

COURTESY OF QUINNIPIAC ATHLETICS

Quinnipiac women's cross country gathers together before competing in the MAAC Championships.

Quinnipiac women's cross country trusts the process in the midst of a potential MAAC Title four-peat

By CLAIRE FRANKLAND
Sports Editor

Winning is at the forefront of most teams' minds. Race hard, finish strong and take home the win.

Yet, if you ask Quinnipiac women's cross country what it's focused on, winning wouldn't be the answer.

"It really is more about the process than necessarily the outcome," head coach Carolyn Martin said.

Coming off last season, the Bobcats captured the MAAC Title with a score of 31 with the help of Alessandra Zaffina '25 and Lauren Selkin '25 and seniors Rachel St. Germain and Sierra Gray. All four athletes scored within the top 10.

Going into the 2025 season, the Bobcats sit at the No. 1 spot in the MAAC Preseason Coaches Poll, with Iona falling closely behind. Yet, this season is different for the Bobcats, losing three strong runners who have contributed to the program's three-peat. However, the veterans are not afraid to step up.

"We have some kids that have really stepped up," Martin said. "Every year I think, oh man, it's going to be a building year. Maybe we have to build some more kids up because we did lose three of our top five from last year."

St. Germain and Gray, who both finished in the top 10 during the MAAC Championships, will be returning for their fourth season in Hamden. Both have consistently placed high with fast times, helping the Bobcats come out on top.

Moreover, Quinnipiac is set to have a returning roster, with 14 runners set to run it back, including junior Avery Palmucci and sophomore Madeleine O'Neill, who both scored in the top 40 during the MAAC Championships.

This season, the Bobcats have also seen the addition of three freshmen and one transfer from St. Thomas Aquinas College, junior Zoe Merryman.

"I'm excited to get to run with new people on the team. It's always fun to have added people," Gray said.

With a mix of new additions and returning athletes, Quinnipiac is focused on working together to consistently finish strong this season.

"For the year, we want to learn to pack up and work together," Gray said. "We do have different groups of paces and runners, but we want everyone to get close together so that we can get the fourth title for the MAAC Championship."

Pack running is an important asset that will allow the Bobcats to continuously score higher, as their scores will be closely bunched together at the finish. Pack running has always been an emphasis for the Bobcats, especially in time for the conference championships, so its continued usage will enable the Bobcats to improve as the season progresses.

Aside from their competitive, winning nature, Quinnipiac attributes a great amount of its success to its team culture.

"Our team culture is really good. It's been really good these past four years," St. Germain said. "Everyone's best friends, and everyone's happy for each other at the end of the day, which is all you could really ask for and all you could want."

In a sport that is dominated by constant mental strain and pressure, Quinnipiac's team culture allows its runners to let loose and enjoy competing, alleviating some of the pressure other teams face internally.

And while the athletes have fostered a great culture, Martin has made a big impact for the Bobcats, pushing them to always be their best and have fun while competing.

"I love coach, she's literally like a mom figure, and honestly, it's nice to be able to go to her with for anything, and she's very understanding," Gray said.

The MAAC coach of the year for the past three years is valued by her athletes for her coaching style and personable approach, making her a strong leader as the Bobcats hope to claim their fourth straight title.

Quinnipiac women's cross country has the opportunity to make program history this season, currently carrying three straight MAAC titles under its belt. By securing this year's MAAC title, the Bobcats will set the bar higher and become the second program in MAAC history to win four straight titles.

The Bobcats opened their season on Aug. 30 at the Stony Brook Season Opener, taking first with a score of 28 and an average time of 14:21. Quinnipiac came out strong in its first meet of the season, with five Bobcats finishing in the top 10, including St. Germain and Gray tying for first.

"I'm excited, it's gonna be a really good year," St. Germain said.



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