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"We have been through a lot of adversity over the past few seasons, and I think it has brought out team much closer together."
WILL RICHTER '27 MEN'S HOCKEY

In up-and-down season, top Ivy League seed but no March Madness bid

MEN'S BASKETBALL

BY BRODY GILKISON
STAFF REPORTER

Last Tuesday, as the final seconds ticked off the clock at the John J. Lee Amphitheater, a loss against the University of North Carolina Wilmington (27–7, 15–3 CAA) in the first round of the National Invitation Tournament — for teams that do not qualify for March Madness — brought the Yale men's basketball (24–7, 11–3) season to a close.

This Bulldog squad had its fair share of highlights, honors and record-breaking performances, but also suffered from a number of bad breaks and errors which eventually prevented the team from achieving all of its preseason goals.

Prior to the season's start, guard Riley Fox '28 listed what he thought of as the Bulldogs' goals for the year: "Every year, we want to improve and grow together as a team throughout the season, get the No. 1 seed, win Ivy Madness, and make the NCAA tournament."

In early November, Yale got off to a great start, winning 11 of its first 12 contests and enjoying a top 25 spot in the NCAA men's net rankings — a metric the national tournament committee uses to determine seeding in March. However, a trip down south to Alabama resulted in a 24-point loss on Dec. 29, and, just two games later, the Bulldogs were upset by the Princeton Tigers for their first conference loss of the season.

After a weak shooting performance that resulted in the Jan. 10 loss against the Tigers, the Elis righted the ship and won four straight games, situating themselves at the top of the Ivy League with a record of 5–1 within the conference and 16–3 overall.

By then, Yale had not only solidified its standing as the best

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Bulldogs close season marked by rivalry upsets and woes on the road

MEN'S HOCKEY

BY LIZA KAUFMAN
STAFF REPORTER

With a loss to Colgate in the opening round of the ECAC tournament, the Yale men's hockey team (8–22–1, 7–14–1 ECAC) finished its first season under interim head coach Joe Howe earlier this month.

While the Bulldogs struggled to find consistency, especially on the road, the squad accomplished feats that broke long-time droughts and tallied two more wins than did last year's team.

"I think our group learned a lot about what it takes to win big games," captain David Chen '26 wrote in a text message to the News. "It takes a full 60 minute effort every night and confidence in ourselves. I think the team next year should be excited and use the extra experience in tight games all year this season to their advantage."

The Bulldogs opened the season with a 6-0 exhibition win over the Czech University Selects, a team of top Czech university players, at Ingalls Rink.

Following a difficult road loss to Dartmouth (22–7–4, 13–5–4 ECAC), the Bulldogs rebounded in their home opening weekend, which also marked the program's Alumni Weekend and first two conference games.

On Nov. 7, Yale took down its cross-town rival, the then-No. 5 nationally ranked Quinnipiac Bobcats (26–9–3, 17–4–1 ECAC), by a score of 4-2. That was the first time the Bulldogs had defeated Quinnipiac in seven years. The next night, the Elis tamed the Princeton Tigers (18–12–3, 11–9–2 ECAC) 2-1 in an overtime thriller to go a perfect 2–0 in the start of ECAC play.

The two ECAC upset victories marked Yale's strongest start since the 2010-11 campaign.

"I have a lot of favorite memories but I think beating Quinnipiac at home this year was awesome," junior forward Will Richter '27 wrote in a text message to the News. "It was a huge game for us and our fans deserve more of those big time wins."

Although road games continued to prove challenging for the team, the Bulldogs remained perfect at home over the start of Thanksgiving break, earning an ECAC victory over Brown (5–24–2, 4–16–2 ECAC) and a nonconference win over University of Nebraska Omaha (12–24–0, 8–16–0 NCHC).

The new year started with a quick trip to a rainy Palm Springs, where Yale competed in the second annual Cactus Cup, a four-team tournament featuring Division I programs from different conferences. There, the Bulldogs lost to two top-ranked opponents.

Back on home ice, the Bulldogs snapped a six-game skid with an 8-1 victory over St. Lawrence (7–25–3, 6–15–1 ECAC). First-year defenseman Hudson Miller '29 opened the scoring, and five other Bulldogs also found the back of the net. In the final frame, sophomore Ronan O'Donnell '28 and first-year Tom Molson '29 each scored twice. Molson's two goals marked his first two as a Bulldog.

In their first road trip of 2026, Yale then swept New York's Capital District to pick up its first two away victories of the season.

An 8-3 victory over Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (11–23–1, 8–13–1 ECAC) marked Yale's second eight-goal performance in three games. A stout penalty-kill unit proved critical to the team's success.

Against Union (22–12–3, 11–9–2 ECAC), the first years shined. Kurt Gurkan '29 and Dylan Hunt '29 assisted James Shannon's '29 game-winning goal, and Shannon and Molson each potted empty-netters to cap off scoring.

Despite inconsistent results in the following weeks, Yale showed resilience during a homestand against then-No. 12 Dartmouth and Harvard (16–16–2, 11–10–1 ECAC). Trailing 2-0 to the Big Green, the Bulldogs mounted a comeback to force overtime and a shootout against Dartmouth.

The following night, in a heated Valentine's Day rivalry clash, the Elis defeated the Crimson in overtime in front of a packed crowd at The Whale. The crowd stood silent while referees reviewed footage of a potential goal. After the call on the ice was overturned in Yale's favor, the team rushed the ice, securing its first win over Harvard in 14 meetings since 2018.

While the Elis struggled to find consistency down the stretch, they remained competitive in many of their final matchups.

"We have been through a lot of adversity over the past few seasons, and I think it has brought our team much closer together, especially our older guys," Richter wrote.

At the close of the season, O'Donnell led the team with 12 goals, followed by Chen, Micah Berger '28 and Richter with seven each. Chen's 17 assists were a team high and also contributed to his team-leading 24 points.

Two Bulldogs also picked up Ivy League accolades. Chen earned Second Team All-Ivy recognition for his 10 points, 21 shots and 5 blocked shots against Ivy opponents, while Hughie Hooker '28 was named All-Ivy Honorable Mention for his seven points, 14 shots and 5 blocked shots in the 10 Ivy games. Chen also made history as the first Bulldog to earn the ECAC's highest academic honor, the ECAC Hockey Scholar-Athlete of the Year award.

With success this season driven by key contributions from underclassmen and flashes of offensive power, the Bulldogs will look to build on their young talent as they head into the 2026-27 season, with rising seniors ready to step into key leadership roles.

"The season is still a long way away and we have a lot of work to do before then but I feel as seniors our role as a class puts us all in a leadership role where we will have to be a sort of rock for our team and lead from the front," Richter, a rising senior, wrote.

Yale's men's hockey team won the NCAA tournament in 2013.

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LIZA KAUFMAN / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR
Earlier this month, Yale lost to Colgate in the first round of the ECAC conference, ending their first season under interim head coach Joe Howe.

Bulldogs end turnaround season with loss in national quarterfinals

WOMEN'S HOCKEY

BY AUDREY KIM
STAFF REPORTER

The Yale Bulldogs (26–10, 16–6 ECAC) finished No. 8 nationally after a remarkable season, which included capturing the ECAC regular season title and advancing to the quarterfinals of the NCAA national tournament.

The Elis finished the regular season atop their conference, earning themselves a first-round bye and home-ice advantage in the conference tournament. After taking down Colgate (19–16–1, 13–8–1 ECAC) in a dominant ECAC quarterfinal performance, the Bulldogs traveled to Lake Placid for the semifinal and championship matches. There, they defeated Cornell (20–11–2, 14–7–1 ECAC) in the semifinals on March 6, earning a place in the ECAC championship.

Despite falling to Quinnipiac (29–9–3, 14–6–2 ECAC) by four goals in the conference championship, Yale secured an at-large bid to the NCAA playoffs due to its high national ranking.

"This season was such an amazing experience for all of us. It was the first time the women's ECAC championship was held in Lake Placid, and the arena was packed representing a great step forward for women's sports," Sophia Levering '28 wrote to the News. "We played an amazing game against Cornell in the semifinals and were sad to come up short against Quinnipiac in the finals."

The Bulldogs entered the NCAA tournament as the eighth seed, and the team beat Minnesota Duluth (20–15–3, 15–10–3 WCHA), the ninth seed, to advance to a quarterfinal game against first-seeded Ohio State (36–5, 24–4 WCHA). In that matchup, the Bulldogs suffered a five-goal defeat.

"Having finished the first half of the season 9th in the ECAC, it was an amazing accomplishment to enter the NCAA tournament as the 8th seed nationally. Beating Minnesota Duluth was also a big bragging rights win for the ECAC versus the other strongest league, the WCHA. Ohio State was what you would expect of the best team in the country, but we are proud to have put our best foot forward and forced them to play a good game," Levering wrote.

Despite a less than ideal start to the 2025-26 season, in which the Bulldogs struggled to stay ranked in the nation's top 15 and experienced several frustrating losses, the team was able to remarkably turn the season around halfway through. In December, the Elis began a 14-game win streak that propelled them to an ECAC regular season title and postseason first seed, a testament to the team's growth and persistence.

The 14-game win streak achieved during the 2025-26 came close to tying the record 15-game win streak that the Bulldogs notched during the 2022-23 season. The 2022-23 season was also the last time Yale appeared in the NCAA playoffs, when they fell to Northeastern in the quarterfinals.

"For the seniors, it was a full circle moment returning to the NCAA tournament which they had not been to since freshman year as the winningest class in Yale women's hockey history," Levering wrote to the News. "For everyone else, it was our first trip to the tournament and amazing to be able to participate in something we have watched since early in our careers. We have a lot to be proud of from the season, a lot to thank our seniors for, and a lot to build on for next year."

Yale ended with the second highest national ranking in the ECAC, only trailing No. 7 Quinnipiac, and finished with the highest ranking in the Ivy League, leading No. 9 Princeton and No. 11 Cornell.

The Wisconsin Badgers (35–4–2, 24–3–2 BIG 10) defeated Ohio State to win their second straight NCAA women's hockey title.

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YALE ATHLETICS
Before falling in the quarterfinals of the NCAA tournament, Yale went on a 14-game winning streak to rise from ninth in the ECAC to winning the conference's regular-season title.

STAT OF THE DAY

DAVID CHEN '26 LED THE TEAM WITH 17 ASSISTS THIS MEN'S HOCKEY SEASON.