Philip Akre Writing Samples - Quinnipiac Athletics
From undergraduate studies (2016-2020)

In my time at Quinnipiac University, I wrote for two student-run sports media outlets (not including The Quinnipiac Chronicle, you can find my Chronicle work here): **QBSN** (Quinnipiac Bobcats Sports Network) and **Q30 Television** (including on-air work in freshman year). Additionally, I was a member of the Bobcats Sports Media Group, which was a collection of students within QU's athletic department who focused on in-depth feature articles and video projects.

A large majority of what I produced during this stretch can be found on this document. Use the table of contents to easily jump from one outlet to the next.

Quinnipiac Bobcats Sports Network (QBSN)

New Season, New Team: Quinnipiac Men's Basketball 2017 Season Preview

(Original article)

Well, here we are. The offseason sure went fast, didn't it? The Quinnipiac men's basketball team will hit the hardwood in just a matter of weeks. Quinnipiac's brand new logos will adorn the arena and new head coach Baker Dunleavy will begin his first year at the helm.

If you couldn't already tell, this season will be quite different from any that the program has ever faced. *Everything* is new.

There's a new roster, new coach, new assistant coaches and perhaps most importantly, a new culture. Let's break it down.

Baker Dunleavy, Basketball Life

- His father, Mike Dunleavy Sr., coached in the NBA for over 20 years and is now the head coach at Tulane.
- His brother, Mike Jr., is a free agent who has played 15 seasons in the NBA
- Was an assistant at Villanova University for seven years on Jay Wright's staff, which compiled a 183-45 record in the last seven years.

- Handpicked Tom Pecora, Shaun Morris and Anthony Goins as his new assistant coaches.

(Very) Updated Roster

Like any new season, Quinnipiac will showcase a revamped roster. This year, though, it's essentially an *entirely* new team. As a result of transfers and graduation, the program lost seven players. Seven names on this year's rosters are members of last year's squad, along with eight new additions.

Lost: Donovan Smith, Reggie Oilver, Mikey Dixon, Peter Kiss, Daniel Harris, Jaw'Kwan Jones, Phil Winston

Kept: Aaron Robinson, Cameron Young, Alain Chigha, Chaise Daniels, Andrew Robinson, Greg Tarca, Abdulai Bundu

Gained: Sam Donahue, Travis Atson, Matt Donahue, Isaiah Washington, Rich Kelly, Nathan Davis, Jacob Rigoni, Kevin Marfo

Dunleavy's squad will consist of 10 guards and five forwards, identical to last year's roster with just an extra guard. Travis Atson, a sophomore transfer from Tulsa, won't see time this year, as he's out with a torn ACL and lateral meniscus, per Dylan Fearon of Q30 Sports. While the injury is unfortunate, Atson wouldn't have been able to play this season regardless due to NCAA transfer rules.

Toughest to Replace?

It goes without saying that Mikey Dixon and Peter Kiss were massive losses for the program. The duo singlehandedly took over the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference last season, with Dixon winning MAAC Rookie of the Year and Kiss taking home unanimous MAAC All-Rookie honors.

Dixon averaged 16.5/3.7/2.3 in 31 games as a Bobcat, while Kiss compiled a line of 13.5/5.6/2.8. Dixon, in particular, scored 13 or more points in 24 of his final 26 games. Kiss, on the other hand, was one of the top playmakers on the roster, with an IQ that was developing him into a multi-faceted guard.

Notable Additions

Rich Kelly, Guard*:* The 6-foot-1 freshman comes to Quinnipiac from nearby Fairfield, where he played prep ball. Kelly isn't afraid to take contested shots right in front of defenders and is an ambitious playmaker with a nice touch on the three-pointer.

Like any above average guard, Kelly has a fantastic basketball IQ, with the ability to dish out smart passes and really thread the needle in terms of helping his teammates succeed. Perhaps most importantly, the guard plays with a sense of swagger, one that

will be sorely needed on a Quinnipiac squad looking to develop a new culture. Look for him to take the reins of the starting gig at the point.

***Matt Donahue, Guard**:* Donahue, a 6-foot-3 freshman, should become a legitimate catch and shoot weapon for the Bobcats fairly early in his collegiate career. He'll look to become a go-to option for the three-pointer, as his instincts beyond the arc are impressive. Quinnipiac lost four of its top five three-point shooters from last season, with Andrew Robinson the lone double-digit three-point scorer remaining. Donahue will look to fill some of the shoes that left last year, as he'll be able to draw attention away from more mobile guards when driving into the paint.

Toughest Game on Schedule

December 28, 2017: Home vs. Monmouth

Monmouth, a perennial contender to win the MAAC, is always a difficult opponent. While this game will be in Hamden, it doesn't make it any easier for Quinnipiac. An experienced and well-coached Hawks team will make its way to face a young, transitioning team.

While the Hawks lost Justin Robinson and Je'lon Hornbeak, who were atop the stats sheet last season, Micah Seaborn and Austin Tilghman return. Both Seaborn and Tilghman will give QU problems, as the Bobcats allowed Monmouth to drain 41 percent of its three's last season.

The Elder Statesmen

The team will undoubtedly lean on fifth-year forward Alain Chigha to mentor its youthful roster. While the Cameroon-native has never been one to fill the stats sheet or rack up awards, he's been a consistent presence in the locker room for a now-young Bobcats squad. He's endured the up's and down's of college basketball and has gone through the process of losing a head coach he'd known for four years.

Predictions

For Quinnipiac, this year is about seeing how its new piece's work with one another. The ceiling for this team? Well, probably somewhere around a 17-13 record. That's assuming all the pieces come together quickly, and Dunleavy creates a winning culture right away, which is certainly far from easy for any new staff.

My guess, though, is that the team finishes just below .500 at 14-16 overall in regular season play. The loss of Mikey Dixon and Peter Kiss will be difficult to overcome in the first year of the Dunleavy era, as the team won just 10 games with the duo in Hamden. The team will go 5-7 in out of conference play and finish 9-9 in MAAC contests. Keep an eye out for both Rich Kelly and Chaise Daniels, as the pair will elevate their game.

If the year plays out to something like this, it should be considered a success, with four extra wins and improved in-conference play as positives. Either way, Dunleavy will have lots of time to craft a winning product here in Hamden.

Social Media and Human Decency: A Contentious Relationship

(Original article)

I love social media. I am like many of my friends and colleagues – we devote our education to learning more about it. I'm thankful to have an internship (and education) that is solely focused on digital and social media.

I'm not alone when I say that I use Twitter every single day, multiple (and I mean *multiple*) times.

And why shouldn't I, or we as a society, use it everyday? Twitter and FaceBook are far more than just vehicles for simply staying in touch – they serve as hubs of information where users gather to collect insights, daily news and entertainment.

There's an undeniable, collective excitement that surfaces from what happens within it. Whether it's politics, sports or entertainment, these events create communities that generate discussion from user to user.

Despite the benefits and innovations of the ever-evolving field, social media is as harmful as it is informative.

Where there's good, even great, there is almost *always* bad.

We generalize 'trolls' as unfortunate side effects of the internet, those whose sole purpose is to scour the social media landscape and look for *something* to criticize. When it comes to sports, specifically the athletes that play them, there's no room for error.

It doesn't matter if you're LeBron James and you hit the game-winning shot. It doesn't matter if you're an athlete who brightens up a kids day in a feel-good story. Simply, it doesn't matter if you do *good* anymore. Good is no longer 'good.' To please the digital world in 2019, you have to be better than great. Sadly, that's a feat that not even the best can achieve.

Everything is under a microscope, more so than ever before. Communication is instantaneous. Every single quote is analyzed, discussed and criticized, usually for worse.

For athletes, it's an unfair game.

We frequently forget that a good portion of these 'professionals' are as young as 19 years old. Take a moment to consider this. When you were 19, where were you? Most of us were probably just starting college or our first job. In a broader sense, most of us were simply trying to find our direction in life.

These kids are thrust into the bright (and unforgiving) lights of stardom.

I'm a 20-year-old in college pursuing a career in sports media, getting experience by writing for school publications. Kevin Knox, a 19-year-old rookie on the New York Knicks, is a starter on a terrible – no, pitiful – team.

He, along with every other player in the league, faces harsh criticism day in and day out. There will always be the faction that rides the tough-guy mentality: "These kids are professionals, they need to learn how to handle the criticism." Sure, that's partially true.

Any professional in any discipline will have to learn the proper ways of handling criticism. In a much larger sense, how to deal with adversity and *life.*

The difference, though, is that when these young adults are dropped into the limelight, we expect perfection. We forget that there is a steep learning curve. This is their first full-time job. This is *their* profession.

When you started your first internship or job, you weren't expected to do everything right. Growing pains are a natural part of the process when becoming suited to your role. Growing pains are a part of life.

Don't mistake this for an attack on the 'mean' people that populate these outlets. This is an admission from someone who admires social media and all that it does offer. You don't have to be an expert or fan of the social landscape to see its pros and cons. Just because we find the topic so interesting and beneficial doesn't mean we can be blind to the everyday harm it elicits.

When we take our irrational anger out on someone who cannot legally buy a beer yet, we sink to a low. But that low isn't a new one. It's existed for a far longer time than social media has. People just have the platform to speak out now. The pundits, critics and admirers are, for the first time, together.

Sports, as much as I, my friends, and the world loves them, are *not* the most important thing. At their core, sports unite us. They unify countries in times of peril. They bring families together through a generational love. They form friendships for individuals who may have nothing else in common.

They make us happy.

Above all, we forget that sports are entertainment. The NFL, NBA, NHL and MLB all aim to do two things – promote their brand and generate revenue. Their duty is to provide a product worth paying attention to. Ours is to cheer on our teams and our beloved superstars.

The silent duty that we often forget to carry out is one that holds a message as simple as sports themselves.

Human decency.

The Road Ahead: Quinnipiac Men's Ice Hockey Looks Ready for ECAC Play

(Original article)

Another week means another jump in the rankings for Rand Pecknold's bunch. They've built themselves a nice cushion with conference play on the horizon.

What's Gone Right?

When a team tallies 21 goals through five games, they have to be doing *something* right. Of course, nine of those goals came against a pretty terrible American International College team, but it's a good start for a team that (for the most part) struggled to get points on the board in 2017.

Fortunately for Pecknold & Co., his top offensive scorers have all gotten off to solid starts. The combination of **Odeen Tufto, Chase Priskie** and **Alex Whelan** have combined for 11 goals and five assists. Of the team's six power play goals, five have been scored by the aforementioned trio.

Aside from the offense, **Keith Petruzzelli** has performed at an extremely high level. He's allowed just six goals on 77 shots this season. As a result, his 1.50 GAA is tops in ECAC hockey and 14th in the country.

Who Needs to Step Up?

Usually, most teams have a few problems, no matter the record. With this Quinnipiac team, though, it's hard to point out any glaring weaknesses – yet. The new-look roster has played well together despite being its first season. The team has scored bunches of goals and defeated a good Boston College team, too. When it comes to lines, Pecknold and assistants Bill Riga and Joe Dumais have pushed all the right buttons. If anything, the penalty kill unit will need to shore up things (17/23 – .739 %). It will be fascinating to see how the team looks against top competition in the next coming weeks.

Who's Up Next?

The Bobcats will hit the road to face Harvard and Dartmouth. It's the start of ECAC hockey play for Quinnipiac, a stretch of games that will last till mid-November.

Predictions

People took notice when Quinnipiac defeated Boston College earlier this month. They found themselves ranked 20th after the win. Following a dominating sweep of AIC, the team was rewarded with the 15th spot in the latest USCHO.com poll. If they sweep this weekend, they could be looking at a top 10 spot.

How will they actually do, though? Tough to say. Both Harvard and Dartmouth have just one game under their belts. In fact, the game was against each other, with the Big Green winning 7-6 in OT. So, do both teams have potent offenses, or was the game a fluke? I'd lean towards both putting up good fights against a hot Quinnipiac team.

For some reason, I have a feeling the Bobcats will do really good this weekend. Why shouldn't they? They're a youthful, fun team that's riding a great start. Does QU improve to 7-0? They certainly could, but I'd still call it a good weekend if they split.

QU defeats Harvard, 3-2

QU falls to Dartmouth, 2-1

Random Notes

- Of the newcomers, two have stood out; **Wyatt Bongiovanni** and **Ethan De Jong.** The numbers won't blow anyone away (three goals, six assists), but the two have been mainstays on the top line with Tufto. Both are physical, fast and smart with the puck. Expect very good things from this young line.
- Senior defenseman **Brandon Fortunato** looks like he's put a disappointing 2017 behind him, as he's already matched his point total from last season (8). He's been one of the surprises of the young season, much like **Craig Martin**. He was pretty quiet last year (four goals, 10 assists), but has contributed five helpers and two scores through five games.

Thoughts on the Break: Men's Hockey's Triumphant Resurgence

(Original article)

As soon as Quinnipiac's season ended a season ago – a 2-0 loss to Cornell in the ECAC Quarterfinals – one thing became quite clear; change was imminent. The team had finished 16-18-4, its first sub-.500 finish since 1995, Rand Pecknold's second season at the helm (when the school was still Division-III).

It seems clear now, though, that the change the Bobcats' needed has indeed arrived. In the process, it has revitalized a program that has constantly chased success.

11-2: How did they get there?

This is a loaded question, I'll admit. There are *a lot* of reasons why Quinnipiac is currently ranked No. 9 in the country, according to USCHO.com. So, let's break that down.

- The Bobcats should be thankful for **Odeen Tufto** and **Chase Priskie**. Simply, either of these guys could be considered the Bobcats most important player. Tufto is off to a torrid start after his remarkable freshman campaign, as he has tallied 18 points on nine goals and nine assists in 13 games. His latest highlight came in the form of a hat trick against Maine. Priskie, though, isn't far behind, as he's put up 16 points (eight goals, eight assists). They've been the leaders of a Bobcat offense that averages 3.77 goals per game, 6th best in the country.
- The combination of **Keith Petruzzelli** and **Andrew Shortridge**. Goaltending wasn't a concern coming into the season. Rather, it was more of a question of who would see more time. After equally impressive showings from Petruzzelli and Shortridge, Rand Pecknold has a very good problem on his hands. Petruzzelli has elevated his game to the tune of a .913 save % and 2.01 GAA. He's also collected three shutouts. But, it could be argued that Shortridge has been even better. His numbers through four starts are impressive (.946 save %, 1.25 GAA, one shutout). If both keep it up, it's not going to matter *who* Pecknold decides to start.
- Hats off to Bill Riga, the Bobcats' recruiting coordinator. His team is reaping the benefits of one of the programs strongest recruiting classes in recent years. **Wyatt Bongiovanni** and **Ethan De Jong** (along with Odeen Tufto) have combined to create a very potent top line. Aside from the aforementioned rookies, Sweden-native **William Fällström** and Vegas Golden Knights draft pick **Peter DiLiberatore** have produced admirably (three goals, 10 assists).
- The Bobcats' have seen increased production from two of their most important defense pieces; **Brandon Fortunato** and **Karlis Cukste**. Fortunato, in particular, looks like a different player. He finished last year with eight points. This year, though? He's tallied 13 assists, the best mark on the team and tied for second best in the country. Cukste, on the other hand, has contributed nine helpers.

Most Impressive, Indeed

There's a reason why the team has continued to climb in the rankings, and it's quite obvious. They're winning a lot, and they're beating some pretty good teams, too. The team defeated Cornell in comeback fashion on the road, 4-2, thanks to three straight goals from **Joe O' Connor, Chase Priskie** and **Alex Whelan**. In ECAC Hockey matchups, Quinnipiac owns a 4-2 record. That's a great start, but the gauntlet that is conference play will only get tougher as the season goes on. Should we expect some growing pains from a fairly young team? Yes. Should we expect that to slow them down, though? Probably not.

The Road Ahead

The team will certainly be tested in the coming weekends, as it will face No. 19 Princeton and No. 3 UMass. Following this four-game stretch will begin five straight games against conference opponents. Predicting outcomes can be a crapshoot, but one thing is certain; we'll learn a lot about this team in the next two weeks.

Biggest Factors Behind Men's Ice Hockey's Return to the Rankings

(Original article)

Rand Pecknold's revamped roster has passed the eye test three games in. After opening the season 3-0, the Bobcats' look like a legitimate threat. Who's been integral to the team's success so far?

Quinnipiac has looked impressive in its 3-0 start, defeating the likes of Vermont, UConn and then-ranked No. 18 Boston College. So impressive, that it's earned the 20th spot on the latest USCHO.com poll.

It comes as a significant achievement, as it's the team's first ranking this season. Rand Pecknold and players will tell you they try not to think about rankings often, but make no mistake. This ranking is *big*. His bunch has looked like the real deal, and there's a few reasons why.

Perhaps most importantly, **Keith Petruzzelli** has been a force. His 1.34 GAA is best in the ECAC, by a good amount. The second best spot belongs to Darion Hanson of Union with a distant 1.99 mark. Petruzzelli's GAA is also tied for 13th-best in the country. In other words, he's been dominant, and has certainly shown why he is such a highly-touted prospect.

His most impressive showing came against the best competition the Bobcats have seen this season; Boston College. Don't forget, this is the home of the No. 11 overall pick in last year's NHL Entry Draft, Oliver Wahlstrom. After tallying five goals against a talented Wisconsin team, the Eagles were limited to 21 shots and zero scores against Petruzzelli & Co. The performance definitely boosted his save percentage (.931), which currently sits 22nd in the country.

"He's been working hard with our goalie coach, Jared Waimon," head coach Rand Pecknold said after the team's win over BC. "I think the maturity, it's a natural progression for him."

If Petruzzelli keeps this rolling, the Bobcats will be tough to beat. But he's only one part of the puzzle. The steady play of veteran…

…Chase Priskie has been integral to the team's success. His two goals are tied with Odeen Tufto and freshman William Fällström for the team lead. His first goal of the year was a game-tying one-timer that allowed the Bobcats to defeat Vermont 3-2 on the road. Against a stout Boston College defense, he tallied the team's lone score of the game. He's the leader in shots (11) and has scored the Bobcats' only power play goal in 11 chances.

After tallying a career-high 101 shots on goal last season, the captain looks well on pace to surpass that mark. It's become clear that he's the team's unquestioned leader in the locker room, too.

“We were tired of losing [last season],” Priskie said after being asked about the team’s improved performance this season. “It wasn’t acceptable. We don’t have a losing culture. We came together and established our standard of excellence.”

In terms of overall impact, rookie **William Fällström** has been equally impressive. The Sweden native has had a fast start to his collegiate career. He tallied two goals (one on an empty net) in the team’s 4-2 win over UConn. He assisted fellow freshman, Wyatt Bongiovanni, on a goal in the third period against Vermont, tying the game at one.

In 58 games last season with the USHL’s Fargo Force, Fälström tallied 45 points on 14 goals and 31 assists. Keep an eye out for him as he sees more ice.

Honorable mention:

- The top line of Wyatt Bongiovanni, Odeen Tufto and Ethan De Jong has the chance to special. The three underclassmen have combined for three goals and two assists through three games. All three are highly-skilled forwards, and all of them catching fire at once seems inevitable.
- Head coach **Rand Pecknold** and his staff have pushed all the right buttons…so far. After reconstructing the roster in the offseason, Pecknold appears to have found a handful of successful combinations. Aside from sticking with Petruzzelli and choosing the right lines, his decision to give Craig Martin more ice time has payed off (three assists), too.

Fit For A Queenie: The Grace and Focus of Quinnipiac Women’s Golf Queen Phenom Queenie Lai

(Original article)

Quinnipiac women’s golf freshman Queenie Lai never aimed to become a winner of three-straight MAAC Golfer of the Week awards.

“It just kind of happened,” Lai said. “It was nice the first time, but my goal has never shifted.”

For Lai, that goal is made up of a few parts. As she put it, she always tries to be her absolute best. Remarkably, she attempts to block out the awards and results.
Rather than embracing her rewards and recognition, as athletes frequently do, she cares about one thing the most: the *end goal*.
Despite consistently ending up with scores in the 70’s, finishing in the top 10 of tournaments and earning awards, Lai just plays her game and focuses on the results for her team.

“I want to get our team prepared for the conference championship,” Lai remarked.
Her personality, poise and determination are traits that head coach John O’Conner has seen develop at a rapid pace.

“She’ll never say it, but she couldn’t care less about the awards,” O’Conner said with a smirk. “She just wants to win; she brings a new type of focus to the team.”
Aside from the accolades and results, Lai has brought one attribute that can’t be taught: *grace*.

Onlookers stop and watch her. She’s dispelled the idea that freshman can’t have a big impact beyond the field, as her own team looks up to her and learns from her.

“Certainly, Queenie is well-liked by everyone on the team. She always works hard. She’s made the golf team this year far better than it’s ever been,” O’Conner said with pride.

With just a year under her belt of living in the United States, Lai’s transition from leaving her hometown of Hong Kong, an autonomous territory of China, has been a fairly seamless one.

She’s spent her entire life growing up in the city that 7.4 million people call home. In Hamden, she’s one of the 7,000 undergraduate students that attend Quinnipiac, the fairly small school in a New Haven suburb.

The time away from home, though, is something she is used to.

“It was a quick adjustment,” Lai recalled. “When I was in high school and middle school I traveled a lot to play international tournaments.”

Though she didn’t know it at the time, the constant time away from home would serve as a benefit in the long run. As Queenie put it, she learned to become independent at a young age.

“I’d be away from home for a week or two because of being on the national team in Hong Kong,” Lai said as she reminisced.

It wasn’t long ago when she got on the phone with O’Conner to discuss the possibility of coming to Quinnipiac, long before she ever knew anyone on the team.

“Everyone was very welcoming. My teammates have become my best friends,” Lai said with a smile.

She noted that even when the team has a down tournament, which at this point is rare, everyone is quick to pick each other up.

For Quinnipiac, the great thing may be that the best of what Queenie has to offer has yet to come.

The freshman force has emerged quietly to the top ranks of the nation's best women golfers. Her voice has been on the green, and more importantly, her results. On the team though, she is the quiet, dominant and graceful force. Her play is heard, but the impact of her words? That's the team's reaction.

"As long as I stay focused and smart on the course and just keep doing what I do, the long-term results will come."

Coming Full Circle: For Quinnipiac Women's Rugby, Seeing is Believing

(Original article) - Magazine cover story

Quinnipiac's women's rugby team has come a long way in its seventh year of existence. It hasn't been earned easily. Innovative philosophies and trust have brought the team unparalleled levels of success. The cycle has come around.

There was never any doubt.

Becky Carlson knew her team was going to leave the pitch, on that fateful Sunday afternoon in November, as champions. This time, though, for the third straight year.

The clock ticked down as the final minute slowly crawled towards the end of what had been an incredible, emotional and well-deserved match. If there had ever been a time to see the physical embodiment of the phrase, "We did it," this was it.

Carlson exchanged smiles with her assistant coaches, Colleen Doherty and Brad Dufek, as the fans and players eagerly waited for the clock to *finally* hit zero.

With the clock at zero and the final play just about over, cheers erupted, players hugged each other, cried and stormed the field. Dartmouth, knowing they had fought well against the Quinnipiac rugby machine, looked onwards with solemn faces.

In the heat of the moment, the thrill of a third-straight national championship, Carlson defined the ultimate sense of *cool*. She turned around to her bench with a slight grin on her face, holding up a yellow t-shirt in her hands with the word "believe" etched on its back.

The moment was a microcosm of the entire season; staying calm, cool and patient in the biggest of moments. They *believed.*

It had been just two months and two weeks since her squad had fallen in just its second game of the year to Dartmouth. The affair was a back-and-forth, questionably officiated and difficult road loss. It proved to be an eye-opener and eventually, what made the season so successful.

“We had some serious gut checks,” Carlson said of the loss. “You lose early in the season and you recognize that no one was going to let you walk into their house. It had us laser-focused on the things that we needed to be better at.”

It wasn’t just the loss that helped. It certainly wasn’t the recognition. The two-time defending national champions didn’t have their own home field until the 2017 season. With the sport in its infancy, the last thing Carlson and her team looked for was the coverage.

It was the *mentality.* As Carlson put it, real champions don’t bait anyone, they attack and go out for the kill.

“The general assumption from people at the start of the season was that we could win the third championship,” senior Flora Poole said. “That’s where you are most vulnerable.”

Panic, worry, or as Poole put it, “frazzlement”; these are all emotions that the team never felt from then on. Even if the opposition opened matches by scoring first in bunches, the Bobcats never felt pressured or worried about their chances.

“There was always a sense of calmness and more of a let’s fix it kind of attitude. It was relaxed, not hectic,” Poole said.

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As Carlson walked slowly onto the field as her team cried, laughed and rejoiced in the moment, she looked around and took everything in. A program in its seventh year in existence had just captured its third national championship, the school’s third, with rugby owning them all.

They had won their third championship, except this time, it was different. There was a real, live television broadcast. There was a press conference, with seats, microphones and a National Intercollegiate Rugby Association (NIRA) banner delicately hung above Carlson and her players during interviews.

These are all typically mainstays of any collegiate gamer regardless of sport, but for Quinnipiac rugby, it signaled a stepping stone.

“It solidified NIRA,” graduate student Tayler Schussler reflected. “Making it real, with a board, a chairperson, it became a high profile tournament. It was an immensely prideful thing.”

Pride is something that Schussler, along with the rest of the seniors, can take with them as they leave behind a program that has outdone itself over the past four years. If

anything, they've built a culture that appears to be set in place for a long, long time. The concept of replacement doesn't apply to the program.

They *thrive* off of change.

"We never say starters and subs. We say starter's and reinforcements. We feel confident in every person we put out there, and they all bring something different to the table," Carlson reflected.

The key word is "we." It's never a one-man job. The team recognizes that they won't be able to replace anyone. It's a unique approach to a part of sports that is usually met with difficulty.

"We're excited to build off the foundation that players have made for us," assistant coach Colleen Doherty said.

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The weeks following the championship were filled with excitement, reflection and pride. The rugby pitch sat and grew colder as snow set in while temperatures dropped.

Eventually, the season will return, with new players in the program and those who left their mark on their own paths. At the same time, Quinnipiac rugby is only just beginning down its path to notoriety around the country.

"Every time I wear a shirt with QU Rugby on it, someone always says that they've heard of us," Schussler remarked.

Like the end of the championship game itself, it appeared that at last, things had come full circle.

Like Carlson's shirt said, all you have to do is believe.

After the Dust Settled: Baker Dunleavy's Search for Everything

([Original article]) - Magazine cover story

As the Quinnipiac men's basketball season begins, new head coach Baker Dunleavy will lead his team into a new era. He's not alone, though, as his new assistant coaches and players will be starting the journey together.

There's one thing Baker Dunleavy wants his team to have by the end of the year.

The highly coveted acquisition isn't physical. It's not something you can acquire after one practice, after running a few plays smoothly; it takes time. They call it a moving target. That moving target is what Dunleavy calls a cohesive culture.

“It’s a day-to-day process of building trust. You can’t say, we’re there, we’ve built trust. It’s more of, we had a good day today,” Dunleavy remarked.

As Quinnipiac fired former head coach Tom Moore, Dunleavy was in Villanova, Pennsylvania, preparing for the Big East tournament. The Wildcats were on the heels of their fourth consecutive Big East title. In Hamden, it wasn’t just a team in flux; it was an entire *program* hanging in the balance.

Quinnipiac athletic director Greg Amodio had to nail the hire. He had to bring hope to a program that had failed to deliver. Enter, Baker Dunleavy. When the job opened up, Dunleavy didn’t think much of it. As he put it: the more time went on, the more perfect of a fit it became. Getting here was the first step. The moving target was in its infancy.

“You just try and listen to people who have done this before, just try and take from people’s experiences and learn and read as much as you can,” Dunleavy thought at the start of the year.

Keeping in line with using the guidance from those before him, he looked to fill his first assistant coaching spot. Enter, Tom Pecora. The first coach added to the staff, Pecora had been out of coaching for two years before getting the call from Dunleavy. Coming from Hofstra and Fordham, Pecora brought a sense of wisdom to the team that Dunleavy strove for.

“Tom is a veteran, he’s been around. He’s got some age on the other guys, but wisdom and experience, too. He’s been in the seat that I sit in, so that’s been immensely helpful,” Dunleavy said with confidence.

Those other guys, they were the last piece of the coaching puzzle. There were three things Dunleavy looked for in his last two vacant spots; level, region, and culture. Enter, Shaun Morris and Anthony Goins. Morris, a former assistant at Boston University, brings a young, youthful feel, as Dunleavy describes. Goins, who comes to Hamden from nearby Yale, brings a winning pedigree and recruiting prowess.

The one thing that Goins, Morris, and Pecora all have is something that Dunleavy welcomes: diversity. He didn’t want to hire the same person for each spot; he wanted a synergy.

“I think we hired all high character, hard-working people,” Dunleavy recalled. “I think that’s the common trait. There are different people with different strengths and weaknesses that can come together.”
After assembling his staff, it was time for the next step. Enter, players. The whirlwind of a process led Dunleavy and his staff to first take a look at the mid-Atlantic and New England region. This was an area his assistants had power in recruiting in the past. This led the staff, like many others in the country, to look at who was available via transfer.

Enter, Kevin Marfo and Travis Atson. These were the two that stood out in Dunleavy's mind due to scouting them before when they were at George Washington and Tulsa, respectively.

"You feel like, alright, even those guys are American League players, A10 players, with the way we do things here (Quinnipiac), we feel like we might have been able to get them," Dunleavy said when he thought back on the initial process.

After the explosive duo of Peter Kiss and Mikey Dixon left the program following Moore's firing, the point guard position suddenly became a gaping hole on the roster. Enter, Rich Kelly. The playmaking, space-creating guard from Cheshire was an immediate target for the staff.

There's one player, though, who isn't new to the college game. That's fifth-year player Alain Chigha, or as the team calls him, Al. For Dunleavy, he's been an extension of the coaching staff.

"Everybody looks at leadership differently. Who can raise the level of other people's performance around them while still taking care of their own business?" Dunleavy stated. "Al does it naturally."

It's something the team not only loves to see but something they *need*. As Baker put it, everyone is new, whether or not they're playing for him for the first time. He also believes that the group hasn't earned the right to be picked anything other than towards the bottom of the league. They have to *prove* their worth.

"I don't want this year to be about one thing. I think any time you're in a team sport, even the last few years at Villanova, not once did we ever say, 'Hey, here's the goal, win the Big East Championship,'" Dunleavy said about setting goals.

Enter, the season.

Practices, the late nights watching film, it's all led up to this: *basketball.* It's going to have its ups, but there will certainly be downs. One step forward and two step backward; it's a trend that even Dunleavy admitted might become a reality. The search, though, to finally catch that moving target, might never end.

"I like to think about the daily process, the progression."

Quinnipiac Univeristy Athletics Department (QU Athletics)

QU Women's Rugby Captures Third Straight National Title, Downs Dartmouth 29-20

(Original article)

HAMDEN, Connecticut – A national championship is often the hardest thing to attain for any team. Back-to-back championships are things that some programs only dream of. A three-peat, though, is nearly inconceivable.

That mentality doesn't apply to the Quinnipiac women's rugby team.

The team took down Dartmouth College in an exhilarating match by a score of 29-20, winning their third-straight National Intercollegiate Rugby Association Championship. As they have so many times this season, they came back from behind. They also continued a trend: scoring in bunches.

After finding themselves down 15 points, the Bobcats turned to Mikah Maples (Mowequa, Illinois) to bring them up. The sophomore found an opening on the pitch to the left side, bullying her way in to bring the Bobcats within five. On the play, she was assisted by three-time All-American and reigner Ma Sorensen Player of the Year Ilona Maher (Burlington, Vermont).

Maher, as she has all season, put the team on her back. Along with the assist on Maples' try, Maher tallied two tries and an additional assist, giving her five tries and two assists for the tournament and earning NIRA Championship Most Valuable Player honors. Maher scored the crucial try that gave the Bobcats the 17-15 lead after Margaret Wesolowski (Milwaukee, Wisconsin) nailed the conversion.

With the victory, the team finishes the year with a perfect 8-0 record at home. A home field is something they didn't have for the entirety of their program before this season.

After Mikah Maples and Ilona Maher did their work in the try zone, Tayler Schussler (Westminster, Maryland) put the final touch on the match with a try of her own.

The cold was bitter, the wind was a factor, and the mud was thick. The team didn't care, though. Nothing was going to stop them. The determination is what they had.

"Just because you won the first national championship and you won the second one, that means nothing," senior Flora Poole (Christchurch, New Zealand) said.

That mentality rang true today, as the team knew they had to change things coming out of the half. After falling to Dartmouth earlier in the season, Quinnipiac knew they couldn't afford to take anything for granted.

They lived, breathed and fought to prove the one phrase that they preached all season; Each game is our biggest game of the year.

Perhaps more importantly, the team's win marked a significant moment for the trajectory of collegiate women's rugby.

"Our win is more important for the growth of our sport," head coach Becky Carlson remarked.

With the incredible feat of the three consecutive championships attained, the program is far from finished. The program's future is bright, according to both Carlson and fans alike. Maher believes it. too, as she's leaving behind a program in good hands.

NOTES

- Senior Ilona Maher scored two tries in the match. She also added two assists.
- Sophomore Mikah Maples (Mowequa, Illinois) scored two of her own tries. One of hers tied the match at 15-15.
- The team went on a 19 point run after Maples' first try of the match.
- Senior Flora Poole added an assist.
- Senior Tayler Schussler scored the final try of the match for the Bobcats, putting them on top 27-15.
- The Bobcats finish the season with an 8-0 record at home and a 9-2 record in NIRA conference play.
- Senior Margaret Wesolowski was 2-for-5 (40%) on conversion attempts.

Far From the Ordinary: Flora Poole’s Journey Extends Far Beyond Hamden

(Original article)

By: Phil Akre '20

Quinnipiac's women's rugby team is just about ready to get things going against the day's opponent, Penn State.

It's a much anticipated match. The crowds buzzing, fans are entering the stands, and the team is finishing its warmups. Nearly the entire team is methodical through warmups, not taking a break, minimal laughter, and focus at a high.

The one exception from the group takes her time in preparation for drills and games alike. Once a play or drill is over, though, she doesn't wait to crack a joke, smile, or lighten the mood on the team.

"She comes off the field and has this goofy laugh, and she's a little bit silly. She's got this kid that's inside of her," Head Coach Becky Carlson said. "That kid gets absolutely put in timeout every time she steps on the rugby field."

The kid spirit from Poole is something that's developed over the course of her entire life. That's because she's taken a wildly unique path to Quinnipiac.

In many ways, Quinnipiac is just another pit stop for the soon-to-be graduate.

Officially being listed from Christchurch, New Zealand, the senior standout was born in England, where her entire family before her is from.

After moving to New Zealand at the age of eight, Poole grew up in the country until she was an 18-year-old.

"My high school in New Zealand offered an exchange program for just a month in Manhattan," Poole said. "I stayed with a host family and got on with them really well."

The taste of American life was all Flora needed, as she left everything behind to travel the world. Her first stop? The United States.

As fate would have it, Poole ended up working for a summer camp in Pennsylvania. During this time, she rekindled connections with her host family from high school.

"They said to me, you should come play rugby in the states. I told them I didn't know the states played rugby," Poole said.

The states, though, were far from the last stop she'd make.

"I traveled from New York down to Texas, and then out to Los Angeles," Poole said. "I flew back to England and played rugby there for a while and had a couple of jobs out there."

Flora has added Ireland, multiple countries in Europe and France to her list of places she's visited, too. On the top of the list, though? Germany.

"I love the culture there. I love the food. The people there are just so friendly. They're so inclusive," Poole reminisced.

After a stop at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, Germany, Flora made the decision to become a history major when she eventually chose to attend Quinnipiac.

"I made awesome friends, I was never alone even though I was traveling alone," Poole remarked. "It was great."

From all of her travels, she's learned to appreciate what life has to offer, since she's seen how different cultures operate. The fly half is constantly regarded as one of the best people in terms of support, advice, and when someone needs a smile.

"You don't know people's stories. You don't know people's backgrounds until you've had that conversation with them," Flora said.

Her pit stop at Quinnipiac is coming to an end soon, though. The player who has done so much for the rugby program on and off the field, will move on from the stop in the road that is Hamden.

"I've got itchy feet. I plan on traveling the west coast after graduation," Poole thought to herself. "Maybe grad school in Europe, that's a possibility."

Poole's itchy feet have taken her a lot of places. For her, it's a matter of appreciating each stop in her life as she goes, rather than reminiscing on what she misses.

She's left her post-graduate life much of an open book. Nearly everything is on the table. If one things for sure, it's to expect the unexpected from the vagabond England-native.

"Maybe I'll play some summer seven's, we'll see."

Adjustment on the Fly: Anna Kilponen’s Transition to Quinnipiac

(Original article)

For *Anna Kilponen*, the last few months have had one theme; change.

Change is subjective. It can be a positive thing for one or a negative shift for another. In this case, it was a mix of both. One chapter of Kilponen's life closed, leading the way for a new one to begin.

In the wake of the University of North Dakota shutting down it's women's ice hockey program, Kilponen knew change was on the horizon.

"It's definitely been different coming here," Kilponen said. "Getting used to everything again. For the first couple of weeks, I felt like a freshman."

Kilponen, like all of her 24 teammates, were left at an immediate crossroads. There were no more games on the upcoming schedule, no more practices lined up, no more *hockey.*

Surely, Kilponen was going to be going somewhere. She just didn't know where to look heading into her junior year.

"There have definitely been some moments where I think it has been hard for her," head coach Cassandra Turner said.

While the transition has been a difficult one for the 22-year-old Kilponen, Turner had a feeling her team would welcome the transfer with open arms.

"(They've been) awesome," Turner said with a smile. "Our team (is made up of) great people. I can see right away that they've welcomed her in. Everyone seems to be getting along really well."

International players always seem to gain more attention from the fans, whether it's the accent, their history, or how to properly pronounce their last names.

When talking to Kilponen, you'll find she's not too different from the rest of us.

"I like to relax, watch Netflix or movies with my friends," Kilponen said. "It's nice to go to new places. One day, we hiked the Sleeping Giant, and that was awesome."

With stops in Finland, North Dakota, and now the small town of Hamden, Kilponen has quite the contact list.

She's added a few more since she's arrived on the east coast, too. Her teammates have made it easy for her to feel at home.

"The team has been great. There are a lot of great people," Kilponen said. "The girls are all so nice and helpful. They're always there if I need help."

In her short time knowing Kilponen, senior *T.T. Cianfarano* has been vocal in her support for the talented junior.

"Being a transfer is difficult, not just for her, but for anyone who has transferred," Cianfarano said. "We're just keeping her upbeat and energetic, not having her think of what's happened in her past."

One of the positive things that Kilponen has brought to the program is what Coach Turner likes to call, "Olympian habits."

"Every day I want to be better," Kilponen said. "I want to my best on and off the ice to be better for this team and the Olympic team."

Representing Team Finland in the Olympics would bring Kilponen satisfaction in more ways than one, as she only visits home on Christmas and occasionally in the summer months.

For now, though, Kilponen is about to begin her first season as a Bobcat. When she suits up for the season opener against Maine and every game after, she'll tape her stick and attend the pregame meeting.

Along the way, she might change up her routine. After all, she's no stranger to change.

"If I can, I like to have my pregame nap. Around twenty minutes or so."

Q30 Television

A look ahead to the new year for the Quinnipiac women's ice hockey team

(Original Article)

Quinnipiac's women's ice hockey team hasn't competed since Dec. 3 when it finished up the first half of its season with a win over Rensselaer, capping off a three-game win streak. Friday, Dec. 30, though, the Bobcats will return to the friendly confines of High Point Solutions Arena when they face Penn State University. As the team begins the second half of its season, there are a few things to look out for.

First-half recap

The Bobcats' record of 13-4-3 is good enough for third place in the ECAC and a No. 8 ranking in the latest USCHO.com poll.

Quinnipiac averaged 2.8 goals per game at the end of the first half of the season. Junior forward T.T. Cianfarano, reigning ECAC Player of the Year, led the team in scoring with 11 goals and 18 points. Senior captain Emma Woods was quiet for most of the first half but ended up with eight goals, second most on the team. Her first half success was highlighted by a four-goal outburst in a series with Rensselaer.

Perhaps the biggest surprise came from sophomore Kenzie Lancaster, who also has eight goals thus far. After a quiet freshman year, Lancaster has become one of the Bobcats strongest offensive weapons.

Who needs to step up?

Abby Cleary: The freshman forward came into the program with big expectations and so far has failed to live up to them. To date, Cleary hasn't registered a single point or goal the entire season and has seen a drastic decrease in her playing time. She came to Quinnipiac from powerhouse institution Shattuck-St.Mary's, so to say her lack of production is surprising is an understatement.

Sarah-Eve Coutu-Godbout: After missing the first 12 games of the season due to NCAA rules, the Quebec native had little difficulty in adjusting to the speed of college hockey. While she has looked fantastic on the ice, fluid with the puck, she has yet to translate it into goals. Her 28 shots on goal have resulted in just one point for the team. She needs to work on finding the holes, or else her offensive ability could be held back for the rest of the year.

Who will be the breakout player of the second half?
The easy answer to this question would have been Sarah-Eve Coutu Godbout had she not injured her hand before Quinnipiac's 27-day hiatus. With that being said, Kenzie Prater seems like the most logical candidate. The Wisconsin native has emerged as a go-to scoring option for the Bobcats, as she is top-five on the team in goals and points. She tallied three goals in the last six games of the first half, so perhaps her strong ending in 2016 will continue into the new year.

Second half predictions

Quinnipiac has done what it is supposed to do; beat the bad teams, and compete with the elite ones. The team holds a 7-2-1 record in conference, with its only two losses coming from the two teams above them, St. Lawrence and Clarkson.

In the second half of the season, the Bobcats will have a chance to prove that they can hang with the best of the ECAC when they face the Saints and Golden Knights in early February. While it won't be easy to win on the road against these powerhouses, it's reasonable to think that they can defeat St. Lawrence, as Quinnipiac lost to them by just one goal in Nov.

As for the rest of the Bobcats schedule, eight of the teams that Quinnipiac will face are owners of sub-.500 records. The Bobcats should make it out fairly easy against these teams and go 11-3 in the second half, with losses against Clarkson, Princeton, and an upset from a sub-.500 team. If this is the case, the team will finish 24-7-3 and find itself in good post-season position.

Sarah-Eve Coutu-Godbout set to make an immediate impact for Quinnipiac

(Original article)

For the Quinnipiac women's ice hockey team, the line sheet remained nearly untouched for the first 10 games of the season. That is, until they faced off against Clarkson University, when a new face was listed on the second line.

The new Bobcat was Sarah-Eve Coutu-Godbout, the seemingly unknown freshman finally made her collegiate debut after missing the first 10 games of the season. The move came as a shock, as she had never played a second of college hockey, yet she

found herself thrown right into the fire on the second line against Quinnipiac's biggest rival in Clarkson.

Her introduction to the lineup bumped sophomore Kenzie Lancaster from the second to third line, even though Lancaster was coming off a two-goal weekend. Head coach Cassandra Turner, however, knew that she was well prepared, and of course, a bit nervous for her first game.

"She's been training and practicing with the team. She was here for a few weeks in the summer training as well, so she has put in a lot of work, but she didn't have the game time," Turner said. "I've been really impressed with Sarah-Eve. I think she was nervous her first weekend."

It was apparent that Coutu-Godbout, the Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec native, looked quick, fluid with the puck, and energized in her first two games. So why did it take so long for the highly touted prospect to finally earn play time? Coming from Canada, Coutu-Godbout's main language is French, which caused the NCAA to take a longer time in examining how she would be able adjust to the United States.

"The education system is a little bit different there (Quebec), so there was a little bit of a holdup with NCAA and her eligibility. We were waiting for the process to play out," Turner said.

For Turner, this is not the first time her and Coutu-Godbout have met, as Turner previously coached her in the Canadian national program. This prior relationship has been a huge benefit to Coutu-Godbout's adjustment to the United States and the college game.

Assistant coach Amanda Mazzotta or, "Maz," has also played a big role in helping the Quebec native ease into Quinnipiac hockey, as she has stressed the importance of the goalie-to-offense lessons that can be learned.

"Maz and I worked with Sarah-Eve. Maz is actually quite comfortable with her, there's a lot that happens between a goalie coach and our forwards, in terms of how to shoot and how to score. So, they had built a good relationship as well," Turner said.

Coutu-Godbout is the first member of the Quinnipiac women's ice hockey program to use French as her primary language. However, on her visit to Quinnipiac during the recruitment process she learned that current sophomore Randi Marcon uses French as her secondary language. Turner said that this was also a big reason Coutu-Godbout liked Quinnipiac.

During the 2015-2016 season, Coutu-Godbout played for the Cégep Limoilou Titans, which represents Quebec's pre-university college in Quebec's educational system. In 16 games, she tallied nine goals and 12 assists, good for 21 points overall. Turner saw a lot of things she liked from her during the recruitment process.

“She brings a different pace of play, one that we were wanting,” Turner said. “She has a knack for being around the net, she can finish there. She’s got tremendous offensive ability; she can really shoot the puck well. When she has time and space in transition, she finds a way.”

As of right now, she has five shots on goal, and no points to show for it in her two games. But don’t let these stats fool you, the Quebec native is being held to high expectations from teammates and coaches, as she could be one of the most talented prospects the Bobcats have had in a long time.

“I do expect pretty big things from her as we move forward,” Turner said.

Meet the freshman: The new faces of the 2016-2017 Quinnipiac women’s ice hockey team

(Original article)

Losing important senior players can usually be an extremely tough task for teams to overcome. For the Quinnipiac women’s ice hockey team, it lost six of its own after the 2015-2016 season.

After winning 30 games in 2015-2016, the Bobcats now head into this season with six new members on the team. Despite the loss of some key players, the team isn’t thinking about what they’ll miss. Instead, they’re looking forward to the future faces of Quinnipiac hockey.

#7 Kati Tabin – Defense

Tabin, a 5-foot-8 defender, comes all the way from Winnipeg, Manitoba, after representing Team Manitoba at the 2014 and 2015 Canada Winter Games. In addition to competing the Winter Games, she was a first team Junior Women’s Hockey League (JWHL) All-Star in 2015.

Through three seasons with the Balmoral Hall Blazers of the JWHL, she was a force. Tabin tallied 13 goals, 53 assists, and 66 points. As a defensive-minded head coach, Cassandra Turner will surely love Tabins versatility on the ice, and to see her develop in a strong defensive culture.

#6 Allison Roethke – Defense

Allison Roethke is a prime example of the type of player that Turner has been trying to recruit to the team.

“The most important thing to us is character. We want, and need, good people in our program,” Turner said. “We just want people who want to get better, people who are

have a good knowledge of the game and are smart with the puck. Talent never trumps character."

Roethke comes from Buffalo, Minnesota, where she was a captain of the Buffalo Bison (AHL) during her junior and senior seasons. She was a five-time all-conference selection in her career before Quinnipiac, and tallied 102 points throughout her high school career.

She is skilled on both sides of the puck and has already gotten some significant playing time this season. Look for her to have a big role early on in her Quinnipiac career.

#17 Abby Cleary – Forward

If there's one thing Abby Cleary does well, it's competing. She's a proven winner, taking home championships as a member of powerhouse Shattuck-St.Mary's U-16 and U-19 teams.

Cleary, along with Allison Roethke, has a track record of leadership, as she was a four-year team captain as a member of the Buffalo Bisons, where she led the team in scoring each season. Cleary knows what it's like to be there in the big moments.

"Confidence is just a huge part of my game. When I play with confidence, I feel really strong out there, I feel I can do a lot more."

Now as a member of the Bobcats, Cleary will surely have her time to shine when the lights are brightest. She's got an incredible work ethic, and she'll look to prove herself early on this year.

#21 Kenzie Prater – Forward

Keeping in line with the winning trend of the newcomers, Kenzie Prater is no different. She won a gold medal as a member of the U-18 U.S. National team, and she won gold as a member of the IIHF's U-18 Women's World Championship team. As if that wasn't enough, she also won two consecutive Minnesota State Championships in 2015 and 2016.

Prater has enjoyed having Emma Woods, an offensive minded player, by her side as she's eased into the college game.

"She's definitely a positive person," Prater said. "She is very vocal with that positivity, and it's very helpful. She's always there for you, to help you after a bad shift and help you forget it. Her positivity makes it a lot easier to be more confident in yourself."
For Prater, her focus this season is clear.

“I think my own personal goal is to just keep getting better and help the team play the best hockey we can play. Whether that is scoring, assisting, or just being out there and putting pressure on the other team. Just doing whatever I can to help the team.”

After scoring 124 points in 135 games over the last five seasons, Prater has the chance to become Quinnipiac’s next big offensive weapon.

#24 Sarah-Eve Coutu-Godbout – Forward

Coutu-Godbout comes to Quinnipiac with a track record of incredible offensive production under her belt. In 16 games played from 2015 to 2016, the forward scored 21 points. The Quebec native was a member of Team Quebec’s U-18 team, and scored a goal for Team Canada during the world championships.She won the Limoilou Best Sportsmanship award and earned the title of Most Improved Player while playing in Canada.

#35 Abbie Ives – Goalie
For Abbie Ives, she’s coming into the best situation she could have hoped for. She has senior Sydney Rossman, the reigning ECAC Goaltender of the Year, as a mentor. Head coach Cass Turner understands the impact this has had on the freshman so far.

“It’s been really neat to watch those two,” Turner said. “Syd has kind of taken her under her wing. Syd is teaching her, talking to her, about the expectations that our program has for the goaltending position.”

Ives has been incredibly appreciative of Rossman and the rest of the senior’s guidance. “She’s taught me so much, and showed the ropes. She took me under her wing. Me and Abby (Cleary) are both really close with the seniors.”

Coming from Bedford Hills, New York, Ives was named the WRPDIIHL Player of the Year and a member of the 2016 MSG Varsity All-Hudson Valley Team. She’ll look to continue to grow under the tutelage of Rossman as she hopes to become the goalie of the future.

Women’s ice hockey series preview: Quinnipiac vs. Mercyhurst

(Original article)

The Quinnipiac’s women’s ice hockey team will hit the road this weekend when they travel to take on Mercyhurst University in Erie, PA for a two-game series.

This is the Bobcats’ second consecutive road trip of the young season. After going 2-0 this past weekend against the University of Connecticut and the University of New Hampshire, the Bobcats will look to continue their undefeated start to the season.

A Look at Mercyhurst

Don't let Mercyhurst's 0-1-1 record fool you, this team plays with heart. The Lakers tied against powerhouse No. 10 North Dakota last week, and Bobcats head coach Cassandra Turner has made it clear to her team that they'll be seeing the Lakers best effort.

"Their team is intense, they play with a ton of pride," Turner said. "No one on our team has played there. It's a fun place to play hockey, their fans are intense. We talked a lot about how to manage that type of environment and be ready for anything."

Last season, the Lakers finished with a solid record of 19-11 and took home the College Hockey America (CHA) Championship. Mercyhurst traveled to Hamden, CT in 2015 to face Quinnipiac for a weekend series and left with a 3-3 overtime tie and a 2-1 loss. Quinnipiac captain Emma Woods has told the younger players not to overlook a hungry Mercyhurst team, especially on its home ice.

"We have to prepare like it's the biggest game of the year. I've heard it's a rough environment to play in, they make it hard to play in their rink. It's going to be a challenge, but I think it is exactly what we need right now."

Bobcats to Watch

T.T Cianfarano – Forward

T.T Cianfarano led the team in scoring last season, and it looks like this year will be the same. The junior forward already has five goals in four games, and she credits her hard work to the preseason.

"I was here all summer with all the coaches, I worked really hard," Cianfarano said. "I just focused on getting better on my all-around game, physically and mentally."
In Quinnipiac's two games against Mercyhurst last season, Cianfarano scored one goal and contributed two assists.

Sydney Rossman – Goalie

Turner summed up her goalie's importance when she said,"Syd (Rossman) is our rock." The senior goaltender just won ECAC Goaltender of the Week, after having three consecutive shutouts against Maine, UConn and University of New Hampshire. She is now just five away from the program record. Turner never doubts her value to the team.

"She's so important for us. She has done exactly what we've needed her to do these past three games."
Rossman is the true impact player that the Bobcats will need if they want to repeat their success from last season. Look for her to continue her excellent stretch this weekend.

Turner's Take

In order for the Bobcats to do well against the Lakers this weekend, they'll need to stick to their gameplan, and realize that they're facing a determined team. Turner is confident that her team can match up well.

"I think we're an intense team too. So when we heard they have angry pride, our kids got more excited about the game. They love to play in a physical battle, they want to compete."

Puck drop is scheduled for 7 p.m on Friday night, and 2 p.m. on Saturday afternoon.

Samoskevich's third period goal leads Quinnipiac to 3-2 victory over UConn

(Original article)

Efficiency is something the Quinnipiac women's ice hockey team struggled with in its first game of the Nutmeg Classic. After they compiled 44 shots on goal, the Bobcats had just one goal to show for.

However, through 45 shots on goal in the consolation game a day later, Quinnipiac defeated the University of Connecticut 3-2. Sophomore Melissa Samoskevich knows that there are some clear takeaways from the weekend.

"Not being satisfied with one goal," Samoskevich said. "There were things we could have done better. But, we rebounded well today."

Quinnipiac came into this year as six-time champions and a one-time runner-up of the Nutmeg Classic since 2004. UConn has been named Nutmeg champions four times since the 2004 season. Earlier in the season, the Bobcats defeated the Huskies by a score of 3-1. Up until the third period of that game, UConn played very well defensively. Today, however, was a complete game effort from both teams.

"[We had] a little more grit," Turner said. "She's [Annie Belanger] a really good goalie. We had that commitment to take away their vision."

Just four minutes into the first period of today's contest, Quinnipiac was able to strike first, as Taryn Baumgardt rifled one in to find the back left corner of the net. Baumgardt's goal was a representation of the first period of play between the teams. It was fast-paced, aggressive and spirited hockey.

Five minutes after Baumgardt's goal, Randi Marcon gave the Bobcats a 2-0 lead after she scored her third goal of the season.

Just as Quinnipiac looked to close out the first with a comfortable lead, UConn's Leah Lum scored with 28 seconds left on the clock. Four minutes into the second period, Lum picked up right where she left off, as she took advantage of a Quinnipiac defensive breakdown and scored her second of the day. The game stayed knotted up at 2-2 for the rest of the second period. This is where a strong defensive stand began for the Bobcats. The defensive stand was led by freshman Kati Tabin, who had some key blocks late in the game.

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"They care about each other. That is kind of the mindset of Quinnipiac hockey. It's nice to see that freshmen can understand about helping one another out–pick each other up when they make a mistake," Turner said.

In what seemed like a theme of the game, early scoring was apparent in the third period. Melissa Samoskevich scored her sixth goal of the season just 18 seconds into the period, which gave the Bobcats the 3-2 lead.

"Very relieving," was how Samoskevich described her goal. "I knew that it would come if I just kept shooting. Our line just kept trying to get pucks in."

The goal was all Quinnipiac needed to take home the victory, even though UConn made it interesting in the final seconds with some last-ditch shots on net but to no avail.

By the end of the game, Quinnipiac had scored three goals off 45 total shots on goal. It was a big difference from the day before, where shot efficiency was nowhere to be found.

"I think our team is happy with how we responded from yesterday," Turner said. "I was happy with how we played when we had a lead. I don't think we let up."

Quinnipiac will play next when it hits the road to play Union College on Friday, December 2nd.

Lancaster's two goals leads Quinnipiac to 3-1 victory over Colgate in Ives' first start

(Original article)

Quinnipiac women's ice hockey goalie Sydney Rossman was named the ECAC Goaltender of the Year just a season ago, as she became one of the nations best. So far this season she has recorded six shutouts and started every game.

But, in Quinnipiac's 3-1 win against the Colgate Raiders on Saturday afternoon, it was freshman Abbie Ives who led the Bobcats onto the ice, as she was named the starting goalie before the game.

"We're in a really good spot. Abbie was prepared," head coach Cassandra Turner said. "She has worked hard all year. We're in a situation where we have to two really good goalies."

The night before the contest against Colgate, Rossman allowed three goals in 33 minutes against Cornell University, which prompted Turner to bring in Ives for the rest of the game and overtime. The freshman made nine saves and let in zero goals in 32 minutes of play against the Big Red. Today against the Raiders, she tallied 18 total saves.

"The win feels great. I was little nervous coming in," Ives said. "The team made sure I didn't see a lot of point-blank shots. (Rossman) told me to just play my game and relax. After the first goal she told me to just forget about it, which I did."

In addition to Ives' fantastic day in net, Quinnipiac's defense as a whole played very well, as they limited a Colgate offense that came in averaging 3.5 goals per game.

"We prepared for it all week," defenseman Taryn Baumgardt said. "We knew they were going to try and make moves to get a lot of one-on-one's. We just played together as a team."

On the offensive side of the puck, Kenzie Lancaster scored just six minutes into the game, which gave Quinnipiac an early 1-0 lead. It was a positive step after it took the Bobcats nearly a period and a half to score against Cornell the day before. Coming into the game, Quinnipiac was 8-0 this season in games they scored first.

"We've been a pretty impressive hockey team in the past when we're up," Turner said. "We want that killer instinct in the first period. We haven't had it as much as we've wanted, but it was nice to get that today."

After Colgate collected just four shots on goal in the first period, they cashed in early in the second as they found the back of the net with a Bailey Larson score.

11 minutes into the third period, Lancaster pulled away completely undefended and scored a shorthanded goal, her second of the day. Lancaster's fifth goal of the season gave the Bobcats the 2-1 lead with 14 minutes left in the third period.

"Practice has been pretty consistent," Lancaster said. "The first goal came off putting a lot of pressure on the D, so I think that's something I've improved in my game. I just get put in great positions."

Colgate pulled goalie Julia Vandyk with three minutes left, which led to a Kenzie Prater goal, her second of the weekend.

Was it Quinnipiac's biggest win of the season? For Lancaster, it was a no brainer.

“Absolutely. We played consistently the whole game. Every period we came out hard, which is something we’ve been trying to focus on. We kept it on them the whole game.”

The Bobcats will return to home ice when they face Merrimack for the first game of the Nutmeg Classic on Friday, Nov. 25.

Quinnipiac sweeps ECAC weekend series, defeats Harvard 2-1

(Original article)

Coming off a weekend where it was swept by St. Lawrence and Clarkson, the Quinnipiac women’s ice hockey team was determined not to let it happen again the next weekend. After defeating Dartmouth College 2-1 on the road Friday night, the Bobcats took down Harvard University by the same score Saturday in route to a weekend ECAC sweep.

It was an evenly matched game both offensively and defensively throughout the first two periods. After going 0-7 on the power play against Dartmouth the night before, the Bobcats got their first chance just 55 seconds into the game. Unable to capitalize on the opportunity, the Bobcats still went on to fire 10 shots on goal by the end of the first.

The play of Harvard goaltender Brianna Lang was both unexpected and impressive. In the midst of an ongoing battle with Molly Tissenbaum for the spot between the pipes, Laing had started two of her teams four games this season, surrendering five goals in that span.

“I was impressed by her play today,” Quinnipiac head coach Cassandra Turner said. “They have a really good goaltending battle going on right now. Laing wants the job and today she was trying to prove that. She did a good job.”

At the end of the second, the Bobcats had tallied 23 shots on goals, compared to eight shots on goal from the Crimson. Despite the lopsided totals, the score remained tied at zero heading into the third period.

“Consistency is something we’ve been pushing. We needed to be in a position where we could score goals. We just wanted to throw everything at (Laing),” Turner said.”

Going into the weekend against two teams with a combined record of 1-8, the Bobcats went into the third period against Harvard knowing they had to breakthrough. They did just that when Kati Tabin scored the first goal of the contest after she found an open lane, giving the Bobcats a 1-0 lead.

Just a few moments later on Quinnipiac’s second power play opportunity of the game, Bobcats’ leading scorer T.T Cianfarano sniped one into the top left corner of the net, as Quinnipiac took a 2-1 lead. Captain Emma Woods knew the goals would come after two periods of missed opportunities.

“Just keep at them,” Woods said. “This is a team that regardless of what the record is, they have confidence in this league. We had to keep piling on shots and we knew goals would eventually come. It’s just keeping that mental focus, wearing down the goalie.”

After the team finished Friday’s game against Dartmouth with two goals on 35 shots, the Bobcats finished with the exact same numbers against Harvard. Quinnipiac’s defense played strong as a whole, limiting Harvard to just 12 shots on goals throughout the contest.

After dropping two tough losses to ECAC powerhouses Clarkson and St. Lawrence, this weekend was certainly a bounce back.

“I think yesterday started off great,” T.T Cianfarano said. “Another close game, but we’ve focused on physically and mentally preparing ourselves for these teams. We capitalized on both games.”

Quinnipiac will next face Cornell University, another ECAC opponent, at home on Nov. 18 in Hamden, CT.

Quinnipiac falls to Princeton, 2-1, in game three to end its season

(Original article)

PRINCETON, N.J. – Game three of the ECAC Quarterfinals between Quinnipiac University (21-10-6) and Princeton University (20-9-3) featured something that hadn’t happened all series. After both teams failed to tally a score throughout the first periods of games one and two, the Tigers broke the streak with two first period goals en route to its 2-1 victory over the Bobcats.

“The first period we were just a little bit on our heels,” head coach Cass Turner said. “There were goals where they just worked to get bounces, and that happens in the playoffs.”

Just two minutes after Molly Contini scored Princeton’s goal, Sylvie Wallin tallied another score as Quinnipiac quickly fell into a 2-0 hole.

“I think you saw how they (Quinnipiac) reacted to it, which was pretty tremendous,” Turner said regarding her team’s ability to fight back. “It’s surprising that we didn’t get more pucks in the net.”

Quinnipiac had its chances. The team finished with 29 shots on goal, but it couldn’t get shots to fall due to another brilliant outing from Princeton goaltender Steph Neatby. The freshman goalie collected 28 saves with her only goal allowed coming with 13 seconds left in the third period.

“She’s a great goaltender. She’s big and she’s incredibly athletic. She has a lot of experience internationally, and I’ve had the opportunity to coach her, which has been fun,” Turner said.

There was some optimism for the Bobcats, though, as Meghan Turner scored the team's lone goal with 13 seconds left in the game immediately following a timeout.

Neatby did face a lot of pressure from most of Quinnipiac's top goal scorers, but T.T. Cianfarano wasn't one of them. Cianfarano, the team's leading scorer, didn't dress for the series' first two games due to an undisclosed injury. While she dressed for game three, she played less than five minutes total through the final game of the series.

While Cianfarano makes up what the team calls "the band," the other members of the trio couldn't find success. Senior captain Emma Woods was limited to five shots on goal, and Melissa Samoskevich also added five.

Quinnipiac rarely had the advantage, as the team found itself awarded just four power play chances throughout the game. It continued a trend of few chances on the advantage for the Bobcats, as they had only seven chances in the two first games of the series.

The Bobcats had only committed two penalties in game's one and two of the series, but they found themselves in the box four times by the end of game three.

Even with the loss, perhaps the biggest takeaway from the game itself was what had been in front of the team all season; a talented group of senior leaders.

"This group of seniors is so impressive," Turner said. "With who they are as people, who they are as leaders, how they've grown as hockey players. For the people on our team who have had the opportunity to play with them, they've left such a legacy. They've learned so much from that group, you saw it today."

Princeton will advance to the ECAC Semifinals next weekend when they head to upstate New York to face St. Lawrence.

While Quinnipiac's season might be over, optimism is in the air for the Bobcats. Bright, young talent will once again be readily available come next Fall, while the impact of the senior class will influence the program's next generation.

Offense explodes as Quinnipiac defeats Yale 4-1

(Original article)

Three different players tallied scores as Quinnipiac women's ice hockey team defeated Yale University 3-1. The Bobcats (18-7-5, 11-5-2 ECAC) have now swept the season series with the Bulldogs (10-12-13, 8-9-1 ECAC), their crosstown rivals.

Saturday's matinee matchup marked the first time the women's team has ever appeared on television. Senior goaltender Sydney Rossman was well aware of the excitement that filled High Point Solutions Arena.

“We knew going in it was going to be a big game,” Rossman said. “The TV factor kind of just added a little bit more excitement. First time being on live TV here at Quinnipiac. It was really cool being a part of that.”

After Yale opened up the scoring with a score that bounced between both pipes, Quinnipiac’s Melissa Samoskevich put a beautiful move on a defender to rifle one to the back of the net.

While Samoskevich’s goal was big in terms of confidence, it was Kate Mackenzie’s 2nd period score that brought the team to life. A laser from 20 feet out that went top-shelve, the impressive goal was a welcome sight for the Bobcats.

“That second goal was important,” head coach Cass Turner said. “We want to be able to win that race to three goals. That shot from Kate was outstanding, it’s something that she works on a lot.”

Quinnipiac’s offense certainly did its part throughout the game, but it was its defense that shined. The team allowed just 25 shots on goal combined between Brown and Yale. Sydney Rossman, after not starting against Brown, got back in net against Yale. Freshman Abbie Ives started in her place a day before, but Rossman had nothing but compliments for her teammate.

“She had a great game yesterday,” Rossman said regarding Ives’ play. “We compete with each other every single day. Sometimes she out battles me in drills, sometimes I out battle her. It’s a good, competitive relationship between us.”

Taryn Baumgardt and Emma Woods added two scores to Quinnipiac’s total before the clock hit zero. By the end of the game, Quinnipiac had tallied 55 shots on goal, 106 shots in two days.

The game, as expected, got pretty physical. Three Yale players had to exit the ice and head to the locker room. Cass Turner knew it was the continuation of a long-time rivalry.

“There certainly is a rivalry,” Turner said. “There’s a lot of emotion involved and today was absolutely no different. I think for our team, there’s always a little bit more on the line when you play Yale.”

The Bobcats will hit the ice next when they travel up to New York to face St. Lawrence in a divisional showdown on Friday.

Bunton’s overtime tally leads Cornell past Quinnipiac, 3-2

(Original article)

Quinnipiac’s women’s ice hockey team was unable to finish its two-game road trip with a win as it fell to Cornell University 3-2 on Saturday afternoon with a crushing OT loss.

Throughout the first period Cornell was faster on offense and generated more chances, evident by its 12 shots on goal compared to Quinnipiac's three. Quinnipiac's No.2 ranked defense couldn't hold Cornell forever, though, as Kristin O'Neill scored on a backhanded goal with 1:44 left in regulation to tie the game.

"The whole first period was just not a good period for us," head coach Cassandra Turner said. "I don't think we did what we wanted to do when it came to pressuring them. You have to give a ton of credit to Cornell, they came ready to play today."

The high number of shots on goal continued into the second, and it seemed as if the puck was floating around Quinnipiac goalie Sydney Rossman to this point. The Bobcats collected nine shots on goal throughout the second and were able to tie it up on a Kate Mackenzie goal with eight minutes to go.

It was Mackenzie's third goal in her last five games as she continued her second half breakout. Coach Turner is not the least bit shocked at her sophomore's newfound success.

"I am not surprised that Kate is doing as well as she's doing," Turner said. "For a year and a half her mindset has been just trying to get better every single day. Her successes, she has fought and worked for them."

Headed into the third period the game was really up for grabs, as both teams had played pretty evenly, not making the most of their shot attempts. Quinnipiac had a chance to take the lead when Emma Greco had a wide open look on the right half of the net, but her shot went too high.

This missed chance came back to hurt the Bobcats, as just minutes later, Kristin O'Neill scored her second goal of the game which gave the Big Red the 2-1 lead.

With 7:55 left in the third, Taryn Baumgardt rifled a shot from 15 feet out that zipped right past Cornell goalie Marlene Boissonnault to tie the game up at 2-2.

Both teams were unable to find the net for the rest of the third as the game headed to overtime. It didn't last long, as Hanna Bunton scored the game winner 10 seconds into OT to seal the victory for the Big Red.

"I don't think it's the toughest loss of the year. I think it's going to be a really good lesson for us. I think that for our team and our program, we need bumps like this every once in a while. I do think this group needed this," Turner said.

The Bobcats now sit at 9-4-2 in ECAC play and 16-6-4 overall. They will hit the ice next when they face Merrimack College on the road next Friday.

Diverse goal scoring continues as Quinnipiac blanks Colgate 2-0

(Original article)

Quinnipiac's women's ice hockey team traveled up to a cold Hamilton, New York, where they shutout the Colgate Raiders 2-0. The Bobcats now have four straight wins against the Raiders.

In the Bobcats' previous three games, their seven goals were scored by six different players. In tonight's win over the Raiders, the trend continued as two players who hadn't scored in the teams past four games found the net.

"Balanced scoring is always a great place to be," head coach Cassandra Turner said. "We were really fighting to create more second chances, second shots. It's exactly what we've been striving for."

Things got going early on in the first two minutes, as T.T. Cianfarano scored the game's first goal and her twelfth of the season thanks to a beautiful assist from Melissa Samoskevich. It was Cianfarano's first goal since December 3rd.

Aside from Cianfarano's goal, the Bobcats didn't possess the puck much in the first, as the Raiders had 10 shots on goal compared to Quinnipiac's seven.

Throughout the second period of the game, it became clear that it was a very evenly matched game. Puck possesion was even between both teams and shots on goal spiked, with 18 combined from both squads.

Colgate wasn't able to keep Quinnipiac away from the net as Raquel Pennoyer scored off an assist from Randi Marcon with five minutes left in the second. It was the continuation of the emergence of the Bobcats' newfound diversity of its goal scorers.

"It was a really fun goal," Pennoyer said. "It all started back in our D zone. The D just sped up there and Randi (Marcon) took it down, all I had to do was tap it in."

Last time out against the Bobcats, the Raiders fell 3-1. It was the team's second consecutive loss after it opened its season with 13 straight wins. Head coach Cassandra Turner knew Colgate would come out strong.

"No doubt," Turner said when asked if Colgate was looking for revenge. "I think that we saw one of Colgate's best games of the year. They possess the puck they look to attack. They had a plan today."

The Bobcats' second win over Colgate highlighted the team's excellent play in conference games this season, as they now sit at 9-3-2 in ECAC play. The team feels good about its chances when it comes to facing conference opponents.

"I think it definitely gives us more confidence," Pennoyer said after the win. "We just try to be the hardest working team out there.

Quinnipiac's defense faced a tough task against the ECAC's fourth best scorer, Jessie Eldridge, but the Bobcats prevailed in this mini-battle, as they limited her to just three shots on goal.

Quinnipiac goaltender Sydney Rossman recorded her sixth shutout of the season and is just two away from Quinnipiac's all-time record. For Coach Turner, she's confident that Rossman can reach the historic milestone.

"100%," Turner said with a smile. "I don't know if she thinks about it, but she is certainly a goalie that is capable of it. No question on my mind."

Quinnipiac is now 3-1-1 in its last five games and will look to continue its strong second half play when it hits the ice tomorrow against Cornell University.

Eight different Bobcats score as Quinnipiac women's ice hockey routs Brown 8-0

(Original article)

Just a day after taking down Yale in its first ECAC game of the year, Quinnipiac's women's ice hockey team dominated Brown University 8-0. Eight different players scored for the Bobcats in the win, improving their record to 2-0 in conference play.

The scoring started off in the first period when Alicia Barry netted her first goal of the season, and second of her career, giving the Bobcats the 1-0 lead. After scoring the first goal of her career yesterday against Yale, Kenzie Lancaster connected for another score, which gave Quinnipiac the 2-0 lead. The sophomore has been thankful for her teammates during her own offensive outbreak.

"It's nice playing with Randi (Marcon) and Rocky (Raquel Pennoyer)," Lancaster said. "They're always places I know they're going to be. They work hard to get the puck back, so I think that helps a lot."

Marcon scored with four seconds left in the first, giving the Bobcats the 3-0 lead heading the first intermission.

In the second period, Quinnipiac's offense didn't let up. Meghan Turner scored first, followed by scores from Melissa Samoskevich, Taryn Baumgardt, and Kenzie Prater. By the end of the second period, the Bobcats lead 7-0, and had a 22-6 shot on goal advantage.

As a senior leader, Turner admitted it can sometimes be difficult to keep focus when building such a big lead.

"It's really hard," Turner said. "After the first period we knew we were playing well. Every game we have certain things we strive for; things we want to fulfill. I think we set the standard even higher for ourselves today. Even after the second, we just needed to really focus on playing our game."

The Bobcats put the finishing touch on the victory in the third period when T.T Cianfarano put one in the net to make the score 8-0.

Head coach Cassandra Turner was pleased with the fact that so many of her players got in on the scoring.

“That’s a step we want,” Turner said. “We’ve really talked to our other lines about chipping in and possessing the puck, being ready to shoot the puck. They are ready to chip in every other game. If we have that, I think we can be successful.”

Freshman Abbie Ives got her first regular season action and recorded five saves, including a highlight reel glove save where she had to go full split. Cass Turner was confident putting her out there.

“She’s a funny kid. For a lot of people, I’d be worried if they would lose focus, but not with her. On that penalty kill, point blank shot in the slot, and she was ready to make the save. That’s what we expect from her.”

The Bobcats will face off against ECAC rival Clarkson next Friday, Nov. 4 in Hamden at 6 p.m.

Quinnipiac women’s ice hockey falls to Boston College 4-1

(Original article)

After a battle with Boston College on the road that resulted in a 0-0 tie, the Quinnipiac’s women’s ice hockey team returned home to square off with the Eagles again.

The Bobcats ultimately fell to the Eagles 4-1 as they were unable to find any real offensive groove. It was an entirely different game from the tie just a day before.

“They (Boston College) played a great game,” Quinnipiac defenseman Emma Greco said. “I just think that they outplayed us a bit. We know how to attack; we just couldn’t do it.”

From the start, it was a physical, back and forth battle from both sides. Boston College was able to continually put pressure on Quinnipiac’s offense.

“They’re an aggressive hockey team,” Quinnipiac head coach Cass Turner said. “Megan Keller and Kali Flanigan, they’re great skaters and they really pressured our offense. I think it showed that we don’t really separate the puck as well as we need to yet.”

Keller and Flanigan were just a small part of what made it so hard for Quinnipiac to score the entire day. In the first period, the Bobcats had just six shots on goal, with 18 by the end of the game. By comparison, Boston College had 19 total shots on goal, but was able to tally four scores.

In the second period things looked a little brighter for Quinnipiac as Taryn Baumgardt evened the score at 1-1 with a power play goal immediately following a Boston College score.

The momentum from the goal was short-lived as the third period was highlighted by the Eagles offensive explosion. With two goals in the last 12 minutes of the game, Quinnipiac's hope for a comeback was slim to none.

"It's something that we have to learn," Quinnipiac senior captain Emma Woods said. "It's about winning those individual battles. From there we can build confidence and recognize it on the bench, who's doing a really good job."

Senior right wing Danielle Marmer took a brutal hit from a Boston College defender which resulted in her being taken out of the game. Cass Turner said she was unaware of her status after the game.

Emma Greco summed up the tough loss with a simple, but powerful message.

"The coaches have given us everything. We just have to learn to execute."

The team will look to rebound when they go on the road next Friday to face Yale University in their first ECAC game of the season.

Quinnipiac volleyball drops second straight, falls to Fairfield 3-0

(Original article)

Quinnipiac women's volleyball lost its second straight match on Saturday afternoon, as the Fairfield Stags, who are undefeated in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference, swept the Bobcats 3-0. In a highly anticipated matchup between the MAAC's top two teams, this match didn't disappoint.

Senior Allison Leigh felt that her team was just one step behind the Stags the entire game.

"We would just make one more error than they would. We couldn't come back from that, so I think it's the smallest details. It's about starting off strong in the beginning."

Quinnipiac had been used to rolling over the majority of its opponents leading up to the match against Fairfield, but the first set showed it was going to be quite the opposite.

It was a back and forth battle, as both teams boasted confidence and intensity. Leigh and sophomore Jen Coffey led the way for the Bobcats in the first, as they combined for seven points. Despite the solid offensive production, the Stags took the first set by a score of 25-22.

The second set was nearly identical to the first, with intense back and forth action. Freshman Natalie Alechko, making her return from a leg injury, played confidently, and was aided by Coffey as she exploded for eight points and two blocks. Fairfield ultimately took the second set by another close score of 25-23.

If there was one positive to take away from the loss, it was that Natalie Alechko didn't miss a beat in her return to the court. She played calm, collected, and smart. Head coach Kris Czaplinksi shared that it was good to have her back.

"She's a very good player, so she's big for our team."

After two sets that saw both teams fight, the Stags pulled away in the third, as they led 18-11 at one point. The Bobcats looked tired and overmatched on both sides of the ball, which lead to a 25-15 set loss, and 3-0 match loss.

It was a tough loss for Quinnipiac, as it looked to cement its status as a true MAAC powerhouse. However, Leigh thinks her team will use the loss as motivation.

"This game was kind of a wakeup call," Leigh said. "I think practices are going to be a lot tougher now. We know that they're the best in the conference, who we need to beat. This loss is going to make every other game more important."

The team resumes play on Saturday, October 15 at 1 p.m. when they take on the Marist Red Foxes at the Burt Kahn Court in Hamden.

Quinnipiac volleyball wins fifth straight, defeats Iona 3-0

(Original article)

Quinnipiac women's volleyball extended its win streak to five on Saturday afternoon, defeating the Iona Gaels 3-0. The Bobcats have now won seven of their last ten, and sit at 12-5 overall.

Coming off a six game road trip that saw the Bobcats go 5-1, they picked up where they left off against the 1-12 Gaels. The first set was highlighted by senior middle hitter Allison Leigh's four points, three kills, and two blocks.

Quinnipiac looked fundamentally sound, with fluid communication throughout the first. The Gaels didn't help their cause, as they committed 12 attack errors. Sophomore outside hitter Jen Coffey contributed three points, one kill, two digs, and three blocks. After taking a commanding lead, the Bobcats won the first set 25-18 as a result of an Iona attack error.

Iona was a bit more polished in the second set, as they kept it close the whole way through. However, excellent ball placement from Quinnipiac's Jen Coffey overpowered them, as the sophomore scored four points and totaled four kills. The Bobcats took the second set 25-20.

Looking to close it out in the third set, the Bobcats trailed often, as the Gaels at one point led 11-7. Quinnipiac lacked the focus they had in the first and second sets, but it chipped back, and eventually won the set 25-15. Head coach Kris Czaplinski wasn't surprised with his team's booming confidence and ability to comeback.

“It started on the first day of practice,” Czaplinski said. “They came in and they expected great things from this team. We’ve been in deficits in all of our games this year and they’ve been able to battle back. I have the utmost confidence in this team.”

Now 4-0 in MAAC play, Czaplinski feels that it’s the result of the growing chemistry his team has. “It starts with practice. Focusing on the game plan, especially for Iona. They’re doing a great job. Just focusing on the small details of that team.”

After some tough years as a member of the team, senior Allison Leigh is now enjoying true team success. “It feels pretty amazing,” Leigh said. “It’s kind of hard to believe sometimes. I think we look forward to the games more now; it makes us work a lot harder.”

After tying Quinnipiac volleyball’s record for consecutive wins, Jen Coffey added, “This is just a huge morale booster.”

Quinnipiac looks to continue its excellent stretch as they face Manhattan College on Sunday, September 25th at 1 p.m.

Quinnipiac volleyball defeats Fairleigh Dickinson, snaps three game losing streak

(Original article)

Quinnipiac women’s volleyball snapped a three game losing streak Wednesday night, as it defeated Fairleigh Dickinson University 3-1. The Bobcats closed out the win with a dominant fourth set, winning 24-14.

The Bobcats improved their record to 6-3 overall, and remain undefeated at home this season. As for the Knights, they fell to 0-7 on the season.

The first set was a tight battle, with junior middle hitter Elizabeth Kloos leading the way for the Bobcats with four kills. The Bobcats went on a 5-0 run while up by three, expanding their lead to 22-14, forcing the Knights to call their second and final timeout of the set.

The second set came down to the wire. After sophomore Jen Coffey’s kill gave Quinnipiac the 25-24 lead, Fairleigh Dickinson’s Emma Liller responded with kill as well. However, the Knights then had two attacking errors leading the Bobcats to a 27-25 victory.

After jumping out to an early 5-1 lead in the third set, the Bobcats eventually went up 16-10. Despite the large leads, Quinnipiac couldn’t close out the match, and lost the set 25-23. However, head coach Kris Czaplinski was confident in his team’s ability to comeback strong in the fourth set.

“The captain’s did a great job vocally on the floor, they got everybody involved,” Czaplinski said. “Maria (Pansari) went back to running a great offense and we were good behind the service line tonight. We were executing offensively from all positions.”

Pansari echoed her coach’s statements, saying, “We just went out and fought, we knew the third set wasn’t our best and we could do so much better, so we just went out and did our best.”

After totaling a staggering 52 assists by the end of the night, Pansari thanked her teammates for her success.

“I was just trying my best to connect with the hitters. The passing and the defense were amazing, so I was just focusing on that, talking to my hitters. We’ve been working a lot on it in practice, and it converted over to the game.”

Quinnipiac was dominant in the fourth set, as they never trailed. Kloos was appreciative of her teammates, en route to her 20.5-point night.

“It was a team effort, for sure. The passing was awesome,” Kloos said. “I was able to put the ball away, they put me in a good position. We knew what we had to do and we knew we were the better team. We can’t get caught up with the little things.”

Kloos, along with her teammates, feels that the team’s chemistry has been improving day by day.

“It’s a whole different team this year, very exciting.”

Quinnipiac will face La Salle University, a team it lost to 0-3 earlier this season, at the Friar Classic in Providence on Friday, September 9 at 5 p.m.