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**MACK JOHNSON, FOOTBALL**

# FOOTBALL: Bulldogs hope to keep playoff hopes alive against Brown

BY BRODY GILKISON  
STAFF REPORTER

Team 152 is set to travel on Saturday to Providence, R.I., to take on the Brown Bears.

Yale (5-2, 3-1 Ivy) comes into the matchup hoping to keep its playoff hopes alive, while Brown (3-4, 0-4 Ivy) is still looking to pick up its first conference win.

After Dartmouth's (8-2, 5-2 Ivy) 31-10 loss to Harvard (7-0, 4-0 Ivy) last weekend, Yale now controls its own destiny regarding reaching the Football Championship Subdivision playoffs. The No. 9 ranked Crimson remain atop the Ivy standings with a perfect in-conference record thus far, but Penn and Yale both sit only one game behind.

Since Yale holds the head-to-head tiebreaker over Penn, a Bulldog victory over the Crimson in The Game would crown Yale as the 2025 Ivy League champions and would punch their ticket to the playoffs.

### Looking at Brown

Brown is a team known for its emphasis on the deep ball. Quarterback James Murphy has been aggressive throwing the ball all year, averaging 267 yards per game while throwing ten touchdown passes in seven games.

However, that style of play has also led to turnover issues. Murphy has also thrown a league-high ten interceptions on

the season, four times more than the next closest Ivy quarterback.

On the ground, the Bears' rushing attack has struggled to alleviate pressure on the offense. Brown averages only 101 yards per game on the ground, which places them at second-to-last in the league in the category. With Yale currently ranked as third in the league in both rushing and passing defense and first in sacks, the Brown offense will need to break out of its season slump to give the Bears any chance on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the Eli defense will look to keep building upon their strong performances so far this season.

“We knew that we had a great group of guys heading into camp, but the way we have meshed as a group throughout the first part of the season has been unbelievable,” defensive lineman Mack Johnson '28 said in an interview. “We know we have great depth, and that allows us to be aggressive and build on each other's skillsets.”

### Keys for a Yale win

Yale is coming into this matchup with the mindset that every snap, drive and game matters down the stretch — no matter the opponent. Given the possibility of reaching the FCS playoffs for the first time in program history, it could be easy for some players to fall victim



LIZA KAUFMAN, PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

The football team will travel to Providence to face Brown on Saturday.

to looking ahead at a potential playoff berth.

“At this point in the season, we don't care about the name on the jersey of the guy lining up against us,” tight end Spencer Mermans '27 said in an interview. “We just want to play our brand of football, execute our game

plan to the best of our ability and go 1-0 every week.”

The Bulldogs could try to take advantage of the Bears' sloppy offensive play and set the tone early on. If the Yale defense is able to get the ball into their offensive playmaker's hands, star players like Nico Brown '26 and Josh

Pitsenberger '26 will look to wear down the Bears early and often.

Kickoff is set for at noon at Brown Stadium. The game will be televised on ESPN+.

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## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL: Bulldogs reenergized for new season

BY AZARA MASON AND TANNER BATTLE  
CONTRIBUTING REPORTERS

After a challenging 2024-25 season with a record of 4-23, the women's basketball team has been preparing to come back stronger.

The Elis struggled to compete with most schools in their division during their last campaign but say they are determined to turn things around. They have emphasized strengthening their mental toughness as well as their bodies in preparation for the upcoming season.

“Our team has focused on mental performance, strength and con-

ditioning, as well as skill work to gain confidence in other areas of our games to bounce back from last season,” senior captain Kiley Capstraw '26 wrote in a text message.

For Capstraw, building team chemistry is a priority, considering that the roster features five first-year players and two transfers. With 14 players on their roster — half of the members new to the program — the Bulldogs have had only a few months to build cohesion.

In order to build trust on the court, the Bulldogs say they have benefited from time together off the court.

“We spend a lot of time with one another and really have gotten to

know each other off the court,” Capstraw wrote. “Our trip to Spain and France this summer was extremely instrumental in growing our chemistry and has carried over very well.”

Returning sophomore Magdalena Schmidt '28 echoed that sentiment, emphasizing that the team became closer through the summer and preseason.

“We all genuinely love spending time together, which I think translates onto the court and will help us a lot this year,” Schmidt said.

Schmidt also praised the first-year

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## VOLLEYBALL: Elis to take on Harvard, Dartmouth in weekend away games

BY RACHEL MAK  
STAFF REPORTER

The Yale women's volleyball team (10-8, 6-4 Ivy) will challenge Harvard (5-13, 4-6 Ivy) and Dartmouth (7-13, 4-6 Ivy) this weekend in their final regular-season away matches of the 2025 season.

Earlier in the year, the Bulldogs hosted the Crimson and the Big Green at the John J. Lee Amphitheater, where they swept

both. The last time Yale lost to either team was in 2021.

On Friday, Yale will take the court against Harvard. In their last matchup on Oct. 18, the Bulldogs defeated the Crimson 25-21, 25-21, 25-10. Ava Poinsett '29 led the offense, with 13 of Yale's 36 kills. The Elis also bested the Crimson in total aces and blocks. With three aces, four blocks, seven digs and 27 assists,

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## MEN'S HOCKEY: Elis host Quinnipiac, Princeton for home-opening weekend

BY LIZA KAUFMAN  
STAFF REPORTER

The men's hockey team (0-1-0, 0-0-0 ECAC) will open its home slate and begin Eastern College Athletic Conference play this weekend with two high-stakes matchups against Quinnipiac (5-2-2, 0-0-0 ECAC) and Princeton (2-0-0, 0-0-0 ECAC) at Ingalls Rink.

This weekend will be the first chance for Yale hockey fans to experience the \$3 million upgrades to The Whale, which include a new scoreboard, speaker system and broadcast room. The program will also welcome back generations of former Bulldogs as it celebrates alumni weekend.

To promote the highly anticipated War on Whitney between the two New Haven-area universities, Yale Athletics is hosting a flag giveaway and ResCo challenge, in which one student from the most-represented college at

the game will win a prize.

“Our rivalry with Quinnipiac means a lot for both teams. The atmosphere of the building whenever we play each other is unlike any other game on the schedule,” captain David Chen '26 wrote in a text message. “With the added excitement of our first home game of the year and our alumni weekend, I'm sure Ingalls will be electric on Friday night. The team is definitely looking forward to playing in front of our home crowd!”

Senior defenseman Tucker Hartmann '26 wrote that he is particularly excited for Friday night's faceoff and to play in front of a packed crowd.

“Games against Quinnipiac are always special. It's bound to be an electric atmosphere with fans from both teams able to make the watch. These are the types of games that make me so grateful to be playing college hockey at

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YALE ATHLETICS

The Elis will return to Ingalls Rink for the War on Whitney and their alumni weekend.

### STAT OF THE WEEK

YALE QUARTERBACK JAMES MURPHY HAS AVERAGED 267 YARDS PER GAME WHILE THROWING TEN TOUCHDOWN PASSES IN SEVEN GAMES.