SPORTS

"We decide, on issues large and small, whether we will be bystanders or upstanders."
SAMANTHA POWER '92 AMERICAN DIPLOMAT

YALE ATHLETICS



GOLF
BY LIBERTY ADAMS
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

The seniors of the men's and women's golf teams leave behind a strong impact both on and off the course.

On the men's side, the seniors broke personal bests in their final season. Captain Will Lodge '26 shot six under at the Schenkel Invitational, his lowest career round to par, while Sam Davis '26 recorded his single round career low at the Rutherford Intercollegiate, his final regular season tournament. Lodge earned All-Ivy First Team honors, marking his second year-end honor.

For the women, Mia Sessa '26 opened the fall season shooting five under par to claim first place at the Nittany Lion Invitational and earn the Ivy League Golfer of the Month honor. In the spring, Sessa recorded a 54-hole career low before finishing second at the Valspar Augusta Invitational in her hometown. The season concluded with her third consecutive All-Ivy First Team honor.

Captain Ashley Yen '26 also won the Molly Meyer Humanitarian Award, which honors seniors who have demonstrated extraordinary devotion to their team and the greater Yale community. Yen and Davis additionally received the Academic All-Ivy honor for their commitment to excellence both in competition and in the classroom.

The teams' underclassmen also emphasized the seniors' contributions to team spirit.

"We are all cheering for each other more than anyone," Preston Howe '29 wrote in a text message to the News, adding that Lodge has been a "phenomenal leader."

Matthew Lin '28 stressed the team's "amazing" culture.

"Whether it be hyping each other up, laughing during dinners, blasting music in the car, strategizing for the upcoming tournament, or anything in between, I am grateful to be a part of this family," Lin wrote in a text message to the News.

VOLLEYBALL
BY RACHEL MAK
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

The five-member Yale volleyball senior class leaves the program after a historic run. Gigi Barr '26, Chidera Chukwumerije '26, Lauren Kellen '26, Isabella Mendoza '26 and captain Halle Sherlock '26 witnessed their team capture three straight Ivy League regular season titles in 2022, 2023 and 2024.

In the class of 2026's senior campaign, the team finished second in the Ivy League with a 10–4 conference record. A trip out west early in the season tested the Bulldogs with some tough competition, but the Bulldogs triumphed, coming away with two wins and only falling to the University of San Diego, a team ranked first in its conference.

Over the course of the season, Yale built upon this momentum, especially at home. The Bulldogs won all of their home games this year except one, avenging their road losses to Ivy League opponents. In the tournament semifinals, the team won a back-and-forth battle against Cornell before falling to Princeton in the title match.

The five seniors leave New Haven having accumulated a 49–7 Ivy League record, three consecutive Ivy League regular season and Ivy League tournament titles and three straight NCAA tournament appearances.

YALE ATHLETICS



LIZA KAUFMAN / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR



WOMEN'S SOCCER
BY WALTER ROYAL
SPORTS EDITOR

The five members of the class of 2026 made an immediate impact for Yale women's soccer.

In the now-seniors' first season, the team jumped five spots in the standings to finish third in the Ivy League. The rejuvenated team boasted a 7–0–1 home record in 2022, with a season-opening 0-0 draw with Hofstra University being the only blemish to their undefeated defense of Reese Stadium.

2023 represented a step back. While their nonconference season showed promise, with the team's offense displaying further improvement, the hot boots went cold in conference play, finishing the Ivy slate 0–5–2. However, the Bulldogs bounced back in the class's junior year, posting a winning overall record and picking up a pair of conference victories.

This season started out bright, with a 4-0 win over Hofstra University in the home opener. Things went south from there, but the Yale squad showed promise, rallying for a stunning 1-0 midseason upset over the eventual Ivy-champion Princeton Tigers on the road.

Though the team missed the postseason once more, the Princeton win provided a crowning achievement for the team's senior class that graduates after persevering through adversity.

MEN'S SOCCER
BY LIZA KAUFMAN
SPORTS EDITOR

The 10 graduating seniors on the Yale men's soccer team "left the jersey in a better place than they found it," according to Andrew Myerson '27, a junior on the team.

"Their leadership and professionalism consistently raised the standard for everyone around them," Myerson wrote in a text to the News.

During the 2022 season, Alex Umana '26 scored his first two collegiate goals in back-to-back games and Aydin Jay '26 played in 13 matches. That year, Yale finished 7–4–5 overall.

The defining season of Yale soccer's last four years came in 2023, when Yale improved to 11–6–3 overall and captured the inaugural Ivy League title the first year the tournament was held. The win followed a 4-0 clean sheet victory over Harvard in the semifinals, in which the Bulldogs avenged an earlier regular season loss, before the team topped Brown 2-1 in the finals to secure the conference's automatic NCAA bid. On the national stage, Yale earned a 1-0 shutout victory over Bryant University before falling to Hofstra University in the second round.

Although the team struggled to replicate that success in the following two seasons, the seniors were a consistently strong presence. Jay scored his first collegiate goal against Sacred Heart University in 2024, and in the class's senior season, captain Diego Zaffanella '26 delivered a game-winning penalty kick goal against Brown — scoring his first collegiate goal in his final game. Goalkeeper Conrad Lee '26 closed out his career with two shutouts this season and finished first in the Ivy League in saves per game.

"Zaffanella especially set the tone as captain through his empowering servant leadership, always putting the team first," Myerson wrote. "That group will definitely be missed."

LIZA KAUFMAN / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR



YALE ATHLETICS



FIELD HOCKEY
BY ELI RATNER
STAFF REPORTER

The four seniors of Yale field hockey — Captain Poppy Beales '26, Lauren Venter '26, CC Wolf '26 and Maddy Zavalick '26 — brought the program to new heights.

The class of 2026 arrived in 2022 alongside a new head coach, Melissa Gonzalez, and played its way into a new era for Yale field hockey. Since their freshman season, the Elis have steadily progressed, moving up from a 7–9 record in 2023 to 10–6 in 2024, before their most successful 12–6 campaign in 2025.

This fall, the Bulldogs advanced to the NCAA tournament for the first time ever. The Elis went 12–4 in the regular season, earning a 4–3 record in a competitive Ivy League before falling short against Princeton in the Ivy League tournament. The Bulldogs finished the season 12th in the NCAA Division I rankings.

The excellence of the class of 2026 began before their senior season. Early in her career, Beales emerged as one of the team's most accomplished players, starting every game she has played since her sophomore year and earning All-Mideast Region and All-Ivy First Team honors in each of the past three years. Following her successful senior campaign, she was dubbed a second-team All-American. Zavalick also played a key role on the team throughout her career, starting 12 of 15 games her sophomore year, before returning to start all games as a senior.