

SPRING SPORTS PREVIEW

TEAMS READY FOR ACTION



NOLAN SAUNDERS/THE ITHACAN
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THE ITHACAN

THROWING FOR IT ALL



ANA MANIACI MCGOUGH/THE ITHACAN

★ ★ ★
**GIL
MEROD**

BY ROCCO DI MAIOLO

The Ithaca College baseball team has made its return to the diamond and has high expectations for the 2022 season. This spring, the club is eyeing a Liberty League title and a trip to the NCAA tournament.

Last season was head coach David Valesente's first full year in charge after the 2020 season was shortened because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Valesente said he expects his team to pick up where it left off and improve from last year, which entails

winning the Liberty League and competing in the NCAA tournament. He also wants his team to excel on and off the field.

"Our goals are to build off of last year's return to play and continue to compete at a high level," Valesente said. "Our goal is also to keep players healthy and to keep them on task for success in the classroom."

Several sluggers from last year's lineup are returning to the club this spring, including four players that hit above .300. Senior first baseman and pitcher Buzz Shirley led last year's team in batting average by hitting .389. Sophomore infielder Louis Fabbo also played an integral role, hitting .353 with 31 runs batted in (RBI) and 27 runs scored.

The team recently began preparation for the 2022 season by attending training sessions and participating in early-morning and late-night practices in February. After participating in those team sessions, senior pitcher Kyle Lambert feels much better about the team dynamic compared to last season.

"I think this season will be different because this year, the team feels different," Lambert said. "It feels like ... we all have great team chemistry, we're all very connected, we're all very close. I think that'll be a big difference for us this year."

Junior catcher Gil Merod is also planning on breaking individual records and earning accolades of his own this season, which include recording a higher batting average and earning an all-league or all-region acknowledgment. Merod impressed in 2021, but he said he wants his team to improve



and put more tallies in the win column.

"I know last year we lost games pretty weekly and we gave up some runs," Merod said. "I would say a minimum of 30 [wins]. That's a doable task that would show the talent we have, the powerhouse that Ithaca [College] should return back to be."

But regardless of the end results, he said he still hopes the team can improve on the tactical aspects of the game.

Merod also said team chemistry is important, noting that there is a more positive atmosphere among everyone on the roster.

This season will look different from the past two seasons but back to normal overall because there will be a more usual spring baseball schedule compared to the ones during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The team has two preseason trips planned before the spring break trip, which Valesente said will help it better prepare for the upcoming season.

Valesente does not want his team's focus to change each game based on whoever it plays this season, noting that each game is just as important.

"I'd like to really focus on playing against the game," Valesente said. "We don't care who we play. Day in and day out, whether it's the best team in the country or the worst, we're playing against the game. For us to be successful, I want us to do the little things."

The Bombers kicked off their season Feb. 25 in a 5-4 walk-off victory against SUNY New Paltz. The club will not be taking the diamond at Freeman Field until March 30 when it takes on Elmira College.

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**KYLE
LAMBERT**



ANA MANIACI MCGOUGH/THE ITHACAN

CHASING A TITLE

BY DUSTIN TERRY

For the Ithaca College softball team, this season will be about rebuilding a culture.

After ending last season with a 6-1 loss in the Liberty League Championship game to the University of Rochester and graduating multiple starters, the Bombers will be looking to come together as a team to compete for a title.

This season will look much different than the 2021 season for the Bombers, which graduated seven players, including pitcher Beth Fleming '21. The team will also have nine freshman players competing to begin their college careers. Head coach Hannah Quintana said

she knows this season will be a challenge for everyone and recognizes the importance of becoming closer as a team.

"We're really just working on creating a solid team culture and really identifying what [the team] is going to hang their hat on," Quintana said. "With so much turnover from last year's graduating class and so many new players, I think we're really just trying to identify what our team is going to look like."

Junior pitcher Riley Piromalli nearly split the workload on the mound with Fleming last season, throwing 95.0 innings, 75 strike outs and posting a 2.14 earned run average for the season. Piromalli is stepping up this season to lead the club's young pitching staff and said she has taken the rookie pitchers under her wing.

"Our pitchers are amazing this year," Piromalli said. "And allowing our freshman pitchers to know they can count on me for anything is a really key factor to our pitching staff."

Quintana said the Bombers will also need to rely on the leadership and experience of returning players. The coach said maintaining continuity between the team's ace and catcher will play a key role for the squad this spring.

"To bring back to the battery combination of Riley Piromalli and [senior catcher] Kira Flegenheimer is a huge advantage for us," Quintana said. "They have a lot of experience. They are both very competitive and excellent at their positions."

Quintana also said senior Julia Loffredo, outfielder and catcher, is an 'anchor' to the infield. Loffredo started all 33 games last season for the Bombers, logging a .333 batting average, 32 hits and 34 runs batted in. Loffredo said the team is focused on themselves and what it needs to do in order to compete in another championship.

"Every year, every team in the Liberty League comes out and plays hard," Loffredo said. "We're focusing on our personal goals, our journey, our track to beat whoever it is in the other dugout."

Loffredo is also a player who will be an important leader for the Bombers' lineup, and she wants to lead by example for the younger players.

"I'm a team-first type of person, and that's what we're pushing for this year," Loffredo said. "I'm going out, grinding every single day, showing off my knowledge to the younger girls to help them."

The Bombers finished last season with a 25-8 overall record and a 19-4 record in Liberty League games. The team finished second in the Liberty League as well as the Liberty League tournament.

The team looks to continue its winning play this season and return to another Liberty League Championship. Loffredo and Piromalli both said the team believes it can make a run in the NCAA tournament.

"Our team faced a lot of challenges and obstacles last year," Piromalli said. "This year's team is really focused and

dedicated to taking it very far this year. Our team has great camaraderie and there are lots of key players that want to win."

The Bombers are set to open the 2022 campaign in a doubleheader March 5 at the University of Scranton in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

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★ ★ ★
**JULIA
LOFFREDO**

ANA MANIACI MCGOUGH/THE ITHACAN

★ ★ ★
**RILEY
PIROMALLI**

ROW WITH THE FLOW

BY MARK PUSKEY

After the Ithaca College women's crew team won the Liberty League Championship and finished third at the NCAA Division III Championships last May, it is expecting nothing less than success in 2022.



NOLAN SAUNDERS/THE ITHACAN

IZZY
OZKURT

Six of the rowers who were a part of the boat that finished in third at the NCAA Division III Championships in 2021 are returning to the team for this season.

Senior Izzy Ozkurt said the team is ready to prove its worth after being ranked third in the country in Division III by

the Collegiate Rowing Coaches Association at the end of last season.

"We are still riding high off that season," Ozkurt said. "But we want to showcase all of the hard work this team has put in during the fall season and over the winter."

Along with the team's successful season, two Bombers received All-American honors for their efforts during the 2021 campaign. Libby Ryan '21 was selected as a First-Team All-American in the 2019-20 season and graduate student Allison Arndt was named to the Second Team.

Graduate student Michele Hyland said the team will look to build on this success and is eager for the season to get underway.

"We're really pushing ourselves, we can't wait to get back on the water," Hyland said.

To fill the spots on the varsity eight boat, the team is looking toward Hyland, Ozkurt, Arndt, junior Taylor Volmrich and senior Dania Bogdanovic to step-up. But head coach Becky Robinson said "seats are open to anyone who puts the work in."

The most anticipated races this season, Robinson said, are the championship races, including the New York State Championships on April 23, the Liberty League Championship on April 29 in Saratoga Springs, New York, the National Invitational Rowing Championships (NIRC) on May 8 in Worcester, Massachusetts, and the NCAA Regatta from May 27 to 29 in Sarasota, Florida.

"The NCAA [Championship] is limited to two [eight-person boats]," Robinson said. "But the squad is deep enough to have five [eight-person boats]. So for athletes who aren't in the top two boats, the [New York State] and NIRC Championships are really exciting."

Ozkurt said she is most excited for the

Liberty League Championship because it helps the team focus as it begins postseason play. The Bombers have finished first in the event in each of the last three seasons, excluding the 2020 season that was canceled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Well, not to brag, but we usually win that one," Ozkurt said. "But it also shifts our mindsets from just having fun to 'we need to work hard, we are here to win a national championship.'"

As a captain, Ozkurt tries to motivate and encourage her teammates. She said she believes her motivation and mentoring really helps her younger teammates.

"A lot of the time they are surprised at how far they can push their bodies," Ozkurt said. "They unlock something in themselves they didn't know they had."

Hyland said that she is looking forward to returning to competition and is happy that the underclassmen will be able to compete in a traditional slate of meets.

"This year is going to be really special, it's like a redemption year," Hyland said. "Some of us [graduate students] are using our extra year of eligibility. This is the first full season for the juniors, sophomores and freshmen because of COVID[-19]."

Robinson said she hopes this is the end of the COVID-19 pandemic interfering with competition. She said the team has not gotten a chance to face all of its usual opponents because of it, so it is looking to get back to that.

"Traditionally the biggest competition within the Liberty League has been [Rochester Institute of Technology] and Hobart [College]," Robinson said. "But the University of Rochester has a new coach this year, so they might be bringing something."

MICHELE
HYLAND

NOLAN SAUNDERS/THE ITHACAN

Ozkurt said the Bombers' biggest challenger outside of the Liberty League this year will be Bates College. Since 2015, the Bobcats have won the D-III National Championships five times, including the last four in a row. The teams will meet later this season at the NIRC and the NCAA Regatta in May.

The Bombers will kick off their season at the Cayuga Duels on April 2, where it will face-off with William Smith College, Canisius College and Johnson & Wales University at the Cayuga Inlet.



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MAKING A SPLASH

BY DEAN GUTIC

With the 2022 spring season approaching, the Ithaca College men's crew team is gearing up for a return in April as it looks to reach its goals for the year.

The team saw some success last year, finishing with a 2-2 record in a shortened season due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It also finished second behind Hobart College at the Liberty League Championships. But the team graduated eight athletes, including two in the varsity eight boat.

The team competes three boats of eight rowers at each race, called the varsity eight, the second varsity eight and the third varsity eight. Head coach Dan Robinson said he is trying to make the team as competitive as possible this spring to achieve the goals he has lined up.

"One of our main goals is to be as competitive as we can and to race with two competitive eights," Robinson said. "In 2019, we had a bunch of success. Fast forward to last spring, we didn't do too great and a few years before that we had trouble with the second eight. Now with this season, we have our two eights."

With the National Invitation Rowing Championships (NIRC) back this season and COVID-19 restrictions being relaxed as the year moves along, the team looks forward to facing opponents it has not faced since Spring 2019.

"Our biggest competition is our rivals

[Rochester Institute of Technology] and Hamilton College. Every time we race them, if we beat them, we feel like it makes it a successful season," Robinson said.

Junior Jake Lentz said Robinson has been pushing the team to train harder through workouts and is preparing the rowers for a big season.

"Coach Robinson is turning up the intensity of our training on the [rowing machine] erg and is also improving our form in pool stations," Lentz said. "He has us working hard at a high intensity."

Besides pushing the rowers to work harder, Lentz mentioned how Robinson has been working on improving the team culture. He said the coach has been emphasizing the importance of team interactions.



SAM
BICKHAM

NOLAN SAUNDERS/THE ITHACAN

JAKE
LENTZ

"Coach Robinson has helped us focus on prepping us in many ways for the season but has also helped us interact better with one another," Lentz said.

Senior Sam Bickham is returning this spring for what will be his last season as a rower for Ithaca College. However, he said he will not be changing his approach this season.

"My goal for this season is to ... win states and make finals in the NIRC," Bickham said. "In 2020, our season was put to a halt due to the ongoing COVID pandemic and in 2021 we weren't able to travel up north for the NIRC ... We are pushing as a team to do whatever it takes to reach our goals."

With the spring season approaching, Robinson said he expects his team to step-up to the challenge this year. He said that a big part of the competitive eights for this season are going to be the six returning varsity rowers from last season, but that there are more rowers to watch out for than just the upperclassmen.

"We have three good freshmen, even though it's still new for them, that should all make the second eight," Robinson said.

With so many new faces, Robinson said many of the spots for the second varsity eight are still open. He does not know yet who will step-up to fit into those roles, but knows it could be anyone.

"Everyone has a shot at making the second eight," Robinson said. "And I have a feeling there will be someone that is going to surprise us by developing in a short period of time."

With almost a month to go before the season starts, Lentz said the whole team is ready to compete and is excited to see how the season goes.

"We have a strong freshman and senior class that is motivated to work," Lentz said. "We are excited for the season and we are ready to attack."

The Bombers will open up their spring season at home April 2 as they take part in the Cayuga Duels on the Cayuga Inlet.

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PURSuing A NATIONAL TITLE

MEGAN MOTKOWSKI

BY TOMMY MUMAU

After a dominant 2021 season in which the Ithaca College women's lacrosse team went 14–2, the Bombers entered the upcoming campaign ranked as one of the top squads in the nation with championship aspirations.

The team entered the season ranked No. 4 by the ILWomen/Intercollegiate Women's Lacrosse Coaches Association (IWLCA) preseason poll and No. 7 by the Nike/USA Lacrosse Magazine preseason poll. After losing nine seniors from last year's team to graduation, the Bombers will turn to three graduate students and a highly touted sophomore class of eight players to help lead the way. Alexa Ritchie, graduate student midfielder and captain, said that despite the departure of last year's strong senior group, she is confident that the team has the ability to contend for a national title.

"I think our expectations are pretty high for where we've got to go," Ritchie said. "There's always that talk of [how] we graduated a huge senior class, but what they don't realize is this team right now has so much potential and so many players have already played ... there's no worry for our performance this year and expectations left off right where we ended last year."

The Bombers' impressive 2021 season came to a halt in the third round of the NCAA Championship, falling to No. 4 Salisbury University by a final score of 16–5. The team had a perfect 11–0 regular season record, playing a shortened slate of games because the start of the season was delayed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Bombers are set to return to a full schedule in 2022, with 17 contests on the team's regular-season slate. Head coach Karrie Moore said she is looking forward to once again having a traditional spring.

"It's certainly nice to get back in what we think of as [a] regular schedule," Moore said. "I think something that I've come to really appreciate about our players is we just take things as they come and we worry about what we can control. And that's just kind of how we roll with things and it's served us well."

The Bombers were able to overcome adversity presented by the pandemic last season, recording 16.50 goals and 21.88 points per game as a team, which was the best mark in the Liberty League. This dominant offensive output was led by midfielder Jacqui Hallack '21, who led the Liberty League with 4.94 goals and 5.94 points per game. This impressive campaign earned Hallack All-American honors, being named IWLCA Division III National Midfielder of the Year, IWLCA First-Team and to the USA Lacrosse Magazine First-Team.

Graduate student Rachel Rosenberg, defender and captain, was also a key contributor to the Bombers' dominant year. Last season, Rosenberg led the team with 38 ground balls collected and 34 turnovers forced. This resume helped her earn IWLCA First-Team All-Empire Region, All-Liberty League First-Team and IWLCA Second-Team All-American hon-

ors in 2021. She also enters this season as a First-Team Preseason All-American by USA Lacrosse Magazine.

The Bombers will also look to graduate student Madison Boutureira to make an impact, coming off a season in which she posted the team's third-highest point total. The attacker recorded a total of 46 points and 30 goals. These credentials earned Boutureira a spot on the All-Liberty League First-Team and she was honored as an IWLCA Second-Team All-Region player.

This season, the team will rely on its three veteran captains to step-up as leaders, turning to Ritchie, Rosenberg and senior midfielder Megan Motkowski. The senior said the upperclassmen have been making an effort to introduce the group's freshmen and sophomores to the program's winning tradition.

"We have a pretty solid culture," Motkowski said. "So, I think we've really shown that to the new underclassmen, and they really have all hopped on board. So I don't think there's any reason we shouldn't get to the same standard and success that we had last season."

Moore, Ritchie and Motkowski each said they are impressed with this year's sophomore class and believe it will play an integral role this spring. Moore said she is particularly looking forward to seeing what attacker Maizy Veitch and midfielder Sydney Phillips bring to the table.

Phillips saw significant minutes in her first collegiate season, checking into all but one of the Bombers' 16 games in 2021. The midfielder recorded seven total points, netting six goals in the process. Veitch played in 11 games during her freshman season, scoring seven goals and posting a total of 10 points.

Ritchie said she has been very impressed by the sophomore class's relatively seamless transition into college lacrosse, especially because of the challenging environment the pandemic has created.

"They just are so knowledgeable on lacrosse in general. Their game IQs are so high," Ritchie said. "They know so much about our team specifically, like how we run our offense, how we run our defense, the culture and everything. And it's just translated so well with their skills and they're a group to look out for."

Moore said the team's mindset entering the season is to focus on each game and improve throughout the course of the season.

"I think we just want to make sure that we take it one game at a time and we compete," Moore said. "I think we're really just trying to make sure that we are working hard and meeting our own expectations so that we're raising the bar for ourselves."

Ritchie echoed a similar sentiment, saying that the team strives to improve each day as it works to compete for both Liberty League and national titles. The midfielder said that while the

team focuses on each game, one of its toughest games in the conference will be against William Smith College, which enters the season ranked sixth in the nation. The Bombers are 24–33 in their meetings with the Herons.

"We always say we're improving every single day and every single game," Ritchie said. "We talk about milestones a lot instead of goals and basically taking it one day at a time. Of course, we want to win a national championship, before that we want to win a Liberty League [title] and we're hungry for it. But we've got to worry about practice today at 4 p.m., and we've got to worry about practice tomorrow and a scrimmage on Saturday. There are so many steps that go before then."

The team opened its season against a formidable opponent, as it faced off against rival No. 13 SUNY Cortland March 2. The Bombers were initially scheduled to open their season against No. 16 SUNY Brockport Feb. 26, but the game was postponed and has not yet been rescheduled. Moore said she has been impressed with the way the team began its season in practice and is looking forward to the spring.

"I'm excited about where we are," Moore said. "We have a lot of potential and we have a lot of room for growth. And I think we have great upperclassmen leadership, I think our sophomores are doing a great job helping the freshmen. And I think as long as we stay on that path, I think we're going to be really happy with the season."

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BRENDAN IANUCCI/THE ITHACAN

ALEXA RITCHIE



BRENDAN IANUCCI/THE ITHACAN

#6



BRENDAN IANUCCI/THE ITHACAN

DEFENDING THE HILL

JOHN SRAMAC



ANA MANIACI MCGOUGH/THE ITHACAN

BY CONNOR GLUNT

In a stacked Liberty League conference, the Ithaca College men's lacrosse team is looking to establish itself as a top team in the league.

The Bombers went 6-4 last season, including 4-2 during in-conference play but are still behind competitors like the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), Union College and St. Lawrence University in the Liberty League preseason rankings. Last season, RIT won the Division III National Championship while the

Bombers fell to the St. Lawrence University Saints 15-8 in the Liberty League semifinals.

The South Hill squad is returning 21 upper-classmen this year, 14 of which are seniors. After losing key players like Jake Hall-Goldman '21, senior Demetri Lowry will be expected to follow up his strong campaign in 2021 with even better results. The defenseman, who was named a 2022 preseason All-American by both Inside Lacrosse and the United States Intercollegiate Lacrosse Association, forced 1.6 turnovers per game in 2021, which was fourth in the conference.

Lowry said that this year, he wants to leave it all on the field to push the Bombers to the top of the conference.

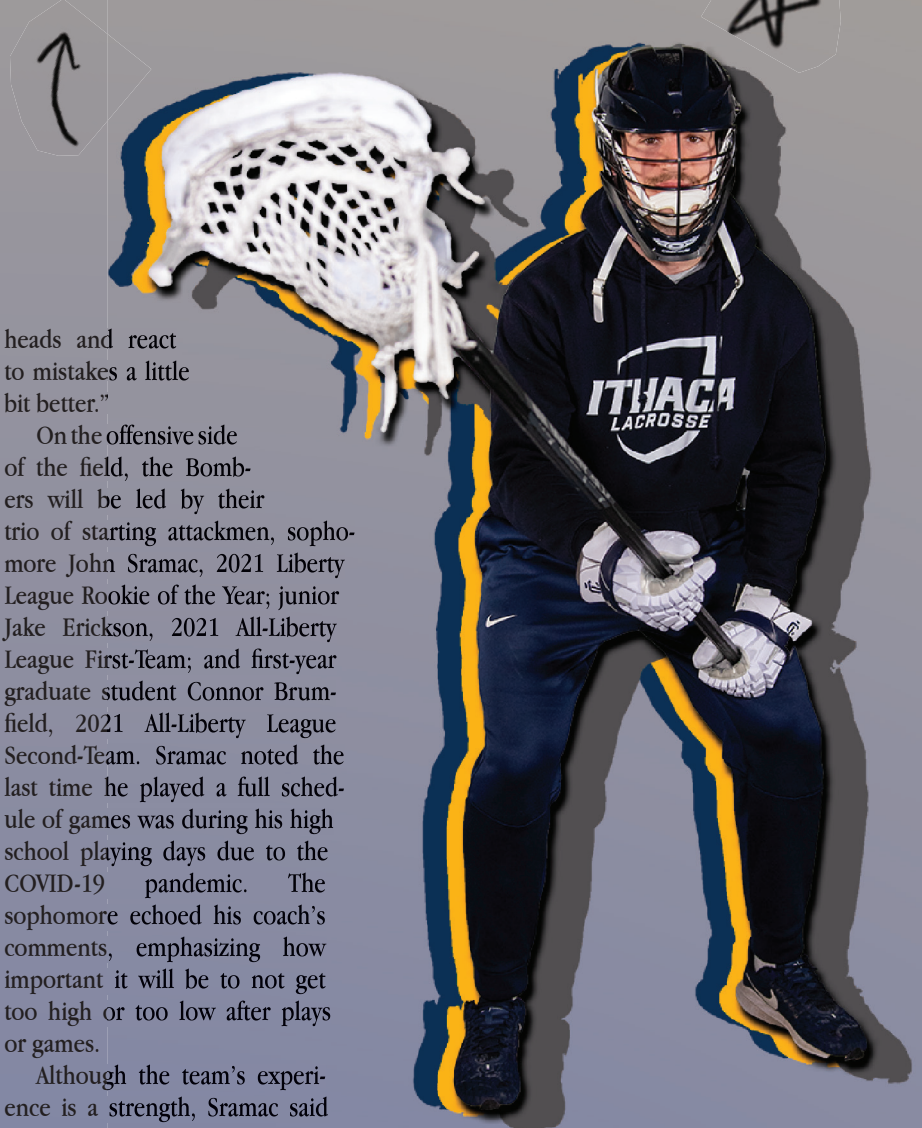
"We have a lot of seniors on our team, and we really haven't had a full-go season since our freshman year," Lowry said. "So considering this is most of our last gos, we really want to push as far as we can in the Liberty League."

Lowry added that the overall goal he has for the team is to make it to the Liberty League championship. The program's only appearance in the game came in its first season in the league, in 2018 when the Bombers lost to RIT.

Head coach Jeff Long also wants his team to make a run at the end of the season, noting that the Liberty League is one of the toughest conferences in Division III in men's lacrosse. In order to do that, he said the biggest thing the team needs this year is consistency. Long said he puts faith into his senior class to help build that up for the rest of his team, including relying on senior captains Jae Stuhlman and Lowry.

"I think the biggest thing is consistency and just 60-minute game toughness," Long said. "No one ever truly dominates for 60 minutes, so you have to be able to deal with a little bit of adversity, not hang your

DEMETRI LOWRY



ANA MANIACI MCGOUGH/THE ITHACAN

heads and react to mistakes a little bit better."

On the offensive side of the field, the Bombers will be led by their trio of starting attackmen, sophomore John Sramac, 2021 Liberty League Rookie of the Year; junior Jake Erickson, 2021 All-Liberty League First-Team; and first-year graduate student Connor Brumfield, 2021 All-Liberty League Second-Team. Sramac noted the last time he played a full schedule of games was during his high school playing days due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The sophomore echoed his coach's comments, emphasizing how important it will be to not get too high or too low after plays or games.

Although the team's experience is a strength, Sramac said the team has a strong group of underclassmen everyone can rely on as well.

"I think for guys like myself and [sophomore] Charlie Niebuhr that got [playing] time toward the end of the year, I think [we have to] take a bigger step this year, improving our game in all types of ways," Sramac said. "Guys are going to step-up who didn't get time last year, like sophomores that are now juniors are going to have to step-up and fill those minutes."

Lowry added that there are a couple of freshmen who have made strong first impressions during their first season as a Bomber, something he thinks is very valuable.

"[Freshman] Kyle Proctor is very vocal which is great to have," Lowry said. "Proctor, [freshman] Jack Pastore ... I've been pretty impressed with them. [They] take chances and aren't afraid to dodge and get physical, which is something I really like to see and I know our coach Jeff Long really likes to see, when guys don't care about what grade they are and they just want to compete."

The team has also brought back a familiar face to the program, assistant coach Torin Varn.

Varn was a volunteer assistant with the Bombers in 2020 and coached at Cornell University last season. Long said it has been an overall positive experience for everyone on the team to have him back.

"He's got the advantage of knowing some of the guys and he learned a ton of information working over at Cornell," Long said. "He's got both an offensive and defensive

mind, so we share a lot of stuff together. I think his approach to the game is really positive and the kids seem to have reacted very, very well to him so far."

With an overall goal of wanting to establish itself as not just a top team in the Liberty League, but also all of Division III, Lowry said he believes the team has the talent to be ranked inside the top-15 overall. In order to do that, the Bombers will have to knock off some of their biggest rivals, something Sramac said he looks forward to.

"I just look forward to playing against the best competition no matter who it is," Sramac said. "Whether it's in-conference like Union, RIT, that's the best way to measure ourselves. And also [SUNY] Cortland, because we didn't get to play them last year, so I haven't been able to experience that rivalry and I'm definitely excited for that this year."

When people talk about this year's team, Sramac said he wants people to say that the group plays fearlessly, is confident and has no regrets, adding that is the only way to play the game. Lowry said he wants the team to make a statement to the elite teams in-conference that the Bombers are here for good.

"A lot of the teams that we play that are all really good teams, like RIT, Union and St. Lawrence, they're all in our league and all very good teams nationally," Lowry said. "The way we've played them in the past has not been up to par with what we should be doing. So, I feel, like, unproven, in a good way, as in we have a chance to show these teams that now we are competitive with you guys, we can play you and beat you guys, and you should be worried about us."



BRENDAN IANNUCCI/THE ITHACAN

SPRINTING TOWARD A CHAMPIONSHIP



BRENDAN IANUCCI/THE ITHACAN

KATELYN HUTCHISON

BY INBAAYINI ANBARASAN

Following a fourth-place finish at last year’s NCAA Outdoor Championships, the Ithaca College women’s track and field team is looking to come back even stronger, eager to return to the National Championships. The team, led by seniors Meghan Ma-theny, Katelyn Hutchison, Logan Bruce

and junior Rachel Rose, is also looking for success at the outdoor Liberty League Championships, aiming to win the league championships for the fourth time in a row. Head coach Jennifer Potter said she is looking forward to returning to the out-door field once again. “Just having a season and the ability to travel and compete and have a na-tional championship is just the goal in and of itself lately,” Potter said. “I think our mindset has changed a little bit since COVID-19 has happened. Obviously, we always want to be competitive at the national level. That’s our goal.” Potter said graduate student Ari Bernard has the potential to qualify for nationals this season. Bernard, who is a thrower on the team, said qualifying for nationals is one of her personal goals. “It has been a goal for I think my entire collegiate career, and this is the closest that I have felt to actually attaining that goal,” Bernard said. Bernard also said that hav-ing the extended time off from competition because of the pan-demic has made the team become stronger together. “As someone who’s been here, this is my fifth year on the team, I real-ly do feel that change feels more like a family and that’s kind of what you want your team to be,” Bernard said. Hutchison said her goal was to see the team win a title. Hutchison, who had to take some time off from track and field for personal reasons earlier this semester, said that getting back into competing has been a

stressful process for her. “My preparation process now is being raced back into shape, as per [Potter’s] words, because, you know, usu-ally you practice to be in shape,” Hutchison said. “But since I’ve missed so much prac-tice, we’re just like ‘All right we’re gonna have to race you back into shape’ and I’ve never had that before so it has been a difficult time.” Bernard said the team works with sports psychology graduate students as part of their prepara-tion for the season. “Sometimes [sessions are] the whole team, sometimes it’s by a big group, sometimes it’s by year, which is re-ally awesome,” Bernard said. “It’s good for mental preparation, especially as we get into these later, more competitive meets.” In order to reach their goal of winning a title at the National Championships, the Bombers will have to face a number of strong competitors. The team will have to get past Liberty League rival University of Rochester, as well as reigning regional champions SUNY Geneseo, which pose as the college’s biggest competitors. “I just know for a fact that, like, we’re more than capable of taking the champion-ship trophy home,” Hutchison said. “It’ll be a fight, but I know that it’s definitely pos-sible for us to do so.” After the Bombers wrap up the in-door season at the NCAA Division III Championships on March 11 and 12, it will begin its outdoor season March 25 at Susquehanna University.

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ARI BERNARD



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RUNNING DOWN A DREAM

BY NICOLAS ROSADO

A year after returning to the track and winning the Liberty League, the Ithaca Col-lege men’s track and field team is looking to repeat as conference champions and con-tinue to build on its success on its path to the National Championships. Only competing in the outdoor season last spring, the South Hill squad racked up its first outdoor conference title since departing the Empire 8 Conference for the Liberty League in 2017. The Bombers have three indoor titles since joining the Liberty League. This year’s roster includes 12 newcom-ers after the team graduated five seniors in 2021. In addition, head coach Jim Nichols will be coaching at South Hill for his 35th straight season after being named Liberty League Coach of the Year for the 2021 outdoor season. As the team prepares to complete its in-door season March 12 and begin competing outdoors, Nichols said he expects improve-ment from his players that he hopes will lead to overall team success. “Our goal is to have everyone on the team improve individually and as a group and try to be at their best by the time we get to the Liberty League championships at the beginning of May,” Nichols said. “[And] shoot for the Liberty League outdoor cham-pionships. That’s always been a constant goal of ours and something we strive for every year.”

LUKE TOBIA

In comparison to other years, Nichols acknowledges that every year is dif-ferent but main-tained that the end goal is still the same. Senior thrower Luke Tobia said he felt similar to Nichols as he conveyed a desire to win the Liberty League again and advance to the NCAA Championships. “Definitely winning a Liberty League [title] again, you know, last year, I think we won by over 100 points, maybe some-thing like that,” Tobia said. “To repeat that or even improve on it would definitely be our goal for sure



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... set some more school records across the board, and you know, send a couple of more guys to nationals and get as many guys there as we can.” Tobia had much success dur-ing the 2021 season, including winning Liberty League Field Performer of the Week in Janu-ary and setting personal records (PR) in outdoor shot put, discus, and hammer with stats of 14.56 meters, 38.86 meters and 55.00 meters, respectively. To-bia said he hopes to set new records while out on the field this season. Junior sprinter Andy Frank said he has personal goals he would like to reach as well. In his two previous years on the Bombers’ squad, Frank has yet to win at nation-als. However, he intends on making that a reality in the upcoming season. “This year it’s look-ing like I’ll have a good shot,” Frank said. “I’ve been

ANDY FRANK

saying this since day one, I just need one opportunity to prove that I will come back with a National Championship. As long as I go, I can promise that I will come back with some hardware.” Not only did Frank say he plans on competing individually for a National Championship, but he has his sights set on making sure his teammates get to experi-ence what it’s like to win as well. Tobia said he hopes to set new records while out on the field this season. “[Being a] national champion is for sure very important to me, not only as an indi-vidual event, but bringing my teammates as well in a relay,” Frank said. “I promised these guys that I’ll show them the top, and I’m gonna show them this year what it’s like. ... Being able to do that alongside team-mates is really something special.” Frank recognized that in order for the team to find success this spring, account-ability is key. He said he believes that with accountability, the Bombers will be able to remain a level of consistency throughout the season. “Holding each other accountable, day in, day out, doing our thing and making sure that we stay on track, making sure that we do the right thing, is the most important thing for us,” Frank said. “Because we have the talent, we just need to stay consistent and stay healthy.”

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KINGS OF THE COURTS

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ARTEM
KHAYBULLIN

BY TOBIAH ZBORAY

After a shortened eight-game schedule in Spring 2021, the Ithaca College men's tennis team is looking to improve its record in its first full season of play since Spring 2019. The team is hoping to build upon the 2021 season when it went 4-4 during a conference-only schedule due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For head coach Chris Hayes '16, who was hired in May 2020, the

shortened season last year made his transition into his role more difficult. "Last season was definitely something," Hayes said. "We were very limited, not just in terms of practices and all of that, but the amount of matches we played. We only played eight or nine matches in the spring, which is obviously a lot different than what we have this semester. ... I really feel like this is my first full year as head coach."

To help ease the Bombers back into competition after such a long break, Hayes said he is looking for the more experienced members of the team to be role models for a roster that has mostly underclassmen. Of the 10 players, six are freshmen or sophomores.

"[Senior] Artem [Khaybullin] and [second-year graduate student] Minos [Stavrakas] are the captains of this team," Hayes said. "They've been around the block for a while now, so they're leading by example. We do have a fairly young team ... so really setting the example is vital."

Khaybullin has been a consistent member of the team since his freshman season in 2018, winning eight singles matches and four doubles matches during his time at the college. For him, the goal for this year is to enjoy his final season while being a leader for the younger players.

"Since I'm a senior, this is going to be my last season," Khaybullin said. "So for this season, I mainly want to perform the best I possibly can ... So I'm just going to try my best, go to all the practices and meets, do team bonding activities with my teammates, spend time with them and just have fun."

Adding to the experienced depth of

Khaybullin and Stavrakas, Hayes said the sophomore class of players is looking to take a big step forward this season on the court. Sophomore Jacob Wachs said he used the offseason to work on fine-tuning his skills to try to make an impact on the team on and off the court.

"I worked on staying a lot more consistent, getting the heavy ball deep, keeping my opponents on their back foot and behind the baseline," Wachs said. "And then, off the court, just being a role model for like the younger guys and energizing everybody and keeping everybody motivated."

Hayes said another part of the Bombers' strategy to improve during the offseason was to use the assistance of two sport psychology graduate students.

"Tennis is such a mental sport," Hayes said. "They say about 90% of tennis is the mental game, and the other 10% is the physical game, so it was a no-brainer."

Khaybullin said his goal for the team is for it to make a run at the Liberty League playoffs and to play well against its conference opponents.

"We're trying to really push ourselves [this season]," Khaybullin said. "There's some really hard teams that we're going to be competing against like Skidmore [College] and [Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI)], but we are going to be trying our best."

For the team to break into the top of the conference, it will have to contend with a talented slate of opponents. Skidmore, the reigning Liberty League champions, have won the league 12 times since the 2004-05 season, including six out of the

JACOB
WACHS

ANA MANIACI MCGOUGH/THE ITHACAN



last seven. Even with the tough competition the team will face this season, Wachs said the team is looking forward to its first full spring season in three years, along with having all spectators being allowed to attend matches this season.

"I know one thing we're all looking forward to is having spectators [back]," Wachs said. "We're also excited to actually finally be able to play the entire Liberty League."

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SERVING UP CONFIDENCE

BY ORI JORDAAN-GRADY

The Ithaca College women's tennis team is hard at work, gearing up for the start of its upcoming season. It will be its first complete season since the 2019 outing, which

REBECCA
ANDREWS



means there are lots of new faces ready to compete for the first time.

Out of the 15 players on the roster, six are freshmen, but there is still the necessary core leadership from the upperclassmen on the team. The team finished the shortened Spring 2021 eight-game season at 2-6 but is expecting much better results this year.

Head coach Chris Hayes '16 said he is excited for the season to begin and has aspirations for each player on the talented roster. He recognizes the new talent on the team and the necessary work it needs to do to keep on improving.

"We've got a really strong group of women," Hayes said. "A lot of upperclassmen, a great freshman class, as well as one of the bigger rosters we've had."

Juniors Rebecca Andrews and Zoe Davis, the team's captains, said they have been very impressed by the new members and how well they have been able to adjust to the collegiate level. During the winter break, the team was able to build chemistry on and off the court.

"It's really a great atmosphere that we have going on right now," Andrews said. "Everyone has been hitting as much as possible during practice six days a week."

Davis is also ready to give full effort all season long and said she has been motivated by the strong effort she sees every other player giving to make the team as

successful as possible. She wants to enjoy the time with her teammates, but most importantly, she wants to win.

"I want everyone to give 100% every match and more," Davis said. "I want them to feel comfortable on the team because I think that produces the best results."

Since arriving back on campus, Andrews said the team has been conditioning to get ready for the season. However, she said it has been spending the most time with "challenge matches," which determine the singles positions. Andrews admitted that competing against her teammates for roster positions is not the easiest.

The team has also been focusing on its mental preparation together. Tennis is a game that requires just as many mental strategies as physical. Hayes believes it will be key in the success of the team this year.

"90% of our sport is really mental, while the other 10% is physical," Hayes said. "We've also been working with sports psychology students last semester with different strategies that we can use."

The entire team also has clear goals for the upcoming season. The Liberty League playoffs have been out of reach for it in the past, having never been able to finish higher than the top five since joining the conference in 2017. This year, Davis said the team expects to make some noise against rivals like Skidmore College and Union College.

"Skidmore is always a challenging team, but I'm really excited to play Union,"

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ZOE
DAVIS

standings leading into the playoffs. "The ultimate goal is to win the Liberty League," Hayes said. The team has the potential to be one of the more successful ones in recent program history. With plenty more time before the Liberty League tournament, it could be an exciting team to watch.

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CHIPPING AWAY

KATIE CHAN & CAITLIN MCGRINDER

BY LAURA ILIOAEI

The 2022 Ithaca College golf team is a tightknit group primed to defend its 2021 Liberty League title. The tournament win was the first conference title for the college since moving to the Liberty League in 2017.

The team consists of five members, including its seniors, Katie Chan and Caitlin McGrinder. The two have been playing for the team since they were freshmen. As they get set for their final season, they have also taken on mentorship roles for their teammates.

“This is my fourth year, so it’s nice to see my other teammates grow, especially the younger ones,” Chan said. “We do have a freshman, and it’s really nice to see how she’s going through the same experiences as I have.”

McGrinder said she hopes that the younger players know they can

come to her or Chan for anything, on and off the course.

“I’ve definitely learned a lot going through the years, so I’ve definitely changed from freshman year to now,” McGrinder said. “So I just always make sure to help them out where I can and avoid where I went wrong my first couple of years when it comes to games, practice and mentality towards the sport.”

Cold weather does not prevent the team from practicing because it also goes to the Athletics and Events Center to utilize golf simulator machines. In addition, during spring break, the team will travel to Florida for practices before the spring season commences in April.

Head coach Keith Batson said he expects juniors Mary Gersec and Cristea Park to have strong performances this season. He said the pair of golfers have been improving during their first two years at the college and expects even more improvement this year.

“I am really looking at Mary Gersec and Cristea Park to be our 1A and 1B players,” Batson said. “They both have continued to improve their averages during their career at [the college]. Both of them are on the cusp of breaking [below] 80 for their average score. I am expecting big things from both Mary and Cristea this spring.”

Batson added that he has high hopes for freshman Rheanna Decrow’s play this spring and hopes that she will be an integral part of the season.

“I am expecting to see [Rheanna] really shine this spring,” Batson said. “She has a

ton of potential, and she has been working hard this winter.”

The primary goal for the team entering this season is to continue the momentum from the end of last season, McGrinder said.

“We won [the Liberty League championship], which was really exciting for us,” McGrinder said. “That was one of our biggest accomplishments as a whole.”

Chan said she wants the team to get closer so the members can provide better support for each other. Golf is an individual sport, but the team earns wins or losses based on the sum of each golfer’s score.

“Our team goals are, since golf is so individualized, for everyone to come together,” Chan said. “We are a very close team—there’s only five of us—so we know each other well and we understand everyone’s individual goals. But as a team, I think that we can work together on encouraging one another in achieving our personal goals and making sure we’re pushing each other to make sure we’re making these improvements for our personal records.”

McGrinder said a major differentiator in this season is the reintroduction of two-day competitions, where teams play the same course two days in a row and scores are added at the end of the second day. Previously, one-day competitions had been implemented due to COVID-19 regulations.

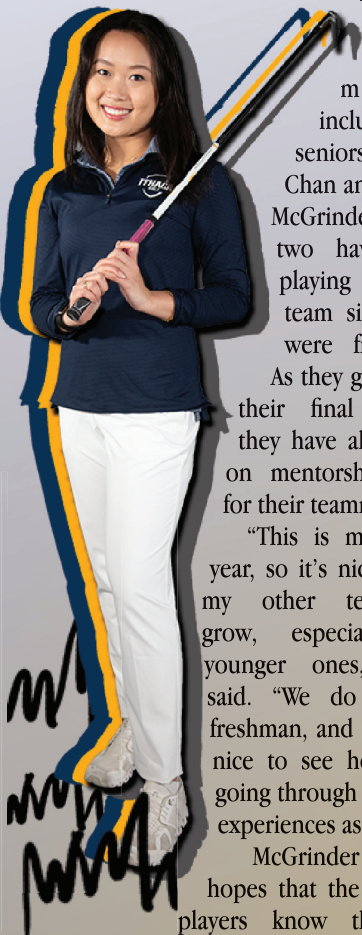
And with this greater competition comes the return of greater rivalry. The Bombers’ conference tournament victory in 2021 broke the five-year streak by New York University (NYU).

Guidance and lessons learned from senior golfers may guide the team to greater victory this semester, McGrinder said.

“Golf is very mental, so if you’re not mentally in it, it’s going to be the worst time of your life,” McGrinder said. “And that was one of my toughest battles freshman year. If you have a bad hole, it’s really hard to get out of it. Learning just how to approach, each shot is a new one and just moving on from a bad hole, I’ve gotten better at controlling my emotions and not getting upset about the first hole.”

That’s something that just comes with maturity with the sport.”

The team is going to open its upcoming season April 2 when it is scheduled to travel to New Castle, Pennsylvania, for the Westminster College Invitational.



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SPRING CALENDAR

MARCH			
5 10 AM Oneonta	2 3 PM ST Lawrence University	23 1 PM & 3 PM Skidmore College (Doubleheader)	7 TBA Liberty League Semifinals
6 8 AM Allegheny	3 9 AM Williams College	23 1 PM University of Rochester	7 TBA Liberty League Championships
6 12 PM Allegheny	3 2 PM Union College	24 10 AM Bard College	8 TBA Liberty League Finals
8 4 PM Haverford	3 2 PM Union College	24 2 PM Bard College	8 TBA Liberty League Championships
12 12 PM University of Scranton	5 3 PM SUNY Geneseo	24 1 PM & 3 PM RPI (Doubleheader)	12 TBA Liberty League Championships
19 12 PM RPI	5 4 PM Hamilton College	27 3 PM & 5 PM SUNY Cortland (Doubleheader)	13 TBA Liberty League Championships
23 4 PM Nazareth College	8 4 PM Bard College	27 4 PM Oswego State	13 TBA NCAA Regionals
24 3 PM University of Rochester	9 TBA Bard College (Doubleheader)	27 4:30 PM Hamilton College	14 TBA Liberty League Championships
26 2 PM Skidmore	9 2 PM Vassar College	29 2 PM & 4 PM RPI (Doubleheader)	20 TBA NCAA Super Regionals
26 3PM York College of Pennsylvania (doubleheader)	10 TBA Bard College	30 TBA Colgate Hamilton Marist	26 TBA NCAA National Tournament
27 1 PM & 3 PM Onenonta (double header)	12 5 PM Alfred University (Doubleheader)	30 TBA Colgate Hamilton	27 TBA NCAA Regatta
27 2 PM Skidmore	13 4 PM SUNY Cortland	30 TBA Clarkson (Doubleheader)	28 TBA NCAA Regatta
29 3 PM Houghton	13 4 PM William Smith College	30 1 PM RPI	
30 3:30 PM Elmira	13 7 PM RIT		
APRIL			
2 TBA Cayuga Duels	16 TBA RIT	MAY	
2 TBA Cayuga Duels	16 TBA RIT	1 TBA CLARKSON	
2 12 PM Union College	16 TBA RIT (Doubleheader)	3 TBA Liberty League Quarter Finals	
	16 1 PM Skidmore College	4 TBA Liberty League Semifinals	
	20 7 PM SUNY Cortland	5 TBA Liberty League Championship	
	22 4 PM St John Fisher College	7 TBA Liberty League Championship	

MENS LACROSSE

WOMENS LACROSSE

BASEBALL

SOFTBALL

MENS TENNIS

WOMENS TENNIS

MENS TRACK & FIELD

WOMENS TRACK & FIELD

MENS CREW

WOMENS CREW