

KYLE SICKE



ELIZABETH PILLOW



Game Face



ANTWAN ROBINSON



FAITH SABATIER



Kicking away conference competition

BY DAVID SCHURTER

After falling one game short of the Liberty League championship in 2021, the Ithaca College men's soccer team is back in action and ready to make another push.

Coming back for his second full season at the helm, head coach Garret Eldridge said he is looking forward to the season ahead. Eldridge said every player on the team has the ability to contribute day in and day out, which will help keep the line moving.

"We have a tremendous amount of depth on the team from top to bottom," Eldridge said. "Everyone can contribute and we are extremely lucky to have that value."

One of those contributors is Brendan Lebitsch, who has played in nearly every game since his first year. The senior defenseman and captain is setting his sights on a national tournament appearance this season after coming up short of a conference championship in 2021.

"My freshman year, we were nationally ranked as high as seventh as we opened up strong," Lebitsch said. "We have to set the tone in the out-of-conference games in order to roll into conference play ready to win and hopefully host the Liberty League playoffs."

Being named a captain for the 2022 season, Lebitsch has taken on an



**KYLE
SICKE** '22

important role as a leader after following the lead of 16 seniors in 2021.

"I've taken on a bigger role this season," Lebitsch said. "Last year I did not have much of a say with 16 seniors, but this year it's me and [graduate student midfielder captain Kyle Sicke], and it's going to be critical for us and the rest of the seniors to come in, set the standard and be that mentor to the incoming freshmen."

A fifth-year captain, Sicke said he recalls having a large incoming class his first year. Now, Sicke said he is ready to help the first-years adjust to their new roles and do whatever it takes to bring home a championship in his final season.

"I've been lucky enough to have played in some really close and exciting games," Sicke said. "We have a big incoming class of freshmen this year, just like my freshman year. I'm looking forward to getting to know them and creating a close, tight-knit team chemistry."

On top of fostering a strong team community, Sicke said the mentality going into this season is to win every day, whether it be a game day or practice.

"I just want to win," Sicke said. "Liberty League, NCAA, I just want to keep winning. We have a mentality of going 1-0 on the day, show up to practice ready to compete, no matter the day — just keep competing and keep stacking up wins at the end of the day."

The South Hill Squad will add 12 new faces to the 2022 roster, including two Division I transfer students, sophomore



defenseman Jack Longo and junior defenseman Emmett Delesie. Delesie, a midfielder center, is coming from Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia, where he was a part of the 2020 Division I National Championship team. Longo, an outside back, is coming from Bryant University in Smithfield, Rhode Island. Eldridge said Delesie will help strengthen the midfield position while Longo will bolster the defense.

After watching 16 seniors on the 2021 roster graduate, Lebitsch is looking forward to welcoming the first-years and transfer students to fill their roster spots.

"We have a lot of new guys coming in, so it's going to be very exciting," Lebitsch said. "Having 16 seniors graduate last year, we will be extremely bottom-heavy this season, but I'm excited to see how the young guys will adapt to stepping into pivotal roles."

The Liberty League will feature several challenging opponents, including the defending champions from St. Lawrence University as well as Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Vassar College, Hobart College and Rochester Institute of Technology. Eldridge said he believes that the tough conference schedule will help the Bombers prepare for a postseason push to return to the NCAA Division III tournament.

"We have built a schedule that is going to be extremely difficult right out of the gate," Eldridge said. "This will help us prepare for conference play and will give us our best chance at making the NCAA tournament, very similar to recent years."

**BRENDAN
LEBITSCH** '23

Despite the tough schedule, Eldridge believes that 2022 will be similar to years past, ending with a deep postseason run. He said if the team cannot perform in the regular season, it cannot expect to perform in the postseason.

"It all comes down to how well we prepare ourselves and execute each game day," Eldridge said. "Each game will be very challenging in the Liberty League, and how well we do and our results will be determined by our execution during those 16 games."

Going into his final season, Lebitsch said he is looking at this season differently than in years past.

"It's the last ride, as everyone says," Lebitsch said. "Last year we made it to the conference championship but fell just short. This year, you definitely appreciate it a little more as a senior, and I am looking forward to getting back and having one last chance at a championship with the guys I came up with."

The Bombers open the season with a road trip Sept. 3 and 4 to take on Texas Lutheran University and Stockton University in Salem, Virginia. They return home Sept. 11 for a game against SUNY Oswego.



CONTACT DAVID SCHURTER
DSCHURTER@ITHACA.EDU

Saving dreams of a championship run

BY DANIEL KING

Following a 3-0 defeat to Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, New Jersey, in the first round of the NCAA Division III Tournament, a disappointing end to an otherwise stellar season for the Ithaca College women's soccer team, the program has its sights set on a title.

The team fell just short in the Liberty League Championships, a 3-2 overtime defeat to William Smith College on Nov. 7, after going 13-3 with a record of 7-2 in conference play during the team's regular season schedule.

Despite the way the season ended, junior goalkeeper Claire Reader said she is excited to use the team's shortcomings as motivation for the upcoming season.



**'24
CLAIRE
READER**

"The loss in last year's Liberty League Championship was pretty heartbreaking for our team and our program," Reader said. "We got a taste of what it was like to play in the championship game and have a tough match."

Senior defender Rachel Richards said the team knows that every game on the schedule is important, but she said it is definitely anticipating the rematch against William Smith, especially considering how close the game was.

"My first day back, our coach said, 'What does 107 seconds mean to you?' That's when William Smith scored and tied the game up," Richards said. "William Smith is the big one."

While the Bombers will look to build upon last season, they will do it with 15 first-years on the roster, six more than last season. Head coach Mindy Quigg, now entering her 29th year at Ithaca College, acknowledged the process of getting the first-years acquainted with the returning players.

"The chemistry piece will be an important part of it. They've started forming relationships already, which is fantastic. It won't be like their first time meeting them. They understand how important that chemistry is."

For players like Reader, the

challenge of getting acclimated with first-years is one she is happy to embrace.

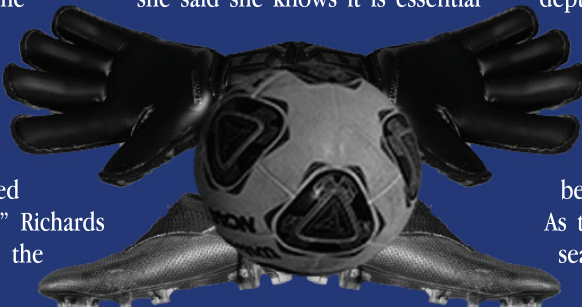
"It's definitely just going to take time to mesh as a group and figure it out. But I'm not worried about it," Reader said. "I think this is all part of being on a college sports team, like, the program changes."

That is why a personal goal Reader set for herself this season is to step up as a leader. Mentioning losing leaders from last season, she said she knows it is essential for her to take the next step as a leader for this team.

"I can't really sit back and be quiet anymore and just play soccer," Reader said. "I actually have to extend myself out of my comfort zone and be a leader on our team."

Richards also echoed the same sentiment as Reader, acknowledging that entering her final season and stepping into a leadership role is key.

"I think I started to do that last year but was really in my own head as I was dealing with some injuries," Richards said. "I want to



show people that you have to put your teammates first."

Even with the challenges of getting the first-year students ready for the season, Quigg said she acknowledges the advantage of having such a new group of athletes to bring to the table. She said that with a big group of new athletes, she will need an adjustment period to know how this current version of the program will play and give the team more depth to start the season.

"Last year I felt like we had to ride a few people pretty hard," Quigg said. "It's going to be more competitive than it has been in a long time."

As the team sets goals for the season, Quigg said she has broken her own goals into segments. Her preseason goals consist of gaining confidence and staying healthy. Once the regular season kicks off, she wants to finish top two in the Liberty League.

"If we put ourselves in that position, we're set up well regionally," Quigg said.

Some players, like Richards, have additional motivation as well because this is their final season. She said this season represents her one last chance to make a run at the ultimate goal every player has: winning a championship.

"I've been looking forward to being a senior since I stepped on

**RACHEL
RICHARDS** '23

the field as a first-year," Richards said. "This is my last chance to play, so why not ball out? We have a minimum of 25 possible games, so why not enjoy every second of them?"

The Bombers will open the season with four straight road games, the first being at 4 p.m. Sept. 1 against Elmira College.



CONTACT DANIEL KING
DKING2@ITHACA.EDU

Looking to make waves in the fall season

BY EMMA KERSTING

The Ithaca College sculling team is preparing for its fall season like any other, with high hopes and goals for a successful season.

The sculling team is composed entirely of athletes who are part of the college's women's crew. After a strong crew season where the team finished fourth at the NCAA Division III Rowing Championship on May 27–29, the sculling team is expecting to expand their skills after recruiting first-year students during the college's move-in process.

Senior captains Taylor Volmrich, Erika Elcsisin and Brenna Hanratty have each trained for the upcoming season in different ways, from staying in shape at home to joining summer rowing teams. All three, along with the rest of the team, were also a part of the women's crew team last spring.

Volmrich said the lack of structure over the summer makes training difficult. She said the team trains between semesters by keeping in shape however they can, but there are no specific goals.

"Summer is hard because it's a lot of training on your own," Volmrich said. "As long as you're doing something, that's kind of our goal for the summer, to just keep everyone in shape."

This season is the first for Volmrich, Elcsisin and Hanratty as captains. Hanratty, along with the other captains, said she is looking forward to the leadership role.

"It's really rewarding," Hanratty said. "I want to do the best I can for our team, I care a lot about

Brenna Hanratty



'23

in it during high school. "It ... gives you a perspective of how much a rowing world there is that you don't really see if you're on a small team," Hanratty said.

While the team has automatic entry from last year, only a certain number of team members are able to compete. Entry to Head of the Charles is done by a lottery drawing. For the Collegiate Eights event, the top half of the ranking from the previous year gets automatic entry. The Bombers were seventh last fall out of 40 teams, well within the top half.

The college's sculling team brings two eights, or boats of eight rowers, meaning only 16 athletes will get the chance to compete. Coming into the season, head coach Becky Robinson '88 said they have 22 athletes on the varsity team, making this year's sculling team the largest ever. In the past, she said, the team has ranged between 10 and 16 rowers, but the larger squad allows for more athletes in small boats.

Performing well in the Head of the Charles is a goal for Robinson as well. Last fall, the Bombers finished seventh at the regatta and went on to place fourth overall at the end of the season.

"My hope is we start higher up than seventh and that we still see the same amount of growth," Robinson said. "Instead of going from seventh to fourth, maybe we go from fifth to second or first."

Because rowing is not a typical high school sport, the rowing teams dedicate a lot of time in the first few weeks after new students arrive on campus to recruit new members to join the sport — no experience necessary.

"I know a lot of people don't really know what rowing is, coming into college, so we're just trying to get the word out as much as we can and get people to come to our info sessions," Hanratty said.

Volmrich also said that the team's recruiting process involves standing outside of first-year check-in and that being present around campus before classes starts to make an impression on the students.

"We start recruiting when all the freshmen are on campus and we go find them," Volmrich said. "It's one of the things our team is the best at, we just stand there and hand out flyers. We say, 'you should row!'"

For Elcsisin, one of the draws to the rowing program at the college was the coaching staff.

"During orientation, I was able to meet one of the coaches, kind of just out of nowhere," Elcsisin said. "They were so nice and welcoming and they said 'come to our information meeting if you like sports. We would love new people.'"

Other members of the team have an appreciation for the coaches of the college's sculling team as well.

"I really do think that Becky and Beth [Greene, assistant head coach] care about us as athletes and people," Volmrich said. "Beth and Becky certainly come together to try and provide the best experience that they can for everyone at all levels."

The college's sculling team will participate in their first meet of the season at 10 a.m. Sept. 25 in the Cayuga Sprints at the Cayuga Inlet.

CONTACT EMMA KERSTING
EKERSTING@ITHACA.EDU



Erika Elcsisin

'23

Taylor Volmrich



'23

my teammates, ... making sure they know if they need anything that we're here and willing to help them."

The Fall 2021 season was different for the sculling team due to restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Elcsisin, there were fewer colleges able to compete because of their small team sizes.

"With everything that happened with [COVID-19], a lot of athletes stepped away from sports," Elcsisin said. "So that was definitely a different experience than what we've had in previous years."

For Elcsisin, this season will only be her second as a part of the sculling team. After joining the crew in Spring 2020 as a walk-on, Elcsisin's season was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Then, because of the remote Fall 2020 semester, there were no athletic competitions.

"We came back last fall and we did sculling, it was really fun," Elcsisin said. "I was so happy to learn this new aspect of the sport of crew."

For all three athletes, a primary goal for the season is to make it to the Head of the Charles Regatta, where teams at multiple levels, from high school teams to college teams of all divisions, compete every October in the Charles River in Massachusetts.

"That is a crazy race to go to and experience," Volmrich said. "There's like thousands of people watching you and it's really intense. ... It's a really technical course."

If Hanratty makes it to the Head of the Charles, it will not be her first time at the regatta, as she took part



Kicking off the season with confidence



ANTWAN ROBINSON

time, ... but I think we built a lot of outstanding momentum as a collective unit in the spring that we're hoping to carry over." The South Hill squad enters the 2022 season ranked No. 17 in the country by D3football.com's top-25 pre-season coaches poll. The team will look to build off a 2021 season in which it finished second in the Liberty League with an 8-2 record. Despite the Bombers' solid year on the field, the college was not chosen by the NCAA selection committee to compete in the NCAA Division III tournament. The squad's two losses of the season were both close games, falling 14-11 to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute on Oct. 30, 2021, and 28-27 to SUNY Cortland on Nov. 13, 2021, in the 62nd annual Cortaca Jug Game in Cortland, New York.

Graduate student defensive back and captain Anthony Robinson, now in his fifth year with the program, said the team is motivated to bring the program back to the NCAA tournament for the first time since 2014.

"I feel like the anticipation kind of has to do with how our other seasons ended," Robinson said. "This group of guys, even these freshmen, they understand that we're all playing with a chip on our shoulder. And in turn, we're just all giving it our all."

This year's team has a strong group of upperclassmen that are set to lead the way, including 15 graduate students. The squad's captains for this season will be senior quarterback A.J. Wingfield and fifth-year students Robinson, offensive lineman Jake Villanueva and defensive back Michael Roumes. Villanueva said he believes the veteran presence will help the group have success this season.

"I think just having that leadership on the team will definitely be a big factor," Villanueva said. "This is probably the closest that the team has ever been, like from top to bottom, of my four years that I've been here. And I think it's just because the upperclassmen have done such a great job of embracing the underclassmen."

Wingfield said the Bombers want to capitalize on having several veterans returning this season and use this continuity as a strength in

the team's pursuit of a postseason appearance that has been elusive.

"We're super excited, and because we're an older team, we feel like the time is kind of now," Wingfield said. "We're going to put the work in day by day, but we're super excited for how far this thing can really go."

The team will be returning several of its key contributors from the offensive line this season, including Villanueva, seniors Colin Norton and JoJo Puckey, along with juniors Anselmo Farrell and Alexander Rice. This position group helped the Bombers' offense post a productive 2021 season, averaging 26.3 points per game, which was the third-most in the Liberty League.

The catalyst for this offensive success was Wingfield at quarterback, who completed his first year as the starter in 2021. Wingfield led the conference in passing, recording 2,383 passing yards and 16 touchdowns in 10 games.

Graduate student wide receiver Michael Anderson will also be an integral part of the team's offensive game plan, according to Toerper. Anderson was ranked fifth in receiving numbers in the Liberty League, recording 571 total receiving yards and six touchdowns. Toerper said he is happy to have several upperclassmen coming back to South Hill this fall.

"Words can't express how blessed I feel to have these veteran players lead this program in my first year as a head coach," Toerper said. "I know it's not going to be like this every year. So, I'm really soaking it all in as far as just a group that I trust, a group that is very mature, a group that has all the tools to be great leaders and lead us out of tough situations."

The team will also look to its veteran leadership to make an impact defensively. The South Hill squad is coming off a 2021 campaign in which it was ranked as the top defense in the Liberty League, allowing an average of just 10.7 points per game. As an upperclassman on the defense, Robinson said he wants the team to focus on the task at hand and not look beyond its opponent that week.

"We do want to win the Liberty League, we want to go to the playoffs, but I think it starts with winning the day," Robinson said. "You have to win practice, you have to win your walkthroughs and training. So as a captain, I don't look forward to anything other than what's in front of me."

While the Bombers concentrate on their matchup each Saturday, there is great anticipation surrounding the 63rd Cortaca Jug against the SUNY Cortland Red Dragons, which will be held Nov. 12 at Yankee Stadium.

The colleges recently promoted the event by holding Cortaca Jug Day on July 28, before the New York Yankees took on the Kansas City Royals at Yankee



GAME



ANTWAN ROBINSON

JAKE VILLANUEVA



BY TOMMY MUMAU

The Ithaca College football team is returning to the gridiron with a veteran group that has high expectations, along with a new head coach on the sidelines.

The Bombers will be led by Michael Toerper, who was hired by the college Feb. 18 as the 11th head coach in program history. Toerper is coming back to the team after being its defensive coordinator from 2017 to 2019.

The squad recently arrived on campus and held its first practice of the season Aug. 11. Toerper said he was encouraged by how the group competed during its practices in the spring, and he is looking forward to working with the team as it gears up for the upcoming campaign.

"We've got to get to work pretty quickly to prepare for a season that's right around the corner," Toerper said. "You've got a lot of work to do in a short amount of



A.J. WINGFIELD



CONTACT TOMMY MUMAU
TMUMAU@ITHACA.EDU

'22

Sticking it out after championship loss

BY TOBIAH ZBORAY

After a trip to the Liberty League Championship game in 2021, the Ithaca College field hockey team is looking to improve its success going into the 2022 season.

Last season, the Bombers finished with a 14–5 record and hosted the Liberty League Championship game where the team lost to Vassar College 1–0. Head

coach Kaitlyn Wahila said the team has clear goals in mind and knows where they want to be at the end of this year.

“Without a doubt, we want to find ourselves competing for a Liberty League title,” Wahila said. “We ended the season with that opportunity in 2021. With that being said, we want to take every game and be able to learn from it and develop as a program so that by the time [the] end of October rolls around, we’re ready to be able to take our play and elevate it to the next level.”

With a goal set for 2022, the Bombers spent Spring 2022 preparing for the regular season. Senior captain Elizabeth Pillow said the team used the past spring to get physically ready by lifting and conditioning.

Pillow also said the work the team did to get prepared extended beyond getting physically ready they were also figuring out what the team looked like coming into this season. The team held a scrimmage and alumni game at the end of the spring semester in preparation for the 2021 season.

“We were just working on heightening our stick skills and making sure that we’re working together cohesively so that we’d be ready this fall because our pre-season is only four days this year, so everyone needs to make sure that they’re on top of it and just ready to go,” Pillow said.

During the offseason, the Bombers took the opportunity to find leadership in its senior class on the field. Along with Pillow, another senior captain who stepped up to be a leader was Amberly Christiansen, who said she is looking to not only lead the team, but help guide the first-year athletes.

“I’m kind of just hoping to really step into that leadership role and kind of be the person between coaches and players and just be a good liaison,” Christiansen said. “I want to help the communication between coaches and players and lead by example and just be a good mentor for the freshmen.”

Joining the team this season are six first-year students. Pillow said the team hopes to use the first-years this season both in the backfield and on the attack after

losing depth in both areas with the team graduating four seniors from last season.

Wahila said the first-years this season bring a combination of talent that she feels can aid the team in all aspects of the game.

“We have a really good mixture of attackers and defense inside of that [first-year] class, which is always a good thing,” Wahila said. “So we have Shannon Dougherty who is goalkeeper, so she’ll add into our goalie culture really nicely and add a third goalie this season, which is really exciting. Then we have Amalia Hickey, who is just a great kid, who’ll probably be a midfielder. Eliza Ballaro will probably be more of a defender for us and then Brenna Schoenfeld will be a midfielder. Anne Leach will be a defender as well as Reese Abrahamson.”

While the new students joining the roster will be looked on to fill holes left by the outgoing seniors, the South Hill squad will be getting help from graduate students returning to the team. Wahila said the Bombers will have four graduate students return to the roster for this season.

Adding to the leadership that the graduate students will bring, the other upperclassmen will be looked on to step up as leaders on the team, looking to fill the roles from the past senior class.

Pillow said the upperclassmen on the team have strived to take on a leadership role to lead the first-year class.

“A lot of the rising junior class have stepped up to mentor the sophomores and help with incoming [first-years] this year,” Pillow said. “And also the senior class feels as if we have unfinished business because of how things ended last year, so I think everyone is on the same page of stepping up and making sure that, you know, we’re stepping up and that we’re ready.”

Wahila also added that the season will feel different for the team with COVID-19 restrictions being fully lifted. Last season featured precautions in the team’s first season returning to play since the beginning of the pandemic. But Wahila said that without those restrictions, specifically rules about masking indoors, she expects the season to be a return to normalcy for the team.

“If anything, it’s going to be similar to our spring season [practices] which was, in my opinion, pretty

much back to normal during the months of April and May,” Wahila said. “I do believe that this season will be kind of like 2019 in terms of pre-COVID[-19] times.”

With the team getting ready to start the season, one other detail has the team excited to get going this year. After losing the conference championship last season to the Vassar College Brewers, the Bombers will play them at home this season Oct. 1 in a rematch of the championship game.

For returning players, Christiansen said the rematch against the Brewers will serve as something for many players to keep in their minds while the team is getting ready for the season and something to look forward to after they start playing.

“I think there’s excitement as well as a little bit of good revenge,” Christiansen said. “With that being said, as we train, we always keep in the back of our minds that we’re hosting Vassar again, and they’ll be on our turf. So I think we’re all really excited, and we’re definitely going to be working toward that game. And when that game does come, we’ll give it our best effort.”

With that Vassar game in mind, Pillow said that the Bombers also want to make sure that they focus on the current game and not get too far ahead of themselves looking at the schedule.

“We’re always looking forward to starting the Liberty League schedule, but our coaches tell us to focus on one game at a time,” Pillow said. “We take one game at a time and one practice at a time so that we’re focusing on ourselves and just focusing on the present moment.”

The Bombers will open the season at 5:30 p.m. Sept. 1 against SUNY Geneseo at College Stadium in Geneseo, New York. They return home Sept. 4 for a matchup against St. John Fisher University.

CONTACT TOBIAH ZBORAY
TZBORAY@ITHACA.EDU



ELIZABETH PILLOW

’23



AMBERLY CHRISTIANSEN

’23

FACE



ELIZABETH PILLOW



Bump, spike, setting high expectations

BY NIC ROSADO

The Ithaca College volleyball team is ready to begin its second season back since the height of the COVID-19 pandemic with the upcoming season approaching.

After returning to the court last fall, the Bombers are looking to build on the conference success they had last season. Although the team went just 16–14 overall in 2021, it went 6–1 against Liberty League opponents. The strong conference performance led the team to the Liberty League semifinal match, which it lost 3–1 to Clarkson University.

Despite the team not advancing to the conference finals, it earned an at-large bid to the NCAA Division III tournament, where it fell to No. 8 University of Wisconsin-Whitewater in the first round.

Head coach Johan Dulfer is entering his seventh season at the helm of the volleyball program. While this year’s team is a young squad that is only returning three seniors while adding six first-years to the 18-woman roster, Dulfer said he can already sense a difference in experience with this squad.

“I really think that . . . this team will have a little bit of an edge in terms of something to prove [after how last season ended],” Dulfer said. “I really don’t think that last season was particularly

one of their favorite experiences, and so I know they’re ready to go and they’re ready to show a different face.”

Dulfer said a big part of this season will be leadership. Despite the low number of upperclassmen on the roster, there are still multiple athletes that are expected to step in this season. Dulfer said he expects the team leaders to be an example to the rest of the squad throughout the season.

“Our returners know very, very well what their program should look like and what the expectations are,” Dulfer said. “And I think they’re more comfortable now setting boundaries because they’ve seen what happens when you don’t do that when circumstances dictate otherwise.”

FAITH SABATIER



Senior libero and defensive specialist Grace Isaksen is expected to be one of the leaders of this Bombers squad after she was named to the Liberty League All-Academic Team for the second year in a row in 2021.

Isaksen said that her previous experiences in being on the team, coupled with the fact that this year’s roster is a bit younger, will require her to rise to a leadership role, which she said she expects to include plenty of support for her teammates.

“With everything with COVID[-19], last year was definitely a rebuilding season. I mean, the entire country was going through it,” Isaksen said. “And so, now I feel like this year, we can finally start getting back, like, in the swing of things. . . . It’s really important for me to step up and be a leader and also be supportive and just understanding of everything going on.”

Isaksen is not the only player on the roster who plans on being a huge supporter of her team. Sophomore outside/opposite Faith Sabatier expects to share a similar role to the one Isaksen described. She even considers it to be her most important goal

for this season.

“Honestly, my most important goal is to be a good teammate, always cheer on the next person or, you know, pick somebody up if you see that somebody is down,” Sabatier said. “Especially now that I have, like, my first year under my belt, I feel like I’m able to help with situations more. . . . I can help the incoming freshmen, support them on and off the court just overall, and be a good teammate.”

With great leadership often comes high expectations. This year’s squad definitely has both, and Sabatier echoed the sentiment of high expectations when discussing the team goals for this season.

“I would say the pretty obvious one is always trying to make it to the NCAA Tournament,” Sabatier said. “Another goal is to be Liberty League champions. We were really close last year, and I think this year we have a really good chance. A lot of our team is still young, we have a lot of new freshmen who are coming in and really talented, so I’m excited to see where that takes us.”

With the goals being set for the program’s first-ever Liberty League title and an NCAA tournament appearance, those expectations are being met with lots of confidence from the players. It has the team ready to tackle the season head-on.

“I think it’s honestly the fact that we wanted it so bad [in the fall], and we lost,” Sabatier said. “I think for

this current team, we want that revenge so bad, we want to prove that we can do it. We want to show Ithaca [College] athletics that we can do the same thing that everyone else has been doing. I think we really just want to prove that we can do it.”

The team starts its season at 6 p.m. Sept. 2, hosting Gustavus Adolphus College, SUNY Geneseo and Swarthmore College for the Bomber Invitational. Its first match will be against Swarthmore College in the Ben Light Gymnasium.

CONTACT NIC ROSADO
NROSADO@ITHACA.EDU

GRACE ISAKSEN '23



FAITH SABATIER



Running toward championship triumph

BY AIDAN CHARDE

Following a 2021 season that saw the Ithaca College women's cross-country team come up just short of reaching the NCAA Division III National Championship, expectations are high for the 2022 season.

Although the Bombers did not reach their end goal, they raced to a third place finish at the NCAA Regional Championship at the Geneseo Warplane Museum in Geneseo, New York on Nov. 13. The result gave the team its third podium finish at the meet since head coach Erin Dinan took over in 2011, but Dinan said the team wants to get past regionals and back to Nationals in her 11th season at the helm.

"They've been talking about getting back to qualifying and competing at Nationals since [the end of regionals]," Dinan said. "All through indoor and outdoor track, they're excited."

Senior captain Meredith Garrity echoed her coach. After the team placed just 26th out of 32 in the country in 2019, its lowest finish at Nationals since 2012, and missed all of 2020 because of COVID-19, she said the team felt as if it had something to prove.

"We really wanted to make it to Nationals, that was our main goal the whole season," Garrity said. "After the race, we knew it was



JULIA TOMANOVICH '23

going to be a tight call to get one of those at large bids. ... We were feeling confident that someone from Ithaca [College] was going to make it down to Nationals, so when we found out [we didn't], we were definitely disappointed."

Dinan added that the 2021 season was different than usual in terms of the team makeup. After having Taryn Cordani '17 and Parley Hannan '20 for six seasons, who Dinan said were the top runners for their years with the team, the 2021 roster saw multiple athletes take the top spot.

"For the first time in a long time, I had about five women interchange who was our top runner," Dinan said. "They had to work together to be leaders. ... When you're number one, that helps, that changes the whole score. But when you have five people running right around the same time, that means you have an incredible pack."

In cross-country, points are scored by the five fastest finishers from a team, a runner's score being the place they finished in. All five scores are added up and the team with the lowest total wins, so while finishing faster is important, being consistent across the field is also key.

That dynamic will also remain in place this season. Although Dinan said the team has several strong runners, no one athlete stands far enough above the rest to be the clear top athlete, which keeps the team a strong, cohesive group.



"Paloma de Monte, Lauren Lobdel and Isabel Johnston were all seniors last year that are coming back," Dinan said. "They'll be leaders in their own right ... [but] it's not just 'this person's leading the team,' it's 'we've all got to pull our weight.'"

Along with the points, Garrity said having a tight pack is vital to team chemistry. She said that being able to look around the track while running and see one teammate can be an incredibly motivating factor, so having a group running together is even better.

"We really do look for each other out there when we're in a race," Garrity said. "We got really into pack running last year, ... so I think carrying that into this season is super important. You want to make sure you work with your teammates and not try and work against them."

Senior Julia Tomanovich, the other captain alongside Garrity, said that her role as a captain means that she has to make sure the pack stays together and that the team has a tight bond.

"I want to make sure that there's a good cohesiveness within the team," Tomanovich said. "Not that we haven't had that before, but I think a big part of being a team sport is that everybody kind of gets along. We can't finish a race without each other."

She added that knowing she is a senior and this season possibly being her last makes her all the more motivated to do well. Although she is a clinical health studies major and has the option of staying with the team for a fifth

MEREDITH GARRITY

year, she is not yet sure what she will do.

"I mean, I'm going to treat it like my last season," Tomanovich said. "I'm lucky enough to have an extra season if I want it, but I'm just going to lay it all out there as if it was my last with the other seniors who don't have another season."

Although she knows the team has to take the season one day and one competition at a time, Garrity said she knows what the team wants to do.

"[Getting back to Nationals] is what we want, it's what we have our eyes set on," Garrity said. "We've had our eyes set on it [since] back when we found out we didn't make it last year. We tried to stay focused on moving forward. What can we do next time? What can we improve on? We're just all about the future."

The team will race in its first meet of the season at the Jannette Bonrouhi-Zakiam Memorial Alumni Run at 11 a.m. Sept. 3 in Ithaca. The team kicks off its competitive season, Sept. 10 at Hamilton College.

CONTACT AIDAN CHARDE
ACHARDE@ITHACA.EDU

Chasing victory after successful season

BY DEAN GUTIC

With the summer over and a new school year beginning, the Ithaca College men's cross-country team makes its return to the field with big ambitions for the season.

Last season, the Bombers finished third at the 2021 Liberty League Championships with a score of 82, sitting behind Vassar College and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI).

With the schedule kicking off in early September, senior Alex Whatley said he has set big personal expectations for his next season.

"My individual goals are to make Nationals and run a personal best," Whatley said. "If I can make Nationals as an individual, then there is a really good shot that we'll make Nationals as a team because I'll be our third, fourth or even fifth runner."

Sophomore James Hughes said the team



ALEX WHATLEY '23

has been training all summer, leading up to the start of the season.

"My teammates and I are all keeping track of each other's progress," Hughes said. "Hopefully all of us are getting up to 50 plus miles per week. We are all doing core work, strengthening work with weights to help us stay fit for cross-country. We're all keeping track of each other, staying in touch and holding each other accountable so we can run really fast in the fall."

To help prepare the Bombers for the season ahead, Hughes said head coach Jim Nichols has been staying in touch with his athletes and helping his runners stay in shape during the team's offseason.

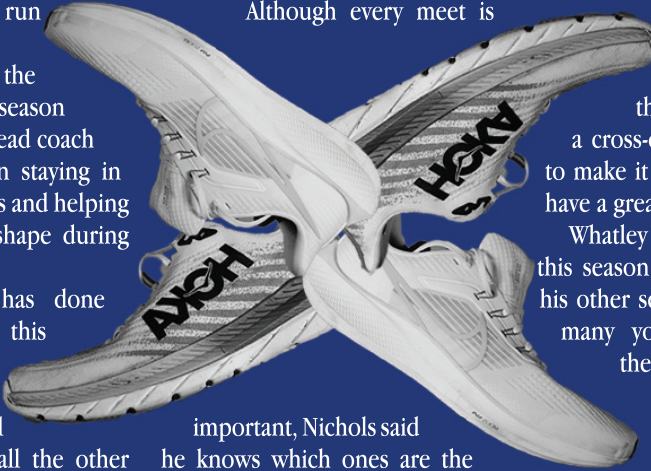
"Coach Nichols has done a great job leading this team," Hughes said. "He's been in contact with us, we all had a team Zoom call the other day with everyone, including the incoming freshmen, discussing what our goals are for the season. We think we have a good shot of making Nationals if we're all healthy."

Following the team's performance in 2021, which featured a fourth-place finish at NCAA Regionals and sending two runners to Nationals, Nichols said he is looking for his team to make big strides for this season and for the best to come out of his players.

"Our goals are to hopefully improve off what we did last year and have each and every athlete in our program run a personal best performance," Nichols said. "Last year we had two individuals [compete at Nationals], Ben Tiber '22 and Danny Jagoe, with Danny being back this year as a senior. Hopefully he'll be heading back and hopefully we can take our team back."

Although every meet is important, Nichols said he knows which ones are the most important for the team to perform during.

"Hopefully, [we will] be running at our personal best at the Liberty League championship at the end of October, and NCAA regionals at [the University of] Rochester, and then hopefully at the Nationals out in East Lansing, Michigan," Nichols said. "Last year we were third at the Liberty League championship, behind RPI and Vassar [College], our goal is to hopefully move up and compete for the



championship if we can."

Because he is a senior, Whatley said he has used the knowledge that it is his final season as extra motivation to work harder to end his collegiate career on a high note for him and his teammates.

"I had to pick around some responsibilities this year, which is also pretty fun," Whatley said. "But I'd say with it potentially being my last cross-country season ever is definitely a feeling of working extra hard because I know if it is the last time walking on a cross-country course, I want to make it my best and I want to have a great season."

Whatley also said he thinks this season will be different from his other seasons because of how many young runners are on the team. Although there are several returners, he said it will be important for the older members of the team to mentor the new athletes.

"This year we are bringing back a lot of the top seven. I think that five of the top seven are coming back, but we're still pretty young," Whatley said. "So this year we're really going to make sure the freshmen learn and that everyone is ... staying healthy and keeping on top of stuff and staying fit."

Although the team will still be centered around seniors, Nichols said there are some notable

JAMES HUGHES

first-year runners to look out for in the upcoming season and future seasons.

"Our top two freshmen ... are going to be Connor Goodwin out of Plattsburgh, New York, and Adam Mocho out of Middleburg Heights, Ohio," Nichols said. "Those are two guys that hopefully had a good summer training that might have a shot to be in our top seven, hopefully they'll be in our top 10. We'll take 14 to the Liberty League, so hopefully they'll be part of that Liberty League championship team."

The first event for the men's cross-country team will take place at 11 a.m. Sept. 3, as it hosts the Jannette Bonrouhi-Zakiam Memorial Alumni Run in Ithaca, before traveling to Hamilton College Sept. 10 for the first competitive meet of the season.

CONTACT DEAN GUTIC
DGUTIC@ITHACA.EDU

FALL SPORTS CALENDAR

