

SPORTS

Bulldogs win national honors

BASKETBALL FROM PAGE 14

New York — an eight-hour trip — with nothing but our jerseys and a cheap hotel at the end of our journey,” Columbia-Walsh said. “The next morning, we started the playoffs, and we knew that our brotherhood had taken us far.”

That playoff run set the stage for the two players’ individual recognition. Columbia-Walsh, the club’s former president, was selected as a First-Team All-American, and Dufallo, the team captain, was selected as a Second-Team All-American. Both were also named to the North Atlantic All-Regional First Team.

For Dufallo, who played Amateur Athletic Union basketball for six years and high school varsity basketball for two, joining the club team was a no-brainer when came to Yale.

However, it would’ve been hard to predict how successful his college club basketball career has been so far.

“I was pretty surprised, as I did not expect to receive the award, but it felt great for Brennan and I to be recognized for all the hard work we put into the team this year,” Dufallo told the News.

He added that other teammates — such as Owen Zhang ’26, Henry Aguirre ’26 and Thai Sapenter ’26 — also deserved recognition.

“I really view this as a team award more than anything,” Dufallo said.

Basketball has also been a major part of Columbia-Walsh’s life. A four-year varsity starter and two-year captain in high school, he scored 1,000 points before coming to Yale and once considered playing Division III basketball.

“I love basketball and come from a basketball family, so getting a nod

as a First-Team All-American was an honor after over a decade in the game,” Columbia-Walsh told the News. He also described the award as a collective success for the team.

Columbia-Walsh said the team has made progress on building camaraderie in recent years.

“We are a class of nearly ten guys who entered a team that was struggling to garner real commitment at practices and games,” Columbia-Walsh told the News. “Over the course of three seasons, we didn’t just find the commitment; we packed our try-outs, flipped our record, made it to the playoffs and even got some All-American nods.”

Zhang, another player on the team, praised the team’s combination of hard work and deep personal connections.

“I was drawn to the team because I wanted to keep playing competitive basketball while at Yale, but in an environment that balanced competition and community,” Zhang said. “My first impression was that the guys were both serious about winning and laid-back enough to enjoy the experience.”

As Yale Club Men’s Basketball gears up for a new season, its players are hoping to continue their string of impressive performances from past seasons and continue expanding their culture of competition and community.

“We want to continue to provide our young guys with the opportunity that others provided us: to play excellent club basketball alongside best friends,” Columbia-Walsh said.

The club sports directory lists 49 teams.

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FIELD HOCKEY: Bulldogs prepare for opening game

BY AVA JENKINS
STAFF REPORTER

Yale’s field hockey team has been preparing for the start of its season, which opens Friday at home on Johnson Field with a game against Long Island University.

The Bulldogs began their pre-season preparations on Aug. 17 with much to build on after a strong season last year, in which they dramatically improved their statistics in both goals scored and goals allowed.

“We have had a longer preseason than last year which has allowed us more time to gel as a team and get to know our freshmen,” Poppy Beales ’26 wrote to the News.

Core coaching staff and key players will return this fall along with seven first years. Head coach Melissa Gonzalez and assistant coach Kerry Kiddoo are entering their fourth season leading the Bulldogs.

Both the 2023 and 2024 seasons ended with the Elis falling short of the Ivy League tournament. This season, they are looking to reach that goal.

“Each season feels like a fresh start in the Ivy League competition,” Victoria Collee ’28 told the News. “We all start at zero again. This gives us the chance to reset while we build on what we have learned from previous years.”

Yale’s forward group features seven players, including two seniors, one junior, three sophomores and one first year. Senior captain Beales leads the attack after earning first team All-Ivy and All-Region honors for the second time in 2024. Beales finished last season with six goals and five career game-winners.

Fellow senior Lauren Venter ’26 matched Beales’ goal total and appeared in all 16 games last year. Last season, Venter became a major asset for the Bulldog’s attack and takes that momentum with her this year.



YALE ATHLETICS

The field hockey team’s season will begin with two home games this weekend.

The team saw a new face making a major impact last season with Chiara Picciafuoco ’28 earning Ivy League Rookie of the Year and second team All-American honors. Picciafuoco finished second on the team in points.

Sophomores Ymre Massée ’28 and Gigi Caldero ’28 also bring versatility and scoring potential, while junior Tabs Collier ’27 and first-year standout Ella Ou ’29, a five-time Nexus Championship selection, round out the group.

In the midfield, Yale returns five players, including junior Emma Ramsey ’27, who has earned All-Ivy honors each season and recently competed at the Nexus Championship. Sophomores Kaitlyn Chang ’28 and Collee both played key roles last year.

Collee notched four goals and three assists as a consistent starter last year, while Chang appeared in 14 games and participated in the U-21 National Team Selection Camp this summer. Collee also earned second team National Field Hockey Coaches Association All-Mideast Region and second team All-Ivy League recognition.

First years Carys Donahoe ’29 and Emma Mueller ’29 add depth and promise, both bringing years of Nexus experience and top national MAX Field Hockey rankings.

Defensively, the Bulldogs return six backs, led by junior Hettie Whittington ’27, last season’s team Player of the Year and a first team All-Ivy and All-Mideast Region selection. Whittington was also the teams highest scorer putting up 17 points.

In goal, Fev Barinova ’28 returns for her second year, with experience training with Lithuania’s under-21 national team. Yale has added two first years to the position: Amelie Schwarzkopf ’29, who played in Germany’s top league and for the under-18 national team, and Maddie Shepherd ’29, a member of Scotland’s under-18 squad.

“We’re in a good spot ahead of our first games. We beat University of Massachusetts-Amherst in our spring scrimmage while they were ranked fourth nationally, and we have good momentum from our scrimmage win this fall,” Venter told the News. “We are just focused on achieving our goals on our merit, rather than hoping the cards fall our way in the results of the other Ivy League games.”

The Bulldogs’ 16-game regular season begins this weekend, with two games at home. The seven conference games begin at Brown on Sept. 20, and the Elis will play nine non-conference games.

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Keith Allain retires after historic men’s hockey tenure



YALE ATHLETICS

Under Allain’s 19 years at the helm, the Bulldogs won their first and only national championship.

BY BAALA SHAKYA
STAFF REPORTER

Keith Allain ’80 — the winningest coach in Yale men’s hockey history and the architect of the program’s sole national championship — announced his retirement on Aug. 8 after 19 seasons of coaching.

Allain’s announcement came just under two months before the Bulldogs are set to open their season in October. No immediate reason was given for his decision. Assistant coach Joe Howe will serve as interim head coach for the upcoming campaign, according to a Yale Athletics news release.

“Serving as Yale’s head hockey coach has been one of the greatest joys of my life,” Allain said in a statement included in the news release.

Howe, who has been with Yale since 2021, will take over this season, bringing experience from coaching

stints at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the University of Denver, as well as with USA Hockey’s under-17 and under-18 national teams.

In an email to the News, Howe credited Allain for building a successful program “the right way,” by caring “deeply about his players and how they develop as people as much as hockey players.”

The University announced that a nationwide search for the team’s next head coach will begin after this winter’s season concludes.

After taking over in 2006, Allain led Yale to the 2013 national championship, as well as to seven Ivy League titles and six NCAA Tournament appearances.

Forward Micah Berger ’28 told the News that Allain’s career at Yale was “truly legendary,” and that he was grateful to play and learn from him before he retired.

“He cared for each of us deeply and wanted us all to succeed. He

was turning us into successful men who were prepared for the real world,” Berger wrote to the News.

Under Allain’s leadership in 2013, the 15th-seeded Bulldogs stunned the college hockey world by defeating three top seeds, including No. 1 Quinnipiac in the title game, according to Yale Athletics. This was the first and only time Yale took home a national championship.

From 2008 to 2011, Allain’s Bulldogs had the best winning percentage in Division I hockey at 0.752. The 2010-11 team became Yale’s first to be ranked No. 1 nationally and won the ECAC Championship.

For Allain’s son, Nik Allain ’24, his father’s retirement marked the end of an era.

“Playing for Yale — and for him — was really special for me,” Nik Allain said. “I pretty much grew up at Ingalls rink watching him coach, so to actually play

for him there was really cool. I don’t think I fully appreciated it until after the fact. I got to go to the rink every day and be with my dad, and my dad got to go to work every day and see his son, so it’s pretty special.”

David Chen ’26, this year’s captain, said Allain’s coaching focused on both competitive excellence and character building.

“Coach Allain embodies what Yale hockey is all about,” Chen said. “He coaches with passion and emphasizes the importance of playing for something much bigger than yourself. He always tells the players that playing for Yale hockey is a privilege that we should never take for granted.”

Echoing Chen, Tucker Hartmann ’26 said that Allain was a “relentless competitor who brought intensity, drive and passion every day at the rink.” Yale hockey would “forever be grateful” for Allain’s contributions, he said.

“To me, he was a huge reason why I chose to play hockey at Yale when I was still playing back in the day,” Rob O’Gara ’16, a defenseman on the 2013 championship team and now a Yale assistant coach, said. “He is the reason that I got into coaching afterwards, and his experience, his dedication to the program — it’s unmatched, really.”

O’Gara credited Allain’s leadership for making the 2013 championship run possible.

Regardless of what comes next, O’Gara said Allain’s influence will continue to shape the program.

“That legacy is going to be honored long, long after he walks out of that rink for the last time,” he said.

Allain was named the 11th head coach of the Yale men’s hockey program on April 15, 2006.

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