

COURTESY OF QUINNIPIAC ATHLETICS

Quinnipiac men's soccer celebreate after beating Merrimack 3-2 on Oct. 30.

'We before me': Men's Soccer looking to turn weakness into strength

By MICHAEL PETITTO
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It's been a wild ride for men's soccer the past few seasons — filled with highs and lows that seem impossible to occur all at once.

After climbing the mountaintop and winning the MAAC Championship back in 2022, the hopes for a repeat crashed into the abyss in 2023 as the team went 3-9-5, suffering a brutal championship hangover.

But the one saving grace about hitting the bottom is that it can only go up from there. 2024 saw the group improve in strides and finish the season 7-9-1.

Now the team, along with head coach Eric Da Costa, finds themselves at a crossroads.

The roster is evenly divided between youth and experience, half of the players are in either their first or second year, while the other half are towards the later stages of their collegiate career.

To an outsider looking in, it seems like a total collapse. Contender to pretender in just one year, a former MAAC powerhouse, now looking to rebuild what was once there. But the current landscape of college athletics haunts all sports, including soccer.

"Every year now because of the transfer portal and movement, it's harder to hang on to players," Da Costa said. "We do a pretty good job of that because of the culture that we have to play. Everybody wants to play for a winning program and I think we're at an age now where if that isn't happening, they'll go seek it somewhere else. I don't necessarily agree with that."

The transfer portal puts Quinnipiac programs in a difficult position, as some may not have the resources to maintain top-end talent. But the transfer cycle is one infinite loop, and when Quinnipiac loses high-end talent, it can always search for more in the portal.

The Bobcats picked up 10 players during the offseason, including one transfer, junior left back from Governors State University, Flavio Di Palma.

Da Costa isn't concerned with the amount of youth or turnover on the roster and is pleased with the progress the group has made in their short time together.

"That's the thing we've been most happy with is how quickly they've adapted into the group and how quickly they've assimilated into our culture," Da Costa said. "On field's going to take a little bit of time, we're really young… and we're growing as a team which is the goal right now."

Graduate student midfielder Drew Seguro, believes the team is already growing together at a rapid pace and is eager to show the conference what the Bobcats have in store.

"Every guy out there wants to fight for one another," Seguro said. "I look to my left and to my right and I want to run harder for those guys, I want to make a tackle for those guys. I'm gonna make that extra run, and I think having that mentality in the team is super, super important."

Team spirit isn't the only element the Bobcats will need to master; health is just as, if not more important to the success of the team.

Last season, Quinnipiac dealt with injuries during the most important part of the year down the stretch. The Bobcats weren't at full strength during their gauntlet of matchups against MAAC opponents, which caused their conference record to slip.

"We need to stay healthy and have our more experienced players on the field," Da Costa said. "That's a difficult thing for fall teams to do as well because you're constantly balancing that time between the offseason and summertime. Everybody's in the same boat, but teams with deeper rosters tend to have more early success."

During team practice on Aug. 26, senior midfielder Alex Miller could be seen running laps around the field. He ran for what seemed like half an hour, no breaks, no water and no slowing down.

The Leominster, Massachusetts native played all 17 games during the 2024 campaign, and is currently looking to get back to full strength.

Miller is dealing with a partially torn LCL and an ECL sprain and is currently in the rehab process.

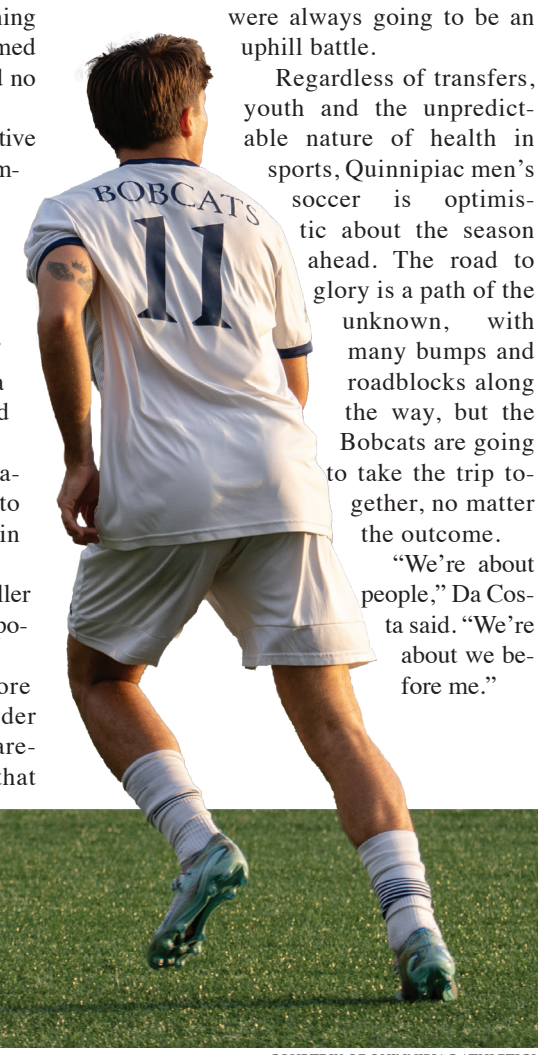
"There were talks with the surgeon," Miller said. "But for now I'm gonna try to go through the rehab path and strengthen what I messed up."

Miller led the team in assists last season with six and is a vital contributor to a group that is looking to make waves in the postseason.

Despite the individual success, Miller credits his playmaking ability to his skill position in the midfield.

"Usually midfielders tend to be more of that type of guy because they're under more pressure," Miller said. "It's awareness everywhere, it just happens to be that I can find a couple people on the offensive side of things."

The team showed awareness during its first matchup of the year against No. 7 Pittsburgh. And despite the 0-1 loss, the Panthers were always going to be an uphill battle.



Regardless of transfers, youth and the unpredictable nature of health in sports, Quinnipiac men's soccer is optimistic about the season ahead. The road to glory is a path of the unknown, with many bumps and roadblocks along the way, but the Bobcats are going to take the trip together, no matter the outcome.

"We're about people," Da Costa said. "We're about we before me."

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