

FIRED UP

Although temperatures are getting cooler, the Bombers are warmed-up and ready to go

SPORTS PREVIEW

A special section of the *The Ithacan*

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Senior forward Kelsey King dribbles the ball in between two Farmingdale State College defenders during a match against the Rams Sept. 7, 2014, at Carp Wood Field.

IILLIAN FLINT/THE ITHACA!

Bombers seek to score ultimate goal this season

BY MADDISON MURNANE

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Last season, the women's soccer team ended its year at the hands of the eventual runner-up, Williams College, in the second round of the NCAA Tournament last November, finishing with a record of 15–4–1. Having only lost two seniors to graduation, the team will be able to utilize a core of experienced returners to get into a rhythm early on and come out this year stronger than ever.

The Bombers are ranked 25th by the NCAA in this year's preseason poll. Comparatively, they were ranked fifth heading into the 2014 season. However, head coach Mindy Quigg said this ranking does not affect the team or its mindset approaching the upcoming season.

"Right now, we are going to focus on getting through preseason and taking everything one day at a time," she said. "The only ranking that matters to us is the one when the regular season comes to a close."

Although the Bombers only lost two seniors, Kel-

ly Pantason '15 and Jessie Warren '15, assistant coach Carrie Bonus left her position to go to Onondaga Community College. She will be replaced by former standout player Ellyn Grant-Keane '14. During her time at the college, Grant-Keane played in 85 games and recorded 72 points, which tied her for ninth in program history.

"She's familiar with our style of play and will bring a whole new energy to our program and team this season," Quigg said.

Quigg said this fall, the team is faced with a tough schedule as always, and no game is more difficult than another. To combat this challenge, Quigg said she is relying heavily on returning players to lead the team and create scoring abilities.

At the forefront of the offense is senior forward Kelsey King. King started all 20 games for the Bombers in the 2014 season and recorded a team-high 14 goals. This was also the second-straight season she was named to the All-Empire 8 First Team.

King said the upperclassmen know what is expected of them and try to lead by example and give everything they have every day.

"As a forward, it's my job to get goals and assists, and I work my hardest to get the job done in any way I can." King said.

King, alongside seniors Sarah Woychick and Beth Coppolecchia, will look to develop into strong leaders this season. Quigg said this enables the coaching staff to look to rising players to fill key roles and be vocal on the field.

One player who has stepped up to the pitch is junior forward Holly Niemiec. Niemiec also started all 20 games for the Bombers and registered a team-high eight assists last season.

Niemiec said the team is trying to silence all of the doubters this season after losing in the second round of the playoffs last year.

"I think the best way to describe my feelings for this season is excitement," Niemiec said. "I really see the potential in this team to succeed, and I think we've all been waiting to prove that since our season ended last year in November."

Niemiec said the team's strong point this season is to work hard every day by putting in extra time and pushing one another to strive to be the best.

"The most important part of our team, though, is our Bomber mentality, which is all of the little things each player does every day to make us better," Niemiec said. "Whether that means staying late to get some extra touches in or pushing a teammate to do their best. It's these little things that are going to give us the edge on our competition this season."

Quigg said aside from the powerful offense provided by the forwards, the team will also be very strong with Coppolecchia in net and in the backfield due to the players' experience.

King said, having fallen early in the NCAA Tournament last fall, the team is looking to pick up where it left off and to advance further in the postseason.

"We didn't make it as far into nationals as we

would've liked to last year," King said. "We are returning a lot of players, so we have an advantage there." This season, in order to advance further in the

tournament, Quigg also said the team will need to focus on getting quicker touches on the ball and faster decision-making on the field.

"It's an interesting group of first-years," Quigg

said. "We have 12 first-years trying out and two transfers. I hope that they will be able to jump on board quickly into our philosophy and team style."

The Bombers open up their season at home against the Keuka College Wolfpack at 4 p.m. Sept. 1 at Carp Wood Field.

King said the returning players are very excited to see what the freshmen will be able to add to the team's chemistry.

"The freshman class is always a huge part of the team, on and off the field," King said. "They bring new energy and excitement to the team. Every one of them brings new skills to the field that enhance us overall as a team."

JUST THE FACTS

HEAD COACH

Mindy Quigg (22nd season)

LAST YEAR'S RESULTS

15-4-1

KEY RETURNERS

Senior Kelsey King Senior Beth Coppolecchia Junior Holly Niemiec

Blue and Gold look to compete with new-found team chemistry

BY MATT ROTTLER
STAFF WRITER

For the past 31 years, the men's soccer team has seen players come and go under the watchful eye of longtime coach Andy Byrne. However, this season one of those former players will step into another role to take over for the legendary coach.

Patrick Ouckama '05, a former four-year starter and captain for the South Hill squad, will be leading the Bombers during the 2015 campaign after Byrne announced his retirement last February. Ouckama, last season's assistant coach, said he is ready to lead the Bombers with the spirit and influence provided by Byrne for so many years.

"I feel very fortunate to be in a position where I have played and worked for coach Byrne," Ouckama said. "I can draw from his experience as well as from my own."

The former Bomber defender inherits a group of players that finished last season with an overall record of 6–8–3, a conference record of 5–1 and an Empire 8 Conference Championship 3–0 loss to Stevens Institute of Technology. Ouckama said he believes being a part of the coaching staff last year will work to his advantage and will lessen the growing pains that come along with a new leader.

"We have a strong group of experienced players returning this fall," he said. "I am excited to work with them again."

Senior midfielder Brandon Thompson, who played 15 games last season, said despite the off-season changes, the team is excited for the upcoming season.

"There is a lot of anticipation for this season," he said. "We have a good group. We have been working hard in the off-season, and hopefully it all comes together."

The team returns with veteran leadership in all major areas of the pitch with senior Joseph Dobbins in the backfield, Thompson in the midfield and junior lead-scorer Sean Forward at forward. Dobbins drew duty in 15 games last season, start-

ing 13 of those games. The senior defender collected four points in last year's campaign on one goal and two assists. Leading scorer Forward had five goals during the season and one assist.

Dobbins said he is optimistic about the season because of the strength of the upperclassmen.

"We have a lot of key players returning from last year," Dobbins said. "We also have a good recruiting class coming in as well that we feel we can compete with."

While the team has returners, it also has some key losses to overcome as it goes through camp. Most notable are the losses of Casey Williamson '15 and Jordan Gentile '15. Williamson, the Bombers' second-leading scorer with four goals last year, had great chemistry with Forward — chemistry that will have to be made up by someone new.

The Blue and Gold will have to fill the big hole left by Gentile, the starting goalie last season, who played 1,573 minutes last season. Ouckama said he has not decided who will fill the void, but he will certainly have to make a major decision early in his head-coaching career between sophomores Brian May and Dan Hinckley, who are fighting for the starting job.

"I expect them to compete with each other for the starting position on a daily basis," Ouckama said. "But I expect that of every player who makes the final roster."

Ouckama said he has not set any starting lineup for opening day, saying he is going into this season with open eyes as to who will start for the Bombers. With big names such as Gentile and Williamson gone, Ouckama said there is a need for someone new to step up.

The Bombers will be up against a very tough early season schedule. In the first month of the season, the Bombers will have matchups with SUNY Oneonta and SUNY Cortland, both nationally ranked teams. The Bombers were defeated by Oneonta early last season by a score of 4–0 and took a 2–0 loss to Cortland.

The Bombers will also face a tough conference



Junior midfielder Aziz Farouk attempts to cut right against a Houghton defender during a match Oct. 25, 2014, at Carp Wood Field. The South Hill squad seeks an Empire 8 title.

JILLIAN FLINT/THE ITHACAN

game with Utica in the beginning of their 2015 campaign. In Utica's 2014 campaign, the Pioneers went 7–9–3, but the Blue and Gold were able to come out on top in their matchups against the Pioneers with a pair of wins.

The Blue and Gold will also have a mid-season matchup with nationally ranked Stevens and have a slate that includes five of the last seven games on the road. Ouckama is relying on an improvement of mental strength to help the players get through their tough schedule.

"There are a lot of tough contests in a very short period of time," he said. "To be successful in our region — specifically in our conference — we have to be a team that doesn't get too high or too low."

JUST THE FACTS

HEAD COACH Patrick Ouckama (1st season)

LAST VEADIS DESIGNES

LAST YEAR'S RESULTS

6-8-3

KEY RETURNERS
Senior Joseph Dobbins

Senior Brandon Thompson
Junior Sean Forward

South Hill squad attempts to stick around in playoffs

BY KRISTEN GOWDY

SENIOR WRITER

Looking strictly at the numbers, last year's field hockey team came up short of a successful season.

The Bombers finished 8-8 and 4-4 in Empire 8 play and missed the playoffs after finishing fifth in the conference, thus failing to clinch an Empire 8 championship for the eighth consecutive year.

But numbers can be deceiving, and no one knows this better than head coach Tracey Houk, who is entering her 20th year at the helm of the program. Houk said last year's team actually exceeded expectations and was more successful than her 2013 squad, even though the 2013 team posted a better record.

"We were playing better than we had in years," Houk said. "Our goal was to get to .500, so we are proud of that. The past four years, we have only been getting better."

And with 20 new players entering the preseason mix for 2015, Houk said the added depth, combined with an experienced core of returners, should make the end goal of the elusive Empire 8 championship more attainable.

The Bombers return last season's top-scorer, junior midfielder Colleen Keegan-Twombly, to anchor an offense that averaged just over two goals per game last season. In comparison, conference-leading Utica College netted 4.4 goals per game.

Keegan-Twombly ranked ninth overall in the Empire 8 last season with 58 shots and led the Bombers with nine goals and 20 total points en route to an All-Empire 8 honorable mention.

On offense, the South Hill squad also returns with senior forward/midfielder Olivia Salindong and junior forwards/midfielders Lauren Delia and Cassie Schuttrumpf, all of whom started regularly last year. Salindong said offensive consistency will be one of the biggest focal points this season.

"I think we have to be more aggressive and more

on the offensive side," she said. "We need to shoot more and be more offensive as a whole."

Meanwhile, the Bombers return one of the conference's best goalkeepers in junior Katie Lass, who led the Empire 8 with an .815 save percentage and five shutouts last season. The only goalkeeper on the 2014 roster, Lass played every minute of every game in the net for the Blue and Gold.

Houk said depth could be a continued issue at the goalkeeper position in 2015, and of the 20 freshmen, none play goalkeeper.

"Obviously I was recruiting a goalkeeper, and the stars did not align," Houk said. "Right now, we are interviewing field players to play goalie.'

Lass said at the team's preseason meetings, Houk gave field players the chance to express interest in playing the goalie position. She said only about four players volunteered.

Houk, who was not a goalkeeper during her playing career at the University of North Carolina, said the addition of assistant coach Maureen Ordnung to the 2015 staff will be beneficial in finding Lass' backup.

"It helps that my assistant is a goalkeeper coach," Houk said. "I'm excited to work with her.

Defensively, senior backs Caitlin O'Brien and Laurel Shnider, as well as junior back Hannah Gerber return after seeing significant playing time in 2014. Where the offense struggled last season, the defense was arguably the best in the conference, allowing 1.75 goals per game — just 28 total on the season to lead the Empire 8.

O'Brien, Salindong and Shinder are the only seniors on the youthful 2015 roster, but Shinder said they are turning this into an advantage.

"Because there are so few of us, it's easier to work together and talk things through," she said. "The juniors and some of the sophomores have been doing a really good job of stepping up and helping us."

And with the 20 incoming freshmen — the team carried just 20 total players on its roster last year, and



Forward and midfielder Cassie Schuttrumpf, left, makes an effort to move the ball down the field during a match against Nazareth College on Sept. 27, 2014, at Higgins Stadium.

THOMAS BATTISTELLI/THE ITHACAN

Houk said the roster will likely expand this year even after she makes cuts — upperclassman leadership will be one of the keys to success, O'Brien said, though she also emphasized the strength and talent in the new players.

We scrimmaged with them last night, and they really gelled with us," she said after the team's preseason practice Aug. 20. "We were very impressed with the amount of talent Coach brought in this year."

Houk said talent should help translate to the conference championship that the team has been seeking for nearly a decade.

"The recruiting is there," she said. "But every season is different, and you never know what's going to be thrown at you, and you just kind of roll with the punches. At the end of the day, we want to be Empire Champions. That's the ultimate goal.'

JUST THE FACTS

HEAD COACH

Tracey Houk (20th season)

LAST YEAR'S FINISH

KEY RETURNERS

Senior Caitlin O'Brien Junior Katie Lass Junior Colleen Keegan-Twombly

Upperclassmen try to serve up their best game to keep the streak alive

BY MATT HORNICK

STAFF WRITER

After five consecutive second-round losses in the NCAA Tournament, the Ithaca College women's tennis team is heading into the fall season ready to move

Despite losing four of their top six players to graduation, the Bombers will look to break that losing streak while also continuing their 10-year run as Empire 8 champions.

Head coach Bill Austin said he is not worried about who will step up and be the leaders this fall, and he has many players who are ready for the challenge.

'We're looking at everybody to be a leader," Austin said. "That gives you a really strong team. We have a lot of players that have experience being on the team but have not been in the starting lineup. And even if they aren't in the lineup this year, I'm going to look to them for leadership because they've been around the

Austin also mentioned lone senior Marni Blumenthal and No. 1 starter junior Haley Kusak as players he expects to be leading the team throughout the season. Blumenthal won two singles matches and four doubles matches last year, while Kusak came away with wins in 11 singles matches and 15 doubles matches.

Blumenthal said, as the only senior, she will use her experience on the team as her main form of leadership. Similarly, Kusak expects to be a leader, not only because of her position in the lineup, but also because of her familiarity with the team.

"As a returning player, I definitely need to step up as a leader, and regardless of one's position on the ladder, leadership is equally important, and every returning player should try to help guide the team to

success." Kusak said.

The team will be looking to both of these veterans for leadership on the court as well as off of it. Kusak, a two-time First Team All-Empire 8 player in singles and former Empire 8 Rookie of the Year, will be at the front of the lineup. Blumenthal was Kusak's doubles partner in 2014.

Other players with experience going into this season include juniors Sydney Greenspan, Jodi Grosberg and Maddie Overholt.

Greenspan said she is ready to help unify the team as she enters her third season as a Bomber.

"In my two years on the team, I have noticed that a closer team off the court creates a stronger and more supportive team on the court, so I hope to help the first-year students adjust to college life and playing college tennis, and to help the team bond as a whole," Greenspan said.

Losing four seniors from last season means the team will have a large number of freshmen coming in with the hopes of making the team. The expectations for newcomers will be the same as all of the experienced players. Austin said the effort they put in is going to be crucial to their success.

"There are a lot of unknowns right now, and we won't truly know until those first hits at practice, but I expect great effort, great attitudes and a desire to compete," Austin said.

Kusak said she will be looking more at the freshmen's attitudes in order to ensure everyone is a part of a cohesive team.

"All I expect from the freshmen is for them to have great attitudes and enthusiasm on and off the court," Kusak said. "I expect that they will give their all to the team and support us throughout the season.'

As the season quickly approaches, with the team's



Junior Haley Kusak gets ready to serve the ball at a practice April 14, 2014, at the Athletics and Events Center. Kusak will be one of the main team leaders this coming season. THOMAS BATTISTELLI/THE ITHACAN

first match being Sept. 5 at Wheeler Tennis Courts against Utica College, the players are excited and ready to extend their streak of Empire 8 Championships. Overholt said the team uses the streak as a catalyst to enhance its performance at practice.

"Even though we have won the Empire 8 for 10 years, we never go into a season thinking it's going to be easy," Overholt said. "Coach always says, 'There is a target on our backs.' We are the ones with everything to lose, and we definitely use that as motivation."

Austin said he expects the team to be able to compete for another conference championship, and if it

puts in the work, it should be able to do just that. "There's no secret formula to winning. It takes hard work; it's working hard in practice, it's preparing for matches and being ready to compete at the highest level we can," Austin said.

JUST THE FACTS

HEAD COACH

Bill Austin (15th season)

LAST YEAR'S FINISH

14-9

KEY RETURNERS

Senior Marni Blumenthal Junior Haley Kusak Junior Jodi Grosberg 4 | Fall Sports Preview Thursday, August 27, 2015

FOOTBALL





Senior John lannone charges through the St. John Fisher College defense on Nov. 8, 2014, at Butterfield Stadium.

JADE CARDICHON/THE ITHACAN

Bombers out to revive reputation

BY ANDREW SULLIVAN

STAFF WRITER

It is remarkable how a single game — a single play for that matter — can define a team's season. Unfortunately, that happened to be the case for the football team last year.

After stifling St. John Fisher College to try to clinch the Empire 8 conference title, the Bombers lost a heartbreaker to SUNY Cortland in the Cortaca Jug game on a botched field goal attempt in the final seconds.

The Bombers' 7–3 record at the time was still good enough to qualify the team for the NCAA championship tournament. They duked it out against then-ranked No. 7 Hobart College and lost a nip-and-tuck contest, bowing out in the first round.

Head coach Mike Welch said last season was wavy with many ups and downs. The two losses to conclude the Bombers' season clouded what started out as a bright, promising campaign.

With their final team record tallying at 7-4, the Blue and Gold won the Empire 8 conference for the second year in a row. More importantly, two years ago, the college won its first conference championship since 2008, and this past year's squad won consecutive conference titles since its string of four from 2002–05.

Though the two losses to Cortland and Hobart muffled the college's progressive success, the Bombers look to break down the door this year and continue the program's resurgence as a conference powerhouse.

JUST THE FACTS

COACHING STAFF

Head Coach Mike Welch (22nd season)

Offensive Coordinator Ryan Heasley (4th)

Defensive Coordinator Mark McDonough (6th)

LAST YEAR'S FINISH

Overall Record 7–4

Empire 8 Conference 6–2

Home vs. Away 4-1/3-3

KEY RETURNERS

Senior Tijah Henderson
Senior Malik Morris
Senior Logan Murphy
Senior Josh Oliver
Senior Max Rottenecker
Junior Rob Barbieri
Junior Andrew Tabbert
Sophomore Tristan Brown
Sophomore Trevon Perez-Tucker

OFFENSE

The Blue and Gold's offense averaged 25.6 points per game in 2014, which was sixth-best in the Empire 8, and will have some fresh faces this season, particularly in the quarterback position.

Both starting quarterback Tom Dempsey and backup quarterback Ryan Condon graduated, meaning there will be a new maestro conducting the Bombers' offense in 2015.

Welch said he has not named his starting quarterback for week one yet.

"We have some pretty good players [at the position]," Welch said. "I'm confident in whoever is going to be the number-one guy; he will be ready to go and be able to run our offense."

Seniors Joe Bianchino and John D'Onofrio, as well as juniors Conor Herr, Michael Rabasca and Wolfgang Shafer, are competing for the top spot.

Though the offense last season excelled in the passing game, ranking fourth and third in the conference, respectively, with a 66.2 percent completion average and a passing efficiency of 146.7, Welch said the offense was inconsistent at times over the course of last season.

"Offensively, we had some areas that hurt us," he said. "We should have had more success in the red zone ... We need to run the ball better. Those are all the things we are looking to improve on this year."

Welch said the running game is key to the success of the offense this upcoming season.

"We didn't average very well in terms of our average per rush, so that needs to be better this year," Welch said. "If we could raise that level up, I feel confident that the rest of the offense will follow."

The running attack averaged 2.9 yards-percarry last season, which ranked second-to-last in the Empire 8.

Welch said it boils down to execution in order to elevate the consistency of the running game.

"We play some very good defenses, especially in the Empire 8," he said. "I think there are some of the top defenses in the country there, which includes ours. Every Saturday is tough. We've got to get better in our technique and our ability to run the ball. I don't think it's so much of changing our schematics, but execution."

Sophomore Tristan Brown returns to the squad as the team's leading rusher after the previous season in which he galloped his way to 591 yards and four touchdowns while rushing for an average of 4.8 yards-per-carry.

The strengths of the offense can be found in the receiving corps and the offensive line, which encompass the bulk of the veteran presence on the offensive side of the football.

The team's receiving corps is highlighted

by Josh Oliver, Preseason All-American senior kick return specialist, wide receiver and running back, who racked up over 1,000 all-purpose yards in 2014.

The offensive line returns 10 players — nine of them upperclassmen — from a unit that ranked in the top 50 in the nation in pass efficiency.

Offensive coordinator and offensive line coach Ryan Heasley said experience and unity are what fuels both the offensive line's success as well as the offense as a whole on the gridiron year after year.

"When you look at the guys we had here play in the program the last couple years, a lot of those guys were three-year starters," Heasley said. "When you come into the new year, one of the challenges and fun parts ... [is] being able to try to bring them together ... It is also refreshing and challenging to mold this new group to make them better than the guys were last year."

Welch said the offensive line epitomizes the program's next-man-up mentality that he has been teaching for years.

"We have good people at those positions," he said. "They are ready for their opportunities. That's our program — we graduate 20 to 30 seniors every year, and a lot of them have been starters. We expect people to perform at that same level."

DEFENSE

The Bombers' defense in 2014 proved to be one of the stingiest in the Empire 8. The defense ranked first in the conference in touchdowns allowed with 24 and second in points-per-game with 17.2.

Logan Murphy, senior co-captain and defensive lineman, said he was proud of how the defensive unit rose to the occasion and silenced the naysayers.

"Everyone was saying how we were going to have a setback because we lost [several] starters," Murphy said. "We just showed everyone that we don't take steps back. When we exit the chamber, we reload."

The Blue and Gold's defense was gritty against both the pass and the run last season. The team finished at the top of the conference with a passing efficiency of 98.1 and tied for first in yards-per-attempt with 5.7. The defense also ranked third in yards-per-carry as it surrendered an average of 3.4 yards.

Rob Barbieri, Preseason All-American junior defensive lineman, said the tenacious play by the defense can be attributed to the philosophies of defensive coordinator Mark McDonough.

"He wants us to play tough," Barbieri said.
"He says, 'You play IC tough!' We stop the run, and we limit the big plays. Those are some big principles that he instills in us. We take a lot of pride in bringing effort to every single game."

Despite the success, Malik Morris, senior co-captain and defensive back, who was also named a Preseason All-American, said the defense needs to be more relentless with turnovers in 2015 in order to ramp up the intensity of the unit.

The only potential question about the defense is in the secondary. The team graduated one of its top cornerbacks in then-senior Sam Carney as well as one of its top free safeties in Anthony Domenick.

Murphy said the secondary should not be an issue this season despite losing Carney and Domenick last year.

"I think that [the coaching staff] being the motivating factors and the senior defensive backs motivating the younger [defensive backs] to step up and play confident in their abilities, we should be a solid defense," Murphy said.

One of the biggest strengths of the Bombers' defense will be its defensive line, which will be led by Murphy, Barbieri and senior Tijah Henderson. All three linemen combined for 72 total tackles and 5.5 sacks last season.

Murphy said the chemistry among him, Barbieri and Henderson will add a significant advantage to the defensive frontline.

"When you add all those connections together, you are going to get something good," Murphy said. "I think you can expect big things from us this year."

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Women's team strives to bolster firm track record this fall season

BY JOELLE GOLDSTEIN

STAFF WRITER

The Ithaca College women's cross-country team is coming off a successful 2014 campaign in which it took home the Empire 8 Championship and made a name for itself at both the NCAA Atlantic Region Championship and the NCAA National Championship last year.

Head coach Erin Dinan and assistant coach Carly Graham, who together won 2014 Empire 8 Coaching Staff of the Year, are looking to build off of last season's fifth place in Regionals and 31st in Nationals.

"I expect that our team will be nationally competitive again, as we have been for the past three years," Dinan said. "It is a goal to qualify our team for the Division III National Championship again this year to keep the tradition running. In addition to that, it is always important that we see individual growth in each athlete, building upon previous years of running."

Despite losing six seniors — many of whom were large contributors to the team's success — the Blue and Gold will still have a strong senior class to look to this season, including captains Michaela Cioffredi, Rachelle Sartori and Anna Fay, leading the way.

Fay, who was named to the All-Empire 8 Second-Team and the All-New York State Collegiate Track Conference Second-Team last season, said she's most excited to meet her new teammates and create a strong team dynamic similar to years past.

"We have some great freshmen coming in," Fay said. "It's always nice to have new faces and distinct personalities. Everyone brings something different to the team."

Although the Bombers have high expectations from others to defend their Empire 8 Conference Championship this time around, the pressure doesn't seem to be a concern for them, seeing as upholding the cross-country legacy seems to come naturally, Dinan said.

"It has been such a tradition that we are regionally and nationally competitive that I

believe it's ingrained in our athletes to want to continue that," Dinan said. "We have athletes who want to compete and strive to do their best, not only for themselves but also for their teammates — both of which have been an incredible drive for our team to achieve their goals."

While winning seems to be the Bombers' top priority, it is also clear that it's not their only focus. The emphasis on teamwork and unity, as expressed by the coaches and players, including Fay and sophomore Alexis Kindig, is another one of the Bombers' main goals as they approach the upcoming season.

"Our team is like one big family, and I think that really pushes us at each meet because we don't want to let each other down," Kindig said. "We're big on listening to each other and using that feedback to push us even more. I think the team atmosphere is definitely what got us to how far we've gotten in the past two years."

Fay said how victorious the Bombers are this season will primarily depend on the team's camaraderie.

"We care a lot about sportsmanship, keeping a positive attitude and keeping our close team bond," Fay said. "When you have a really great team dynamic and relationship, then the success will fall into place afterwards."

The South Hill squad, known for running steadily as a group during meets, believes this close-knit attitude to be a strength that has also helped the team dynamic and led to success over the years, Fay added.

Also on the Blue and Gold's radar this season is another team trip to Nationals. Over the past three years, the Bombers have made three consecutive appearances at Nationals, and this season is predicted to be no different. If things go as planned, Dinan said, the Bombers will also potentially make an appearance at another meet.

"There's a strong possibility our team will be traveling to the Pre-National meet in Wisconsin this year," she said. "That would be an incredible opportunity for our team to experience excellent, out-of-region competition and preview the National Championship course."

Before the team gets to that point, it will be focusing on something else: beating rival St. Lawrence University. The Saints have defeated the Bombers for years, and now Fay said the Bombers are hoping that this fall will finally be their time.

"We're always trying to beat St. Lawrence," Fay said. "They're a very good team, and I think that's always been our goal. Anytime we get to compete with them, that's awesome because they push us along and give us better times and places."

First up on the Bombers' schedule is the Jannette Bonrouhi-Zakaim Memorial Alumni Run on Sept. 5 at the college. In the weeks following, the Blue and Gold will travel Sept. 12 to Saratoga Springs, New York, for the RPI Invitational, which is followed by a trip Sept. 19 to Rochester, New York, for the Rochester Yellowjacket Invitational.

As the Bombers continue to work hard, both off- and in-season, with a workout plan that includes varied-distance runs, speed and endurance training, and lifting, Dinan said they are confident they will stand out among the rest of their competitors this upcoming season and take home another Empire 8 title.

JUST THE FACTS

HEAD COACH

Erin Dinan (4th season)

GAME TO WATCH

Empire 8 Championships Oct. 31 at noon

KEY RETURNERS

Senior Michaela Cioffredi Senior Rachelle Sartori Senior Anna Fay

Men's squad loaded deep with talent as it aims for another shot at Nationals this year

BY LAUREN MURRAY

STAFF WRITER

Entering his 24th season, Jim Nichols, the men's cross-country head coach, returns with a squad that has the potential to achieve its sixth consecutive Empire 8 victory.

The Bombers had a successful 2014 season, with sophomore Tim Chappell being named Empire 8 Rookie of the Year and senior Sawyer Hitchcock qualifying individually for the NCAA Division III Men's Cross Country Championship in Mason, Ohio.

Some of the returners are seniors Stephen Gomez, Larkin Bohanan and Brendan Davis, and juniors Jesse Capellaro, Shane Connor, Chris Gutierrez and Sean Phillips. These runners will fill the big hole of graduates Anthony Altobelli, Steve Derderian and Dennis Ryan, Ithaca's Sportsman of the Year. He also earned First-Team All-Conference honors after finishing seventh overall at the Empire 8 Championships.

The Bombers, like in 2014, could send more of their runners to the Championship, as the upperclassmen have shown immense progress on the trails. Bohanan, Chappell, Gomez and Phillips have continuously been the top seven runners representing the men each race.

They have seen major improvements on their personal best times and placement finishes. Bohanan and Gomez have each seen their respective personal best times in the 8K from year to year drop almost a full second, while Phillips has improved his average time by about five-tenths of a second.

Nichols said he expects the most out of his runners in every aspect of their lives in order for them to succeed as much as they possibly can.

"We want to challenge our runners to be the best that they can be, and that means

academically, socially and athletically," Nichols said. "The toughest competition they are ever going to face in their life is going to be themselves. They need to challenge themselves to be the best that they can be."

The roster is currently composed of 14 runners, so the Blue and Gold will be a veteran-heavy team.

However, Nichols said he is interested to see how the freshmen will perform while they adjust to college life but is confident the upperclassmen will help relieve some pressure with the transition to college athletics.

"Because we're more of an older team, we're an experienced team," he said. "Veterans are more aware about what they are up against. They have developed a familiarity with the trails and know what to expect from teammates and opponents."

Assistant coach Eric Sambolec said he expects the quality of the team to be very high because of the success its returners have had in past seasons.

"We have a returning two-time national qualifier in Sawyer Hitchcock as well as four All-State or All-ECAC performers on the track in Hitchcock, Stephen Gomez, Sean Phillips and Tim Chappell," Sambolec said. "This is a very talented group that has a good group bond."

Entering this season, Nichols said he feels his team has done a great job training on its own during the summer and that effort will be shown on the trails.

While cross-country is an individual-based sport, he said success still comes down to the team gelling well.

"The key to success is athletes working together, pulling together and encouraging each other for their best performance," Nichols said.

Nichols said the student-athlete environment created at the college is also an added plus, and he finds that the college has a well-balanced culture for its athletes to thrive and build off of.

Nichols said the community, the athletic trainers, the Athletics and Events Center and the students' support and pride are all great assets for the student-athletes.

The Bombers will begin competition Sept. 12 at the RPI Invitational in Saratoga Springs, New York. The Blue and Gold will host the annual Jannette Bonrouhi-Zakaim Memorial Alumni Run on Sept. 5.

With new recruits each year, the bonds shift, but the teams Nichols puts together each season have continuously been impressive. He said the South Hill squad is always evolving and doing its best with the individuals that come through the program, no matter who graduates from the team.

"Every year is different because it's a different personality based on the students we have in the program and how they get along with each other and the chemistry that they can provide," Nichols said.

JUST THE FACTS

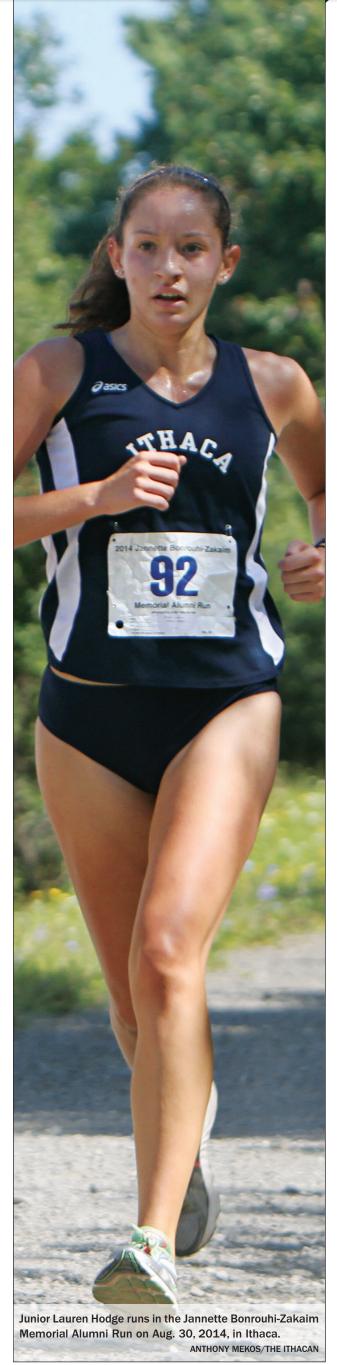
HEAD COACH Jim Nichols (24th season)

GAME TO WATCH

Empire 8 Champion-

KEY RETURNERS

Senior Sawyer Hitchcock Senior Stephen Gomez Junior Sean Phillips



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SCULLING X



Members of the sculling squad race in the Sculling Invitational on Sept. 28, 2014, at the Cayuga Inlet. The team is in its fourth season.

JILLIAN FLINT/THE ITHACAN

Sculling squad looks to propel program in the right direction

BY KEON BROADNAX AND VINICA WEISS

CONTRIBUTING WRITER AND ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Despite graduating almost half of its squad, Becky Robinson, head coach of the sculling team, said the Bombers are more prepared than ever to be a dominant force on the water. However, with five graduated seniors, the team will still have gaps to fill.

Robinson said out of each of its previous three seasons, last season was the year the team made the most significant progress. She said last year's team seemed more experienced, and the Bombers finally figured out how to become a cohesive unit.

Senior captain Katie Ely said despite the loss of five members from the previous season — Rachel Brogle '15, Alexandria O'Neill '15, Kellie Palladino '15, Jennie Peterson '15 and Delaney Pfohl '15 — the team can only look toward a successful future.

"There are definitely people that are irreplaceable; everyone brings something new to the team," Ely said. "It's taking what we've learned from them in the past and trying to move forward."

Ely said the sculling season is really a time for many of the upperclassmen to improve their technique because it takes more coordination than being on a normal crew boat.

"They are smaller boats, and you get the more one-on-one coaching opportunity, which I really like, and the whole team really benefits from that, so I think everyone that joins the sculling team is looking to improve their technique," Ely said.

team is looking to improve their technique," Ely said.

A majority of the scullers come to the squad with little or no sculling experience. Junior sculler Tara Malone, who is also on the women's crew team, said the team is looking to find more people who have previous experience with sculling. In the past, the squad has had to rely on teaching members from scratch, which she said is time-consuming.

"Because the team started up just a few years ago, we're trying to get more competitive, so we're trying to get people in who know how to scull so we can just jump right in instead of spending half the season teaching and then competing," Malone said.

The team participated in four races last season, and Robinson said last year's success depended on experience. Ely said the ultimate goal is getting to the Small Boat Challenge this year.

Malone said the returners on the team have been training during the summer, both together and individually, in order to get ready for the upcoming season.

"We generally do time trials. We'll each individually go out in a single and be given a distance we have to race, and we'll all go at different times, and they'll compare the times, and that'll sort of

help figure out where everybody is," Malone said. "We'll do some erg training, but we mostly try and stay on the water as much as we can."

Ely said the seniors on the team put together their own workouts, so members could stay in shape over the summer. Senior Emily Morley decided to put a twist on the workouts as well.

"At any point when you were working out during the summer, you could send Emily a picture, and she would post it on Instagram — just to keep everyone connected — because it's so hard to work out by yourself, but if your team is there for you no matter where we are during the summer, it's nice ... to stay connected," Fly said

Robinson said there has not been a definite team to beat, but there is one thing she said she looks forward to in the last race of the season.

"Our coxed quad will be there in the championship regatta,"

Although the roster has not yet been released, the team looks to fill a 12–18 varsity roster for the 2015 season. Ely said the team is ready to get the season started on the right note.

"When you're in a boat with just one other person — or at most you're with three other people — you get to know their rowing styles; you get to know their strengths and weaknesses just as well as your own," Ely said. "I know we're all just putting our best foot forward and really working hard. I have no doubt in my mind that we are going to rise to the challenges."

JUST THE FACTS

HEAD COACH

Becky Robinson (22nd season)

RACE TO WATCH

Small Boat Challenge
KEY RETURNERS

Senior Katie Ely Junior Tara Malone Junior Rachel Dowd



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Experience leads the attack for improved volleyball squad

BY MADISON BESS

The volleyball team had an impeccable season last year with its 25–11 overall record, following its 16–22 losing season in 2013.

In their 2014 campaign, the Blue and Gold also placed third in the Empire 8 Championship and advanced to the Eastern College Athletic Conference Metro/Upstate Championship. At the championship, they won 3–0 against Alfred State College in the semifinals and went on to defeat Ramapo College of New Jersey 3–2 in the championship match.

The Bombers went 6-2 in the conference, which was an improvement from the previous three years, in which the South Hill squad went 4–3 each year.

However, over the past few years, the team has been defeated by conference rivals Nazareth College and Stevens Institute of Technology. One of the main goals this year will be to defeat these rivals, senior captain Dylan Gawinski-Stern said.

The Bombers took a pair of losses to Nazareth last season, including the Empire 8 Championship, and lost to Stevens 3–0. Gawinski-Stern said the team is using its positive energy from last season's success to bring much more intensity this fall

We are focusing every practice to keep a competitive team, preparing us for the matches ahead," Gawinski-Stern said.

Head coach Janet Donovan said one of the main focuses this year is to grow into the best team the Bombers can be, which will come through learning from last season and making their play as a team stronger than before.

The South Hill squad graduated Rylie Bean, senior captain and outside hitter, but has five incoming freshmen stepping onto the squad. Bean competed in 28 matches during her senior season. The lone senior played 91 sets and averaged 4.05 points per set, with a .215 hitting percentage last season.

The team will look to strong sophomore and junior classes this season, Donovan said, as Gawinski-Stern will be the only senior on the squad this fall.

Donovan said the the top returning players are sophomores First-Team All-Conference pick Joelle Goldstein and honorable mention, all-conference pick setter, Kayla Gromen. Goldstein played in all 36 matches for the Bombers last sea-

son, leading the team with 383 kills and a .264 hitting percentage. Gromen also competed in all 36 games in 2014 and collected a team-best 809 assists.

Donovan also said sophomore Caroline Gerulskis will bring success to the squad, and the Blue and Gold will also have a few freshmen who will bring more depth to the team as it looks to have another winning season.

Gawinski-Stern said with new players come new skills, which always makes the players work together and improve their game in practice every day.

The senior captain also said the team is very close and knows how to come together to be victorious.

"Having a cohesive team with the same goals will be critical to get us where we know we can go," she said

Gromen said she thinks the team is just as strong as, if not stronger than, last year's.

We have a lot of returners, which will give us a good edge because our team chemistry is already there," Gromen said. "This

year, we are trying a new approach to our practices, which have a lot of competition built in. The Bombers will kick off their season Sept. 1 against Cazenovia College in Cazenovia, New York. The Bomber Invitational is

set to begin at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 11 in the Ben Light Gymnasium. Since it is Gawinski-Stern's last year at the college, she said her personal goal is to make the most out of this season.

My goal is to play with the amazing women on this team and be Empire 8 champions. With hard work and determination, I know we can make it," Gawinski-Stern said. "We as a team are fighting and ready to take that E8 championship title."

JUST THE FACTS

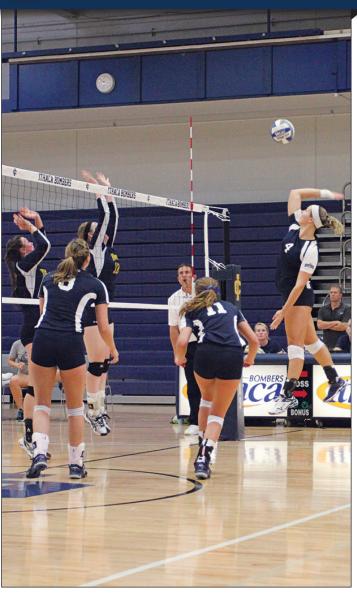
HEAD COACH Janet Donovan (24th season)

LAST YEAR'S FINISH

KEY RETURNERS

25-11

Senior Dylan Gawinski-Stern Sophomore Joelle Goldstein Sophomore Kayla Gromen



VOLLEYBALL

Right, sophomore Caroline Gerulskis spikes the ball as her teammates look on during a match Sept. 5, 2014, at Ben Light Gymnasium.

BRIAN PULLING/THE ITHACAN

New faces and fundamentals to bring a fresh era for the women's golf team

BY CAITIE IRHIG

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The women's golf team will have to adjust to a new dynamic this upcoming fall after some major changes took place during the offseason.

After winning five of last year's 10 tournaments — including the Empire 8 Championship - and coming in second in three of the tournaments, the Blue and Gold will have some big holes to fill this upcoming season.

However, challenges come with the team seeing its second coach in program history and losing three-time All-American

With the loss of Li, the Bombers will also have to work harder to be invited to the NCAA Championship.

The team's success will depend on whether the team can step up its game, which largely hinges on the budding relationship between the players and new head coach Molly Braid. The athletics department appointed Braid to the position Aug. 12.

However, the Bombers will still have past relationships to count on as dominant players Li and Kelsey Baker '15 will be back as graduate assistants to help the team this season.

The Bombers know they will have a very different dynamic this season following the retirements of coaches Dan Wood and Sandi Wood, sophomore Indiana Jones said. She added that the Blue and Gold have a strong group of returners the team can rely on. Jones returns to the Bombers after attaining an average score of 84.38 in 13 rounds last season.

The good part for the five returning players is Sharon and Kelsey will be back to help the team transition to having a new coach and still use their knowledge of the game to help us returning players," Jones said.

Sophomore Kyra Denish, who played 15 rounds last season and ended the year with an average score of 90.40, said the team will also be able to pick the brains of former teammates in order to capture similar success this upcoming season.

The team is also looking forward to seeing what Braid's prior experience will bring to the team. Before she was hired as head coach, Braid was a member of the Ladies Professional Golf Association and taught young girls how to play golf, which Denish said will be a huge benefit to the team as Braid will be able to effectively teach the players the basics.

Sophomore Lauren Saylor and her teammates said they are looking forward to working with the new coach. Baker said the players will have more time to work with Braid and to focus on

making improvements to specific parts of their game. Baker, who averaged a score of 79.94 in 17 rounds last year, said she believes this will have a positive effect on the team as long as the players continue to support one another and build a good relationship with Braid.

Saylor said the women may have to rely on this greater bond to help them through the changes on the team. Each of the six remaining women will have to step up and fill the roles left by the seniors who graduated, including Baker, Li and Taylor MacDonald '15.

"No more Sharon Li leading the scoreboards, no more [MacDonald] putting a positive spin on everything, no more of Kelsey Baker's strong-willed leadership as a team captain, Saylor said.

The Bombers each have short-term goals set. Both Denish and Saylor said they want to become better mental players, and Jones said she would like to place in the top-10 in every tournament.

The short-term goals will not only help the team achieve its long-term goal of getting to the NCAA Tournament but will also help the players do their best in every tournament this season, Denish said.

'One goal is to play the best golf we can as a team and as individuals," Denish said. "Each girl achieving their short-term goal will help them with this overarching goal. Golf is a day-

JUST THE FACTS

HEAD COACH

Molly Braid (1st season)

GAME TO WATCH

St. Lawrence Invitational

KEY RETURNERS

Senior Taylor Reeves Junior Kimberly Wong Sophomore Indiana Jones



Sophomore Kyra Denish keeps her eye on the ball as she makes her backswing during a team practice Sept. 19, 2014, at the Country Club of Ithaca.

JILLIAN FLINT/THE ITHACAN

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