirst, who was the No. 1 pick in the 2025 PLL and NLL drafts and now plays professionally, broke the NCAA record with 247 career goals against Dartmouth last April.

Even with its star player having graduated, Cornell (5–2, 2–0 Ivy) has had a strong start to the season, picking up three non-conferences victories, including away wins over UAlbany (4–4, 2–0 AEC) and then-No. 17 Denver (4–4, 0–0 Big East) and a home opener win over Hobart College (2–6, 0–1 A10).

However, Cornell then suffered back-to-back losses to then-No. 3 Richmond (8–0, 2–0 A10) and then-No. 14 Penn State (5–3, 1–0 Big Ten). Although Cornell was leading at halftime, Richmond's six-goal second-half performance resulted in Cornell's first loss of the season.

Cornell then fell in an 7-19 upset loss to Penn State in Happy Valley. Penn State came out hot, putting up seven goals in the first quarter, while holding Cornell scoreless. The Big Red found the back of the net twice in the second quarter, but the Nittany Lions led 10-2 at the half. Another Penn State seven-goal performance in the third quarter cemented the victory.

The Big Red rebounded to open Ivy play with an 18-9 victory over Brown (5–3, 0–1 Ivy) and a major 13-11 upset win over then-No. 3 Princeton at Sherrerd Field in New Jersey last weekend. A five-goal first quarter start for the Big Red set the tone for the afternoon as a strong offensive showing answered each Princeton goal to give Cornell a perfect 2-0 start to conference play.

While Cornell will enter Saturday's Yale matchup on the heels of two Ivy victories, the Bulldogs will seek to return to the win column and claim their first conference victory.

Yale has a strong foundation on both sides of the center X and is well-positioned to challenge Cornell this weekend.

On offense, Connor Gately '28, who leads the squad with 27 points, including 12 goals and 15 assists, is ranked 18th nationally and third in the Ivy League in assists per game and fifth in the league in points per game. First-year attackman Sean Grogan '29, the team's leading scorer, has made an immediate impact on Yale's offensive unit since joining the squad and sits eighth in the conference in goals per game and 10th in assists per game.

On defense, long stick midfielder Luke Michalik '27 is third in the Ivy League in caused turnovers and eighth in ground balls per game, captain Patrick Pisano '26 is fifth in the conference in caused turnovers per game and goalie Ben Friedman '28 is 15th in the NCAA in saves per game.

Faceoff is slated for 3:30 p.m. on Saturday at Cornell's Schoellkopf Field. The game will be streamed on ESPN+.

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Yale to open outdoor Ivy League play after triumphant spring break

MEN'S TENNIS

BY REMI CLARK-REDSTAR
STAFF REPORTER

With the first of seven Ivy matches on the horizon, the Yale men's tennis team (13–5) enters the final leg of the season with optimism after wins on a string of away matchups.

In preparation to face Brown, which is 0-7 against Ivy teams, on Saturday, interim head coach Eduardo Ugalde and assistant coach Sebastian Vile will review the videos of their February win against the Bears in order to replicate the successes of that previous matchup.

Ugalde said that he and his staff also addressed the Bulldogs about the more emotional and personal nature of playing Ivy teams and how all teams are making a "final push to end the year strong." Ugalde's goal was to ensure that his athletes are ready to play in the new, end of the season environment, he added.

Over spring break, the Bulldogs showed just how fierce of an opponent they can be when they're playing at their best.

"It was a great spring break for us," Ugalde said. "We knew that it was going to be a very important and difficult week for us as we played ranked teams on their courts."

Starting off strong, the Bulldogs secured a 6-1 win against Tennessee State on March 10. The doubles struggled in this match, with Jason Shuler '27 and Dylan Tsoi '27 picking up the only win, while duo Vignesh Gogineni '26 and Edward Liao '28d, as well as duo Jim Ji '27 and Eric Li '26, were defeated 3-6 and 6-7, respectively. But, in singles, the Bulldogs took care of business and swept the board without dropping a single game.

The next day, Yale was back on the court against Middle Tennessee, a team that put up a strong fight. Yale's doubles units bounced back and secured the crucial doubles point with duo Shuler and Tsoi and duo Ji and Li's victories of 6-4 and 6-3, respectively. Gogenini and Liao's match was unfinished 4-5. On the singles court, it was a split with Yale's Gogineni, Shuler and Li taking wins, while Liao, Ji and Ethan Chung '29 fell.

The day ended with a 4-3 victory in Yale's favor.

"I think we did a great job of spending time together," Liao said. "I think it made us closer as a team and gave us the confidence to work together."

In the final two matchups of the break, a tight-knit and confident squad rolled to dominant finishes.

Against Charlotte, a team the Elis beat 5-2, the Yale duos clinched the doubles point early with 6-3 and 6-4 wins by duo Gogineni and Liao and duo Shuler and Tsoi. Gogineni, Liao and Shuler picked up gritty singles victories, which ensured the team's triumph. Li also captured a win of 2-6, 6-3, 7-6. The only two losses of the day came in singles, with Ji and Chung going down after competing hard. Ji and Li's doubles match was unfinished 4-5.

In the final matchup on the away-game roadtrip, Yale conquered St. John's with a 4-0 victory. The story of the competition mirrored that of the one against Charlotte, with a momentum-filled sprint to the win, with duo Gogineni and Liao and duo Li and Ji taking the doubles point early. Gogineni, Liao and Ji finished off St. John's. Shuler and Li's matches were unfinished, but both Yale men held leads before they ended. Similarly, doubles duo Tsoi and Shuler also had an unfinished match of 5-5.

"We were also transitioning from indoor to outdoor tennis which is difficult. The team was up for the challenge and up for making the necessary adjustments in the new conditions. I was proud of the effort from the team and the concentration we had during these matches," Ugalde said.

With a four-match win streak, the Bulldogs now look to their next match, the first of seven against Ivy League teams, leading up to the NCAA tournament.

"We beat a very good MTSU team that had beaten two Ivy teams before us. We also beat a very good Charlotte team that was undefeated at home before our match. Both teams ranked in the top 50 in the country," Ugalde said.

First up on the Ivy docket is Brown, a team the Bulldogs will play on Saturday. In their last outing against Brown at the ECAC Tournament, Yale beat the Bears 4-0, going two for three in doubles and six for six in singles.

"I'm super excited for the upcoming match," Chung said. "Our team has been building on a lot of momentum with good practices and matches throughout the last couple of weeks, and the match this weekend will be another opportunity for us to put ourselves to the test on the road against a good Ivy League team."

The Yale men's tennis team will take the court on Saturday at 1 p.m. in Providence.

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YALE ATHLETICS
The Bulldogs won all four of their spring break matches and are looking ahead to a spate of Ivy League matches before the NCAA tournament.