SPORTS

"There's a beauty in being unrealistic."
ANNE WOJCICKI '96 AMERICAN ENTREPRENEUR

SWIMMING AND DIVING

BY WALTER ROYAL
SPORTS EDITOR

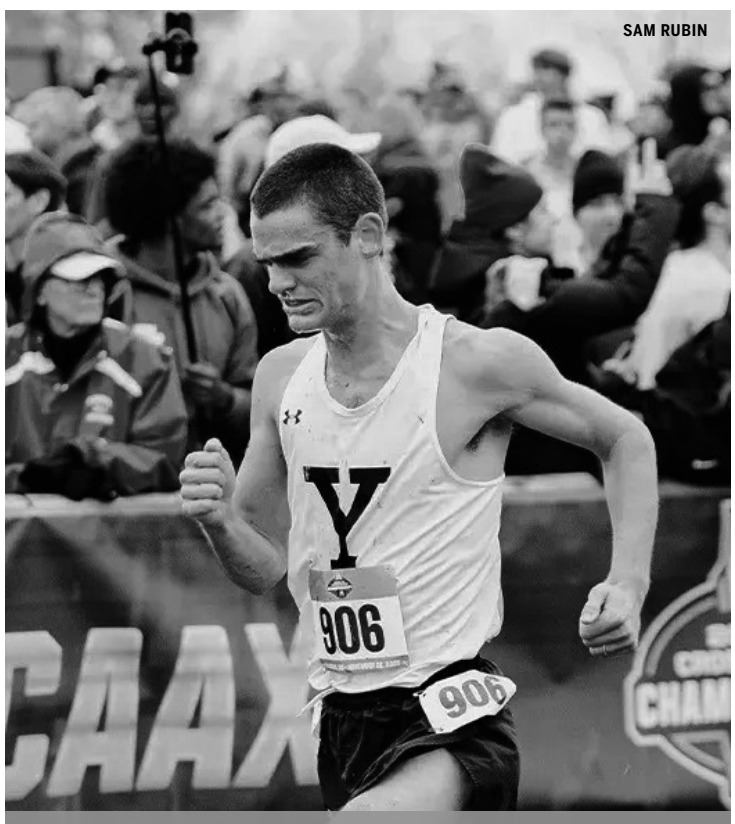

YALE ATHLETICS

Members of Yale swimming and diving's class of 2026 enjoyed remarkable success over their college career, with record-setting races, NCAA tournament appearances and a historic Ivy finish.

That success was highlighted by the men's historic Ivy finish this spring — the team's best in over 50 years. Having not won the Ivy title since 1972, the Bulldogs' second-place mark was especially significant following a heartbreaking third-place finish at the Harvard-Yale-Princeton meet.

At Ivies, a plethora of Bulldogs qualified for the NCAA tournament, including captain Alex Hazlett '26 and Noah Millard '26. Millard finished 10th nationally in the 500 yard freestyle, 16th in the mile and earned All-American honors to cap off his standout career. As a whole, the team finished 20th, becoming the sole midmajor program to finish within the top 25.

On the women's side, captain Jessey Li '26 finished her Yale career with a gold in the 100-yard breaststroke at the Ivy League championship, while her team finished the season fifth in the conference. Caroline Riggs '27 qualified for the NCAA Championship in the mile, where she finished 28th.


SAM RUBIN

CROSS COUNTRY

BY WALTER ROYAL
SPORTS EDITOR

The class of 2026's final season was one to remember for Yale's cross country team.

Last fall, the team finished fifth place in regionals, the highest in recent memory, for the second straight year. Owen Karas '26 and Kenan Pala '26 also qualified for NCAAs, becoming the first Bulldog men to do so since 2023.

Captain Braden King '26 recalled the team's collective excitement after the regionals race in an interview with the News.

"It's such a weird mix of feelings and emotions when you just finished the hardest race ever in the 10K," King said. "You find out your two best friends qualified for nationals, and it's just super overwhelming. A lot of people hugging each other, a lot of tears."

Entering New Haven as a particularly highly recruited class, expectations for the class of 2026 were elevated. King said he is proud of what the class has achieved together.

"When I look back at our time and how we've all developed, I'm super proud of what we built here and what we've continued," he said. "We've really helped push this program further, and I couldn't have asked for a better group of fellow seniors to do that with."


YALE ATHLETICS

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

BY AZARA MASON
STAFF REPORTER

Ahead of the 2022–23 season, three members of the class of 2026 — Kiley Capstraw '26, Lilah Grubman '26 and Lola Lesmond '26 — joined the Yale women's basketball team as rookies. Four years later, captain Capstraw is the lone graduating senior on the team.

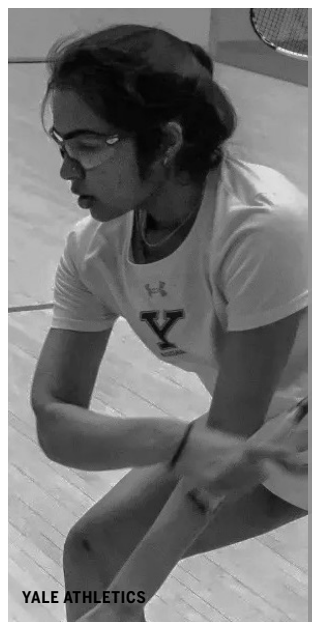
That year, the team also welcomed Dalila Eshe as head coach in 2022 following Allison Guth's departure. In their first season together, Eshe and the Bulldogs finished 13–14.

Both Grubman and Lesmond faced significant injuries during their first year, with Grubman sidelined for the entire season and Lesmond appearing in just one game. Meanwhile, Capstraw's debut season featured three 20-plus point performances and five Ivy Rookie of the Week honors.

During their sophomore and junior seasons, Capstraw started every game, leading the Bulldogs in assists in the 2024–25 season. Meanwhile, Lesmond returned from injury and made 35 appearances across the seasons. Yale notched eight and four wins, respectively.

By the 2025–26 season, Capstraw was the only remaining Bulldog in her class. She continued to play a major role on both ends of the court, once again leading the team in assists while averaging 8.7 points and 6.5 rebounds per game.

The Bulldogs finished the 2025–26 season with seven wins.


YALE ATHLETICS

WOMEN'S SQUASH

BY TANNER BATTLE
STAFF REPORTER

Whitney Taylor '26 is the only senior on the 10-player women's squash team.

As the only remaining member of her three-player recruiting class, Taylor has made steady contributions on and off the court, leading the Bulldogs through several constructive seasons.

Taylor made an immediate impact when she arrived at Yale in 2022. In her rookie season, she competed at the No. 5 spot and boasted a 6–4 record in the regular season, while the team struggled with a 5–8 record.

In her junior and senior campaigns, Taylor played at the No. 7 spot, recording a strong 9–5 record her junior season before closing out her collegiate career this winter.

While the Elis went 4–9 in Taylor's final season, they posted multiple wins against Ivy League opponents, Dartmouth (7–10, 1–5) and Columbia (4–11, 0–6).

Taylor has also excelled academically throughout her time at Yale. During her final two seasons, Taylor earned the College Squash Association Scholar Athlete Award, which honored her outstanding commitment to both the Yale team and her studies.


YALE ATHLETICS

MEN'S SQUASH

BY TOMMY GANNON
STAFF REPORTER

The Yale men's squash class of 2026 hit the ground running four years ago and has not looked back since.

During their collegiate debuts in 2022, Tad Carney '26 and Arav Bhagwati '26 both swept top-ranked University of Virginia opponents, and Shreyas Mehta '26 similarly cruised to victory in his first NCAA match a year later.

As juniors, Carney and Bhagwati sat in the one and two spots, respectively, and helped power the team forward. The Bulldogs reached their first national title match since 2016 when they defeated Princeton in the College Squash Association semifinals in March 2025.

This past season, Carney, who has earned CSA All-American First Team honors twice, captained the squad. Mehta and Bhagwati supplemented his leadership, and all three played critical roles both in maintaining the team's winning culture and cultivating kinship off the field.

"These three guys lie at the foundation of our team's grit and dedication on the court, but they will be missed most for the friendship they brought to each and every member of the team," Lachlan Sutton '27, who will serve as next year's captain, said.