

SPRING SPORTS PREVIEW

2023



THE ITHACA

Women's track and field hurdles expectations

BY HIMADRI SETH

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The Ithaca College women's track and field team is gearing up for another exciting season of competition this spring.

With a strong group of returning athletes and a talented group of 13 newcomers, the Bombers are poised for a successful campaign. Head coach Jennifer Potter said she is optimistic and expects strong performances from all of her athletes.

"Recently, [graduate student pentathlete] Logan Bruce just broke an [11]-year school record," Potter said. "That record was previously held by Emma Dewart ['12], who was a two-time National Champion."

Ava Fowler

'23



NOLAN SAUNDERS/THE ITHACAN



Bruce, a fifth-year physical therapy major, has a long list of accomplishments to her name. She placed fifth in the heptathlon at the NCAA Outdoor All-American and secured second place in the pentathlon at the NCAA Indoor All-American, both in 2022. She was also named the 2022 Liberty League Indoor Field Athlete of the Year, among various other honors.

Bruce said one of her individual goals this season is to return to Nationals in both the indoor and outdoor seasons.

"This is my last year, so I want to go there and have a performance that I'm proud of," Bruce said.

Bruce said this year has been particularly challenging in terms of trying to balance life, work, school and track, which she said has become harder for her to do in graduate school. The team culture of track, however, is one of the things that keeps her going.

"With the girls and the teammates I'm surrounded by, we have a good culture of having fun at practice and working really hard," Bruce said. "We do a lot of homework together, and we try to spend a lot of time together, making sure that everybody knows that they're supported in all different aspects, whether it's socially or in school. . . . It really is a big family culture, and I think that really contributes to the successes we've been having so far."

Potter has also played a vital role in Bruce's support system throughout her entire collegiate career. Bruce said Potter is the type of coach who makes sure her team is working hard but also taking care of themselves and each other and having fun.

"She does a pretty good job of rolling with the punches and making sure that each kid gets their needs met," Bruce said.

One of Bruce's biggest goals this season is to secure the Liberty League title, a goal echoed by

Potter and senior distance runner Ava Fowler.

Fowler said that defending the conference title is something everyone on the team has dialed into — both during the indoor season and the approaching outdoor season.

"In indoor, [the team] is trying to defend our Liberty League title, and I think getting our title back in the spring is something we are very focused on," Fowler said.

Fowler said her personal goals this season are to prevent any injuries that could hinder her performance and to prevent the burnout that can come with being a three-season athlete — cross-country in the fall and track in the winter and spring. As a graduating senior, Fowler said her performance this season is especially important to her.

"It's my last year on the team, so I feel like I'm trying not to take anything for granted and not waiting till the last second to do something," Fowler said. "I'm trying to accomplish more in the beginning of this season than I think I have in years past."

Fowler is one of the seniors that Potter said she has high hopes for as they enter the spring. Potter also said she expected results from senior and graduate student pole vaulters Martha Kemp-Neilson and Meghan Matheny, senior distance runner Meredith Garrity, senior pentathlete Moriah Byrd and Paloma De Monte, graduate student middle-distance runner.

Potter said she also expects strong performances from some first-year students.

"[Distance runners] Jessica Goode and Joy Petersen, both first-year [students], went to the Nationals in cross-country," Potter said.

Potter said she is excited for a season that actually feels "post-COVID" after the past few years of heavy restrictions on gatherings and masks during competition.

"We are hopefully past COVID experiences,

Logan Bruce

'24



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so meetings this season are hopefully going to be fairly back to normal as far as spectators and protocols," Potter said. "Having spectators at competitions is really big for any program."

Potter also said she foresees the University of Rochester being the team's toughest competition this year in the Liberty League.

"They beat us outdoors last year," Potter said. "It's the first time we've lost the league since we were in the conference, so I think they'll be our biggest competition indoors," Potter said.

The Bombers will begin the outdoor season April 1 at the Muhlenberg Invitational in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

CONTACT: HSETH@ITHACA.EDU

Men's track and field chases down outdoor glory

BY AIDAN CHARDE

SPORTS EDITOR

Following back-to-back Liberty League outdoor titles, the Ithaca College men's track and field team is getting ready to head back outside for the spring season.

Although the team still has to stay on top of the indoor season for a little bit longer — the National Championships are on March

Brendan Sheehan

'24



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10 — junior Brendan Sheehan said the team has been preparing to start the outdoor season while also staying healthy for the end of indoor season.

"Everyone's dialing back the amount of work we're doing," Sheehan said. "Still keeping that intensity really high during practices, getting those full-effort sprints in, but not doing nearly as many as we have been doing the previous months."

For the most part, Sheehan said, the indoor and outdoor seasons are the same. However, the switch from the 200-meter track used for the indoor season and the 400-meter track used for the outdoor season makes for some differences in training. Head coach Jim Nichols said the outdoor season also brings new events for the team: hammer, discus and javelin throws, 110- and 400-meter hurdles and steeplechase.

In addition, high winds and other weather conditions can play a small factor, especially in jumping and

throwing events. Sheehan, who has been competing in the heptathlon during indoor season and will compete in his first decathlon in the outdoor season, said he is ready to try out a new event.

"Last year, I was mainly just a vaulter with a couple sprints here and there," Sheehan said. "I haven't done a dec[athlon] yet, but I did hept[athlon] last year — unsuccessfully, but this year it's going pretty well."

Junior Conor Ryan said that as a middle-distance runner, he needs to change his mentality and strategy for the longer length of track. Ryan runs the 400- and 800-meter events but has not run the 800 yet this season.

"For me, mentally, it's the laps," Ryan said. "I didn't want to get into the groove of running four laps and then go to outdoor season. . . . That's a pretty painful race."

Sheehan added that he and the other upperclassmen on the roster need to help lead by example, even if they are not the captains. Although he would not consider himself one of the biggest leaders on the team, he said there is always something he can help teach — and learn.

"I lead more by actions and showing what's expected of the team," Sheehan said. "But I'm

still learning stuff from [the seniors]."

The indoor season proved to be a strong one for the men's team. The Bombers broke several school records, including senior thrower Justin Showstead breaking a 40-year-old record in the shot put. Sheehan said the impressive indoor season is a good indication that outdoor season will be strong.

"If you're doing well indoor, you'll usually end up running the same times," Sheehan said. "You might taper it back a little bit for the first few weeks to let your body recover . . . but if you have a good indoor [season], you usually have a pretty good outdoor [season]."

If the team wants to compete at a high level during the outdoor season, though, it cannot simply coast through the schedule, no matter how well the indoor season turns out. Nichols said there is always room to get better, faster and stronger.

"To compete for an outdoor championship, we need to build on our indoor season and

Conor Ryan

'24



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continue to have individual and team improvements," Nichols said via email.

Following the end of the indoor season, the Bombers will get three weeks to rest and recover before launching back into competition. They start outdoor competition at the Muhlenberg Invitational at 10 a.m. April 1 in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

CONTACT: ACHARDE@ITHACA.EDU

Mens tennis bounces back from late-season faults

BY BILLY WOOD
STAFF WRITER

The 2023 Ithaca College men's tennis team is hard at work pursuing what it hopes to be a prosperous season after individual and doubles success in the fall.

The team struggled late in the 2021-22 season, where it finished 8-10 and 2-6 in Liberty League play last season, but showed bright spots after starting 5-0 and being competitive throughout matches during the spring season.

Head coach Chris Hayes '16 said he has seen a lot of improvement and thinks the Bombers can make an impact this season.

"Everyone on the team continues to improve their level of play and that's something

that's really important to me," Hayes said. "Continuing a strong level of play and continuing to build our team culture, because it's really strong. Right now, the guys are a tight-knit unit; it's been like that for a long time here."

The Bombers are going into the season with underclassmen filling nearly half of the spots on the roster. The squad will have five first-year students and will only carry two seniors on a team of 14 players. One of those seniors, Max Sobel, said he plays with intensity and said the team will replicate that.

"I think when I step onto the court, it's a lot of electric tennis," Sobel said. "It's fast, it's action-packed with a lot going on. We have a big environment around the team, so all the guys are really close and we have a lot of other people that come and support us. It's a very fiery environment."

Sobel is stepping into one of three captain spots for the team and said he is putting an emphasis on his sense of competition and experience to help lead his teammates.

"As a senior now, I'm kind of reflecting back on my past years," Sobel said. "It's been a long journey and it's been a long road to get here, but I think keeping the traditions that have been instilled in me from my past captains and my past seniors is something that I want to bring to the table and bring forward to the team."

Sobel is going into the season as the only senior with a captain's spot, but the other two spots are in good hands, filled by juniors Jacob Wachs and Nicolas Luis. Luis is coming into the season after finishing last season with a 10-7 singles record and 9-8 doubles record. He said he is looking to build off it and make this season his best yet.

"This is my first year as a captain, so I want to set a good example on and off the court,"

Luis said. "I want to be able to talk to everyone, be someone people can come to if they have any problems. ... I want to be playing at my top level at all times and never quit."

The Bombers' youth movement this season will change much about how the team looks from last season, but Luis believes the new season will uncover new versatility.

"We have a big class of five first-year [students], so obviously it's a new big addition to the team," Luis said. "We've lost two of our captains from last year, but these five new first-year [students] will be very versatile within the team, and you see a lot of different game styles and strengths with them."

Hayes said he has loved the ways Sobel, Wachs, Luis and junior Eric Dubiliner have stepped up to lead the team during the pre-season. Hayes said he expects big seasons out of the upperclassmen, but Luis will have a huge impact on the court this season.

"I'm expecting a big year from [Luis]; Nico has continued to improve over his past few years here," Hayes said. "This will be his second-straight full season at number one in singles. ... Last year was his first full year at number one which is a big step."

Hayes said he has recognized the effect the five first-year students have already shown and is very confident in their ability to make an immediate impact. Hayes says that while the first-year students are learning from the upperclassmen, the leaders of the group are learning just as much from the newcomers.

"We have a big first-year [student] class and we've got a lot of really talented kids," Hayes said. "Siddharth Vaada, Jimin Woo, David Lubell, Ean Lantzy and Carlos Hernandez all bring something different to the table, but all are talented individuals. I notice a different attitude within this first-year class than I've seen in previous years, to the point



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where they're really pushing the upperclassmen ... which is great."

The team will face some tough competition with the likes of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Hobart College and Skidmore College, but Sobel is confident the team can compete with anyone.

"We have goals to make the Liberty League playoffs," Sobel said. "We have goals to win non-conference matches and we have goals to be at the top of the Liberty League."

The squad began its season Feb. 12 and have already tallied wins over Drew University and Houghton College. The Bombers next play March 4 against Skidmore College.

CONTACT: WWOOD@ITHACA.EDU

Womens tennis has big expectations with small roster

Taylor Crain
'25



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9-0 Feb. 18 in their first game of the season.

Of the nine-women roster, the Bombers only have one first-year student taking the court this season. The veteran leadership and experience is something the team feels is one of its strengths. Last season, the Bombers finished their regular season play with a 13-7 overall record.

Head coach Chris Hayes '16 said that some of his biggest goals for this upcoming season include maintaining the success the Bombers enjoyed last year, as well as the continued development of his roster.

"I want to continue to make an impact in the Liberty League," Hayes said. "Finishing top four last year was a big accomplishment for the program, and we want to keep that upward trend. Most importantly, I want to see our players keep improving and taking our game to the next level."

Senior captain Caroline Herz, who finished her junior season with a singles record of 7-2 and a 4-0 doubles record, said the team has been putting in the hours over the past several months in preparation for its spring slate of opponents. Herz said that over

winter break, the team practiced different combinations of doubles partners in order to develop chemistry on the court.

"We have been working with new teams and trying to figure out what's going to give us the best shot at winning some doubles matches," Herz said. "I feel like there's going to be a big emphasis on doubles this season."

As she continues her senior season, Herz said she is making a conscious effort to be more positive and enthusiastic in practice, as the rest of the team can benefit from good energy.

"I've been working really hard to set a positive example, and I feel like people will follow that," Herz added. "Just having a good attitude and competitive atmosphere in practice will directly translate to our matches."

Both the men's and women's tennis programs are coached by Hayes, which offers a unique set of challenges and opportunities for him to display his ability to make adjustments on the fly. Considering his role on both teams to be a strength, Hayes said the coaching staff is approaching the season with its head on a swivel with the ability to recalibrate quickly if needed.

"I think it helps our culture because the two teams do a lot together off the court," Hayes said.

"It's a lot of work, doing both, but it's well worth it in the end because you get to see the finished product. It's really like one big team."

Because the team's roster is smaller in number than in prior seasons, it becomes especially important that all of the athletes remain connected. Sophomore Taylor Crain said their coach has made it a point of emphasis to ensure that all the players are in sync with one another.

"Coach has been doing a great job of making sure we are all united, especially because we are such a small team," Crain said. "He's been having us work hard in practice at getting our consistency back after the long offseason."

While the college has not reached the Liberty League playoffs since joining the conference in 2017, the team has some big aspirations for where it wants to end up. This year, the team expects to be competing right alongside Skidmore College, winners of the past 11 consecutive conference titles.

"Skidmore and Vassar [College] are going to be tough outs, they are both really well coached," Hayes

said. "[The Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute] is also going to be good competition for us."

The Bombers started the season 2-0 with wins over Houghton College and the Rochester Institute of Technology. They will continue their season on the road when they take on the Skidmore College Thoroughbreds at 10 a.m. March 4 in Saratoga Springs.

CONTACT: LJAFET@ITHACA.EDU



NOLAN SAUNDERS/THE ITHACAN

BY LUCAS JAFET
STAFF WRITER

The Ithaca College women's tennis team is gearing up for another run at the Liberty League title after it lost to Vassar College in the semifinals last season. The Bombers are looking to make a statement and play deep into the conference playoffs, and the excitement was palpable as they defeated the Houghton College Highlanders

Baseball looks to double down on 2022 success

BY DAVID SCHURTER

STAFF WRITER

After falling one game short of the Division III College World Series in 2022, the No. 19 ranked Ithaca College baseball team made its return to the diamond Feb. 24 with a 16–8 win over Immaculata University.

Last season, the Bombers finished with an overall record of 34–14, winning their first Liberty League Championship since joining the conference in 2020. The team also advanced to the Super Regional Championship for the first time since 2013, which the team hosted May 27 and 28, 2022. In the end, the Bombers came within one win of the World Series, falling to the Catholic University Cardinals two games to one at the Ithaca Super Regional on May 29.

Head coach David Valesente said the team will look to create momentum off last year's historic season, looking to maintain its composure and control upon returning to the postseason.

"We need to build off of the successful season last year while still holding that high expectation and standard of winning," Valesente said. "We want to compete at a high level nationally and have fun while also representing the college in a professional way."

Valesente said the team will be challenged with a tough schedule early on — with six games against ranked teams before March 18 — especially once the Liberty League portion of the schedule rolls around March 25.

"It's certainly exciting being back and competing in the Liberty League again," Valesente said. "We're playing a really competitive schedule. We're really excited about our early season Florida trip and hopefully, the weather holds up so we can get four to six games in before the trip."

Senior outfielder Matt Fabian said that helping out the team by utilizing his positional skills around the diamond is one of his biggest goals for this season.

"Being able to play all four positions; first, third, center field and right field at the highest level is a big goal of mine," Fabian said. "Being flexible and able to bounce around when needed to help the team is important to me."

Fabian said that focusing on plate discipline is another huge goal, both individually and as a team, trying to improve the offensive statistics. In 2022, Fabian had an improved batting average of .359 in 44 games, up from .197 in 2021. Fabian also hit four home runs and drove in 39 runs on 55 hits in 153 at bats in his 2022 season.

"We want to have a team batting average of .330 or higher as that will do us a lot of good on the offensive side of the ball," Fabian said. "Trying to limit the strikeouts and making hard contact to see some growth."

Sophomore pitcher Colin Leyner said he is looking to provide an impact on the mound to boost the starting rotation.

"I'm looking to have significant innings on the mound contributing to wins more," Leyner said. "Improving on my stats from last year, lowering my ERA and minimizing the walks to help secure more wins for the team."

In his rookie season in 2022, Leyner finished with 14 appearances, posting an impressive 7–1 record with a 3.68 earned run average, 55 strikeouts and 22 walks in 63.2 innings pitched, allowing 51 hits and pitching one complete game.

Leyner said that coming up a game short of the World Series was tough, but that this team has what it takes to repeat as Liberty

League champions and make it back to the big stage.

"We just have to be ourselves and let our games speak for itself," Leyner said. "We can't be too overconfident coming off of last year, we can't take anyone lightly, really just staying focused every game. As long as we're doing what we need to do to win, there's no game that we shouldn't lose and there should be no reason we shouldn't win another Liberty League Championship."

As a team in 2022, the Bombers showed some versatility offensively. The team led the Liberty League with a .322 batting average and tallied 530 hits, scoring a total of 382 runs with 28 home runs and 766 total bases.

As for the pitching staff, the South Hill squad posted a 4.95 earned run average as a team, second in the Liberty League behind the University of Rochester. The team allowed 406 hits in 409 total innings pitched, also pitching five complete games. The starting rotation will be anchored by senior Kyle Lambert, returning for one last season as a Bomber.

Valesente said he is looking forward to seeing several players step up into bigger roles this season after posting strong stat lines in 2022.

"I'm excited about all of our guys in terms of their roles last year," Valesente said. "Offensively, we have the reigning Liberty League Rookie of the Year [sophomore infielder] Connor Pederson, we also have [junior outfielder/infielder] Louis Fabbo, Matt Fabian and several other guys. Defensively, our starting catcher senior Gil Merod is back, several of our pitchers, including Liberty League Pitcher of the Year Kyle Lambert returning for one more season, Colin Leyner as well as a couple of new additions and relievers we are excited about stepping up."

Fabian is one of those players stepping into a new role. As an upperclassman on the team, Fabian said he is looking to provide a new level of leadership and increased intensity both on and off the field.

"I have a unique level of intensity on the field and I'm very passionate about the game," Fabian said. "I hold myself to an extremely high standard, playing both a verbal and personal leadership role and I really value having personal relationships with each of the guys. Being passionate, leading in a fearless and confident way as confidence is everything in this game."

Valesente said the team is putting 2022 in the rearview mirror, focusing on this season one game at a time.

"We're not really worried about last year as it's done and in the past," Valesente said. "We're trying to go practice to practice and game to game. Our expectations are to play at a high level and compete nationally and everything else will take care of itself."

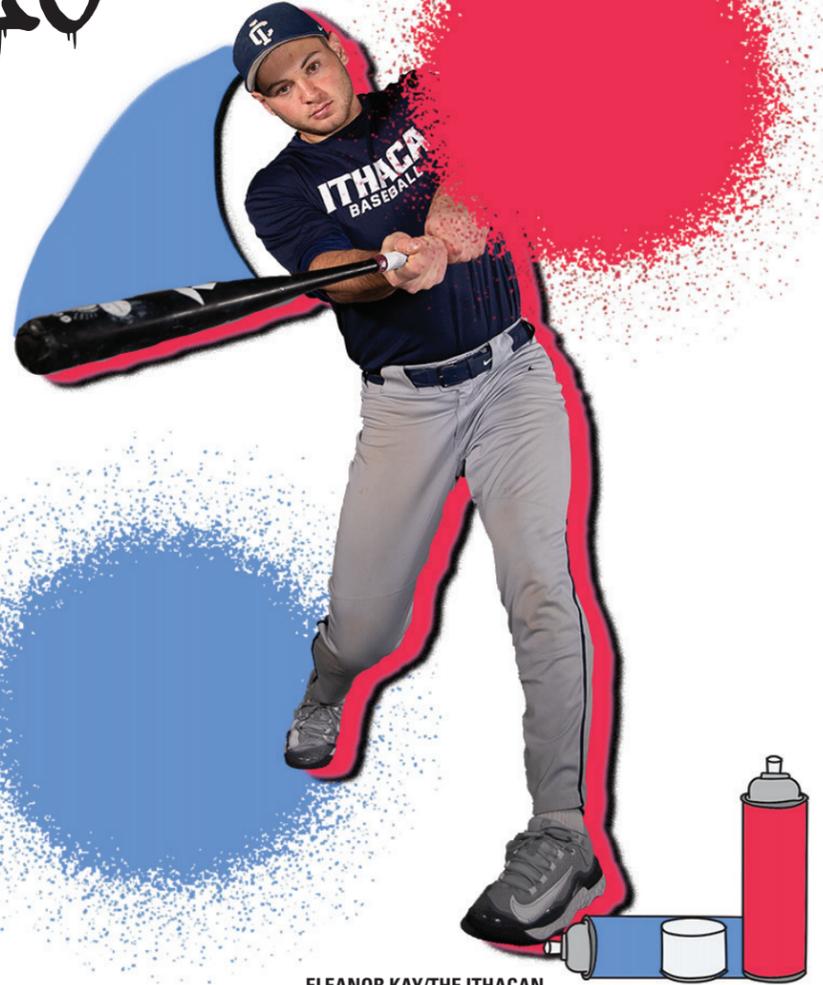
Fabian said the team should stick to what they do best — keeping a healthy, competitive mentality — in order to play up to their high expectations.

"We don't have to do anything outside of what we're capable of doing," Fabian said. "The team, the coaches and culture we have created is us and we need to keep being team guys. Being short-minded, not letting the lows get too low while also celebrating the highs. Understanding the success of baseball is rich, as well as not overthinking the failure side of the game."

The Bombers will continue their season when they take on the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at noon March 4.

Matt Fabian

'23



ELEANOR KAY/THE ITHACAN

Colin Leyner

'25



ELEANOR KAY/THE ITHACAN

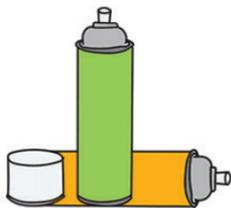
Softball swings for the fences with new head coach

BY TOBIAH ZBORAY

STAFF WRITER

Anna Cornell

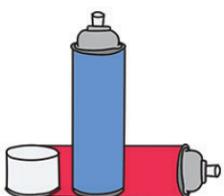
'25



NOLAN SAUNDERS/THE ITHACAN

Allison Dell'Orto

'23



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seeing her role change as much as it has from her first year with the team.

"It's changed a lot and went from having to learn a lot from mistakes to now being a leader and having a bunch of people who look up to you," Dell'Orto said. "It's definitely something that could be a little more difficult, but I also really enjoy proving myself to my teammates. Being able to lead them and guide them and give them advice and help whenever they need it, that's something that's really special to me."

During the offseason, the team looked to stay ready for competition despite the looming questions about the search for a full-time head coach. Dell'Orto said that the team spent a lot of time together, trying to get closer as a team and work to get the best out of every player.

"We worked really hard [during the offseason]," Dell'Orto said. "We've been staying on top of our lifts; we've been lifting really well. We've been practicing with each other and building that camaraderie on the field; it's something that's been a big focus of this season, creating that bond on and off the field. We really worked hard and pushed each other to our limits."

Another key piece for the Bombers throughout the fall and winter heading into the season has been the team's energy. Robichaud said the team is fueled by competition and mentally prepared to take on the Liberty League.

"The energy is great," Robichaud said. "We're all excited to move toward the same direction and have the same goal in mind to win a championship. We love to compete, we always have, and we're continuing to have that competitive mindset, but most importantly, we're going out there and we're having a good time. You'll see a lot of laughs and high-fives and dance parties at practice because that's just what we do. We work hard, and we have fun doing it."

However, winning a conference championship will be easier said than done for the South Hill squad. Cornell said the team has some tough conference opponents in its path if it wants to win the title, along with having to play some strong competition outside of the Liberty League.

"I think [Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute] is going to be a pretty big game," Cornell said. "That was our last game of the season last year, so we are really looking to attack them head-on. Other than that, I would say Rochester is going to be a pretty good game and we're looking forward to playing Cortland this season. Our game last year got rained out against them, so it's a big one this year."

Coming into the season as the head coach for the time being, Robichaud is looking forward to working with the staff around her to give everyone on the team the best season they can.

"The foundation for this team is really solid," Robichaud said. "I'm really excited with the support staff that I have around me. I have a wonderful assistant coach. We have student assistants working with us, we have wonderful athletic training staff. I know as a group that will be able to move forward together and provide a really fun season for everyone."

The Bombers open their season at 9 a.m. March 12 when they take on The College of New Jersey in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina as part of a 10-game slate during spring break.

After a season in which the Ithaca College softball team fell short in the Liberty League tournament, the team is looking toward the leadership of its seniors to bring the Bombers its first conference championship since 2019.

One change the team has had to adjust to coming into the new season is the addition of a new head coach, as former head coach Hannah Quintana '07 stepped down from her position in July 2022. In her place, former assistant coach Kelly Robichaud '16 was appointed as the interim head coach.

Since Robichaud's appointment in July, senior infielder Allison Dell'Orto said Robichaud's presence has been something the team has enjoyed.

"It's been really exciting," Dell'Orto said. "It's definitely been eye-opening for a lot of us. It gives us a lot of new opportunities to develop our skills to a whole new level. I think everyone is over-excited for what's to come. She's a great role model to us, she really pushes us to be our best and we're all really excited."

Dell'Orto enters her senior season after a slight downturn in production following two strong seasons to start her career. She hit .293 last spring while walking a career-best 19 times. She reached base safely 27 times and stole 15 bases during the season, leading the team in the stat, while driving in 15 runners with her bat.

As for Robichaud, she said her focus right now is to acclimate the first-year students to the team, a group that Robichaud said she is excited to have join the South Hill squad while still finding where they fit best.

"We have two really solid catchers that have come in [with] this first-year class," Robichaud said. "We have a dynamic outfield coming in, and we're still finding positions for people in the field. We only lost four from our graduating class last year, so we have a good, solid infield coming back."

The team has had success with students making an impact in their first years during recent seasons. Now a sophomore, pitcher Anna Cornell said her offseason was spent getting her arm ready for the stress of the softball season.

"I was working on some arm care, trying to stay healthier with my arm," Cornell said. "It's a long season and we play doubleheaders almost every weekend this season if you look ahead at our schedule. So I'm just looking at the command of my pitches, hitting my spots overall and then I'm working on one more pitch, that's been something I've been trying to do."

Cornell was a big contributor in her rookie season, where she pitched 87.2 innings and struck out 118 of the 362 batters she faced. Cornell pitched to an ERA of exactly 2.00 while holding hitters to a combined average against of .224, finishing the season with five shutouts and nine complete games to her name in the 16 games she started.

As for the team's goals, Robichaud said she wants the team to compete for a Liberty League Championship while also having fun on the field. As for leadership, Robichaud said she is looking toward the team's seniors to lead them this season, including Dell'Orto.

Dell'Orto said she is ready to step into her new leadership role, especially after

Womens lacrosse shoots for first Liberty League title

Sydney Phillips

'24



BY CHRIS SOHL

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Despite the frigid temperatures and a seemingly never-ending supply of snow, the spring season of sports has begun, which means the return of the Ithaca College women's lacrosse team to Higgins Stadium.

After a very successful season last year in which the Bombers finished with a lofty record of 17-4 — breaking the program record for wins in a single season — the team is looking to avenge its loss to the William Smith College Herons in the Liberty League Championship on May 8, 2022. At the time, the loss to the Herons marked only the third of the season, each

of which were by a slim one-point deficit.

Regardless of the devastating loss, the Bombers were able to march onto the scene at the NCAA tournament and make some noise in the big dance. They were able to take down a top-tier opponent with a 19-9 victory over Cabrini University on May 15, but the magic came to an end after a one-goal loss to the former No. 6 team in the country, Franklin and Marshall College on May 21.

Despite losing some veteran leadership, the Bombers' roster is loaded with young talent and their offense should continue to explode. The team has both of its goalkeepers back to anchor its defense and head coach Karrie Moore has proven she can lead the squad to victory with her outstanding record of 92-29 across her eight-season career at Ithaca College.

With a star-studded roster and plenty of experience, the expectations for the Bombers have never been higher. Junior midfielder and captain Sydney Phillips said the team's focus is geared toward building on its already stellar accomplishments.

"Our team focuses on our purpose and why we want to be here," Phillips said. "We want to continue our established success and obviously take down William Smith this year because they beat us in the Liberty League final last year."

With the team being largely underclassmen — first-year students and sophomores make up 20 athletes on the 29-woman roster — and only one senior, the responsibilities of leading a team fall onto the shoulders of senior goalkeeper and captain Kayla Howley.

"Being the only senior has definitely taken some getting used to, but I'm fully embracing my leadership role now," Howley said. "I don't feel pressured ever because my teammates are so supportive and my other upperclassmen take on leadership roles as well. I try to push

the memo, 'Don't leave any gas in the tank,' and the girls really embrace it."

Phillips, who tallied an outstanding 16 goals across the Bombers' four postseason games in 2022, has also taken on a leadership role after being named a captain for her junior season with the team.

"I want to focus on embracing my leadership role as well, especially now that I'm a captain," Phillips said. "It's definitely some pressure, but it allows me to support the girls around me, and having them look up to me as a leader is really special."

Though the importance of having a talented roster is crucial, the attitudes and mindset of the coaching staff are what have led the team to its deep playoff runs. Phillips said the idea of commitment is one shared by her teammates.

"The coaching staff is extremely committed to their team and they truly hold us accountable for our play," Phillips said.

Howley added that, along with the principle of commitment, her team holds trust to the highest standard.

"Trust is a word that is very driven into our program," Howley said. "It's nice to be in an environment where we can all trust each other to make our team better as a whole."

Moore has put together a talented squad who she said has what it takes to bring the team to the next level.

"We have a very young roster and we expect them to bring lots of energy while absorbing as much as they can," Moore said. "In terms of key players, we have a lot of key returners: [junior midfielder] Caroline Wise is huge in the draw control department for us, [junior midfielder] Lexi Kellish and [sophomore midfielder] Elizabeth Green are emerging in the midfield and [junior defender] Maggie Mandel has truly stepped up on defense."

In terms of her team goals for the season, Moore kept it simple. Moore said that ultimately, she and her team have their sights on some championship hardware.

"We want to win a conference title and we want to win the national championship," Moore said. "Right now, we are figuring out the puzzle pieces to build our team and we certainly have some tough tests including William Smith, Cortland and Amherst, but I think this team has what it takes."

The Bombers will continue their 2023 season when they host the Fairleigh Dickinson University-Florham Devils at 3 p.m. March 4 at Higgins Stadium.

CONTACT: CSOHL@ITHACA.EDU

Kayla Howley

'23



Mens lacrosse takes aim at Liberty League Goliaths

BY ALLIEY MAGISTRO

STAFF WRITER

The Ithaca College men's lacrosse team has been preparing for its 2023 season since missing out on the postseason last October on a last-second goal, falling to No. 16 Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

With a tough Liberty League conference ahead of them, the Bombers are looking to establish themselves as top dogs in this year's league and to hopefully make it to

Chase Gulick

'25



the championship game. The Liberty League is one of the toughest and most competitive leagues in Division III men's lacrosse.

The conference includes the current defending National Champions, No. 2 Rochester Institute of Technology, and last year's national runner-up, No. 5 Union College. In addition, No. 15 St. Lawrence University is in the Liberty League, along with Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, which received 11 votes in the Feb. 20 edition of the United States Intercollegiate Lacrosse Association's top-20 rankings.

This year, the Bombers have 29 returning players — including six fifth-year students — along with 16 new faces. The Bombers have a sixth-year newcomer from SUNY Plattsburgh, goalkeeper Christian Bassi.

Head coach Jeff Long said the first-year students have been working hard to show that they deserve the time to play how committed they are to the team and its culture.

"The freshmen have acclimated really quickly, so I don't feel as though there is a huge separation in terms of confidence," Long said. "They are not where

they need to be yet, but I like the level they are at."

Long said the energy levels have been great and he has no complaints so far in preparing for the team's first game. He feels as though the players have shown dedication and strength.

"We really haven't faced any adversity yet, but in terms of the work rate, and focusing and being on time, the listening skills and all those other things have been really positive so far," Long said.

Long said he wants his team to show effort and consistency throughout this season. He said the biggest thing his team needs this year is to play solid lacrosse throughout all four frames.

"Our goal is to really put up a strong 60 minutes," Long said. "Our issue last year was we lost three or four games in the fourth quarter ... that were key games that could have gotten us into the tournament."

After a strong 2022 season, senior attackman Jake Erickson is expecting a big year for the Bombers. Last year, Erickson was named to the All-Liberty League First Team and led the team in scoring with 42 goals. This year, Erickson said he plans to lead his team in establishing a strong foundation and finishing the fourth quarter strong.

"This year, we can kick it up

more, be more accountable for each other, and I can already see that happening, along with all the effort the team is showing," Erickson said.

Erickson also said that this year, the offense is by far the toughest he has seen so far in his career with the Bombers. With that tough offense comes sophomore midfielder, Chase Gulick.

Gulick, who finished last season with a .515 record in the circle, is one of the Bombers' face-off midfielders and said he has been training hard to have a successful season this year.

"[Sophomore faceoff midfielder] Chris Sohl and myself have been working hard to do the best we can," Gulick said. "I really want to get to the championship this year, and I feel like I speak to the whole team when I say that."

Erickson said he feels as though preseason has been good and he is anticipating a strong season for the team.

"I think we are going to be a pretty tough team to beat," Erickson said. "We are in really good

Jake Erickson

'23



shape, I think, in terms of players listening and learning."

The Bombers are already through two games this season but will return to Higgins Stadium at noon March 4 for a matchup with SUNY Geneseo.

CONTACT: AMAGISTRO@ITHACA.EDU

Men's rowing tries to overtake conference rivals

BY AIDAN CHARDE
SPORTS EDITOR

After a short stint of three races in the fall and a five-month break, the Ithaca College men's rowing team is getting back in the boat for the spring season.

Going into the season with just five seniors on the roster — the team's lowest total since having only one in the 2018–19 season — and a new head coach, the Bombers are looking for all 25 members to contribute, both in the water and in the boathouse.

One of the seniors, Dehron Smith, said it has been a big change for the team since it last competed in the spring when it was under head coach Dan Robinson '79, who announced his retirement in March 2022 following 35 years at the helm.

"It's a huge transition in the leadership for the team," Smith said. "I think the emphasis is to maintain our standards — or exceed them — in this period as you transition the leadership and make sure nothing is lost."

The new head coach has not traveled far to join the Bombers. Justin Stangel, who was hired in June 2022, joins the South Hill squad from Hobart College, where he served as an assistant coach. Stangel was also a Division I rower in college at Syracuse University and has rowed at the World Championships and Olympic Trials.

Stangel said there will always be subtle changes every time a new coach joins a program, but his hope is to help the team to be the best it can be.

"At the end of the day, I think the guys like to work hard and they like to make boats go fast," Stangel said. "So that's what we focus on when we're at the boathouse. Once you step foot through that door, we're not worried about academics or projects or other

things that are going on in the world. We really just try ... and make sure we're getting the most out of every session."

While the older members of the team will be essential to continuing the existing team culture, the Bombers will also look to some younger faces to lead the team, like sophomore Griffin Hunt. As a first-year student in 2022, Hunt was a member of the varsity eight boat, the top boat at competitions, which he said is not common for a rower in his first season with the team.

"I was pleasantly surprised to be put on the varsity boat, but I also feel like I earned it," Hunt said. "I always felt valued on the team, but that really made me feel like I can really help lead the team."

Of the 25 athletes on the roster, just eight are upperclassmen, and Hunt said many of the younger rowers have little rowing experience. So even though he is just in his second year on the team, his time rowing before college means he has to be a leader to teach new rowers the technique.

"You get a lot of people that have no idea where to start," Hunt said. "[We are] helping guide them, work with them on the same level to try and get where they want to be. It's been really fun."

As the season goes on, Hunt said he hopes that dynamic continues. Last season, the men put up a solid performance at the Liberty League Championships, taking second place behind the Hobart College Statesmen by three seconds. However, the Statesmen — who have captured the past 16 consecutive Liberty League titles — will no longer compete in the conference, now racing in Division I.

For the first time, Stangel said the winner of the Liberty League will automatically qualify for the National Championships at

the end of the season. That, along with the conference opening up with the absence of the Statesmen, means the Bombers have the chance for a historic season.

"[There are] a bunch of opportunities available to the team this year in terms of doing something that has never been done before," Stangel said.

But to get to that point in the season, the Bombers have to succeed in their slate of five competitions in the spring. Stangel said one thing that makes the rowing season difficult is the long break — from the end of October to the beginning of February — when the athletes are training and working out on their own.

"If we have to have a hard reset when they come back, then it's going to be a lot more

challenging," Stangel said.

Even once the season starts, Smith said that keeping up on workouts and training is essential to having the success the team wants to have.

"[Rowing] is not like other sports where you have 15 or 20 games," Smith said. "We just have a few races where it comes down to, so that's why people often say rowing is a training sport. We spend most of our time just training for maybe six to eight races a year."

With three races in the books from the fall, the men will get back on the Cayuga Inlet at the Cayuga Duels on April 1 for the team's first competition of the season.

CONTACT: ACHARDE@ITHACA.EDU

Dehron Smith

'23

NOLAN SAUNDERS/THE ITHACAN



Griffin Hunt

'25

Women's rowing makes waves at a national level

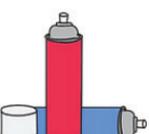
BY TESS FERGUSON
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Following another decorated season resulting in a fourth consecutive Liberty League title and a national ranking, the Ithaca College women's rowing team has lofty expectations for its upcoming racing season.

In May 2022, the squad secured a fourth-place finish at the NCAA Division III Championships in Sarasota, Florida. For head coach

Allison Arndt

'23



Becky Robinson '88, however, the ranking is not quite enough.

"Based on the results of the second varsity eight race, there were three teams that could have won the national championship and we were one of them," Robinson said. "We didn't do it, and that's how we build on it. They have a taste of it, it was there, and now we have another shot to actually secure it."

Robinson said that with a seasoned roster and a glimpse at what a national title could feel like, she is confident that her team has what it takes to make it happen for the first time since 2005.

"They got [to the championship] and they didn't come through on it, which I think is all of the motivation they need," Robinson said. "We didn't lose many rowers. One back for their fifth year, two of them back for their sixth years; so we're really capitalizing on that experience."

Graduate student stroke Allison Arndt, one of the team's sixth-year rowers, was awarded All-America honors for the second time in July 2022 following the crew's decorated spring season. Arndt said that

under Robinson's leadership, the team will be able to adequately adjust to whatever the new season brings its way, good or bad.

"[Robinson] kind of changes a little bit based on what our team needs each year," Arndt said. "We didn't have as good of a season as we wanted last year, so we've definitely seen her adapt and shift our team's mindset heading into the spring."

In seasons past, the team has raced in both sweep and sculling events during the fall season. While sweep, the style in which the team rows during the spring season, is performed with only one oar, sculling is performed with two. This past fall, the squad stuck strictly to the latter. Senior coxswain Carlie Wohlfahrt said the change in pace might offer the squad an additional edge heading into the new competition season.

"[With sculling,] there comes a bigger focus on technique, body awareness and boat-feel," Wohlfahrt said. "I think that will just help us to focus on the small details and the little things this season."

Wohlfahrt said that outside of the emphasis on technique that the fall season has provided, it has also allowed the squad to build the endurance and mental strength that it will need for the quickly approaching spring season.

"Our races in the fall are significantly longer than the ones we'll have this spring," Wohlfahrt said. "It's also helpful to see the other teams and kind of gauge how they're looking for the season."

With a young team and several walk-on athletes — rowers who were not recruited to the team out of high school, many of whom have never rowed before — Arndt said the depth of this year's squad and the valuable mentorship from the team's decorated veterans will be highlighted in its upcoming races.

"For a lot of our athletes, this fall was their first time rowing," Arndt said. "It's really fun to see how quickly people pick up the technique, though. We have a lot of people who will be rowing at a very high level this year."

Despite the team's youth and the number of walk-ons, Robinson said that she has a tremendous amount of confidence in her team, both newcomers and returners, when it comes to their fight for a national title.

"This team has the potential to go all the way," Robinson

Carlie Wohlfahrt

'23



KALYSTA DONAGHY-ROBINSON/THE ITHACAN

said. "Nothing is for granted, but they need to start by believing in themselves, believing in each other and believing in the process. That way, when we get the opportunity, we're really prepared to finish it off."

The Bombers will kick off their spring season when they compete in the Cayuga Duels at 9 a.m. April 1 at the Cayuga Inlet.

CONTACT: TFERGUSON1@ITHACA.EDU

Golf team drives for success with young roster

BY DEAN GUTIC
STAFF WRITER

After finishing third last year on the second day of the 2021–22 Liberty League Championship, the Ithaca College golf team takes the course and is looking to build and make improvements from last year.

With the new season taking shape, Bombers' sophomore Rheanna DeCrow said the team has been staying prepared for the upcoming season despite some difficulties it faces in the winter.

"I know we all practice super hard during the summer, we all played in tournaments," DeCrow said. "Everyone's situation was a little bit different, but we all played in tournaments."

Rheanna DeCrow

'25



NOLAN SAUNDERS/THE ITHACAN

Then in the offseason, obviously when there's snow all over the ground, it's hard to train."

DeCrow said that when it becomes more difficult to get outside and practice, the team has to make the most of the resources it has. When the weather permits, the team practices at the RaNic Golf Club courses. During the winter, the Bombers utilize the facility's simulator.

"Coming into the spring season is really tough because you don't get a whole lot of time outside, you don't get a whole lot of time on the grass, you're relying on the simulator and you're having indoor practices to get you through," DeCrow said. "We have a training trip coming up, which will be really nice, but it's about just trying to stay motivated, trying to get as much experience and as many swings in as possible and to keep that muscle memory intact."

On top of its preparation for this season, first-year student Annika Michel said the team has been staying prepared under the guidance of head coach Keith Batson.

"[Batson] makes sure to keep in contact with us and really keeps us motivated," Michel said. "It's hard in the offseason since golf is such an outdoor sport. He just makes sure that he's there for us to really coach us through whatever we're working on individually."

Part of the team's preparation is the team culture that Batson has fostered on South Hill. Batson said that holding commitment and dedication to the highest priority plays a big role in the Bombers' preparation for the season.

"Our culture is great," Batson said via email. "[The athletes] are all really dedicated and push each other. Our spring break trip in March helps kick off our spring and gives us a week together to really kickstart our season."

With the spring season starting up March 16, Batson said he is largely looking

forward to seeing his team build upon its already established skills each day.

"Our goals are to improve each week, learn, have fun and ultimately play our best golf at the conference championship," Batson said via email.

Batson said that although the spring is technically the competition season, the team did some valuable offseason work in the fall — having competed in five tournaments during the semester — and gained some momentum that it is hoping to keep improving upon.

"It's a wrap-around season from the fall," Batson said via email. "We had a really strong fall and we are looking to continue on that progress."

Batson also said the Bombers have had to prepare for this season without one of their key players, which was a blow to the team dynamic.

"One of our standout players, [senior] Mary Gersec, is not eligible to play this spring due to the [School of Humanities and Sciences'] rule for student-athletes, which includes not being able to play a sport when you are student teaching," Batson said via email. "We are a smaller team than we'd like to be, but our goals are still the same."

Although the Bombers will be without Gersec this season, who earned a scoring average of 81.4 during the 2021–22 season, Batson said this year's team still brings some attention-grabbing skill.

"Cristea [Park] is finishing off her senior year strong, [DeCrow's] improvement from last year to this year and seeing that momentum keep going and watching [Michel] play her second half of her first season with more comfort and understanding of how college golf works will be really exciting," Batson said via email.

Along with their preparation for the upcoming spring season, Michel said the Bombers will

Annika Michel

'26



NOLAN SAUNDERS/THE ITHACAN

still have some strong opponents to look out for after having a strong fall season.

"[New York University] is at the top of our league," Michel said. "We won't be going directly to play them this season because we've played them in the fall, but they'll be at the Liberty League Championships and they're really who we have to beat."

The Bombers' first matchup of the spring season will take place March 16 during the team's spring break trip when they take on the Amherst College Mammoths in Orlando, Florida at the Cleveland Heights Golf Course.

CONTACT: DGUTIC@ITHACA.EDU

Spring Calendar

Women's Lacrosse
March 4 vs. FDU-Florham at 3 p.m.
March 11 vs. Rochester at 1 p.m.
March 24 vs. St. Lawrence at 4 p.m.
March 25 vs. Clarkson at 3 p.m.
April 15 vs. RIT at 1 p.m.
April 26 vs. Hamilton at 4 p.m.

Men's Lacrosse
March 4 vs. SUNY Geneseo at noon
March 25 vs. Clarkson University at noon
March 29 vs. Misericordia University at 4 p.m.
April 8 vs. Vassar College at 2 p.m.
April 22 vs. Union College at 1 p.m.

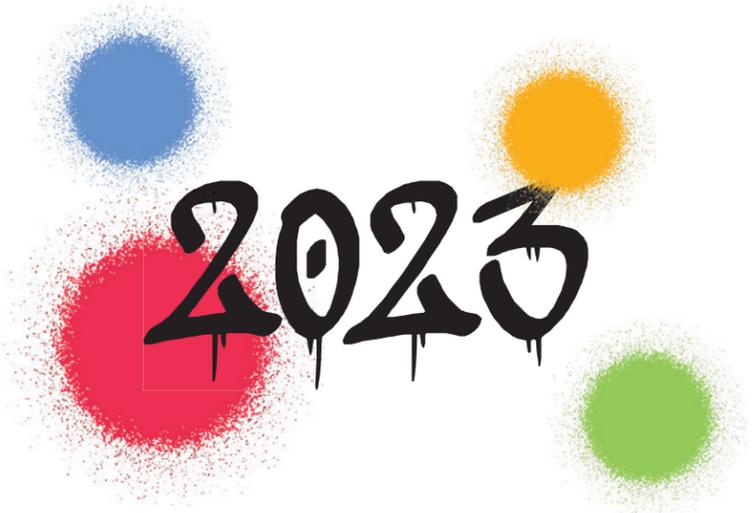
Women's Rowing
April 1 Cayuga Duels at 9 a.m.
April 8 vs. RIT at 11 a.m.
April 8 vs. Rochester at 11 a.m.
April 15 vs. Marietta at 11 a.m.
April 15 vs. Skidmore at 11 a.m.

Men's Rowing
April 1 Cayuga Duels at 9 a.m.
April 8 vs. University of Rochester at 11 a.m.
April 8 vs. RIT at 11 a.m.
April 15 vs. Skidmore College at 11 a.m.

Women's Tennis
March 25 vs. New Paltz at 1 p.m.
March 26 vs. Oneonta at 2 p.m.
April 5 vs. Hartwich at 6 p.m.
April 12 vs. William Smith at 4 p.m.
April 16 vs. Vassar at 10 a.m.
April 22 vs. St. Lawrence at 10 a.m.

Men's Tennis
March 22 vs. University of Rochester at 3 p.m.
March 26 vs. Oneonta at 10 a.m.
April 7 vs. Hobart College at 4 p.m.
April 15 vs. Vassar College at 11 a.m.
April 22 vs. St. Lawrence University at 2 p.m.
April 23 vs. RPI at 2 p.m.

Golf
March 16 vs. Amherst College at noon in Orlando, Florida
March 16 vs. Cortland at noon in Orlando, Florida
April 1 and 2 Vassar College Invitational in Poughkeepsie, New York
April 15 and 16 Martin Wallace Invitational in Cortland, New York



Softball
April 1 vs. Geneseo at 1 and 3 p.m.
April 2 vs. St. John Fisher at 1 and 3 p.m.
April 15 vs. Union at 1 and 3 p.m.
April 16 vs. Rochester at 1 and 3 p.m.
April 20 vs. Cornell at 3:30 and 5:30 p.m.
April 29 vs. Clarkson at 1 and 3 p.m.
April 30 vs. St. Lawrence at 1 and 3 p.m.

Baseball
March 22 vs. University of Scranton at 3 p.m.
March 25 vs. University of Rochester at 1 and 4 p.m.
April 1 vs. St. Lawrence University at 1 and 4 p.m.
April 2 vs. St. Lawrence University at 1 p.m.
April 5 vs. Alfred State College at 3:30 p.m.
April 7 vs. RIT at 3:30 p.m.
April 23 vs. Clarkson University at 1 p.m.
April 26 vs. SUNY Cortland at 4 p.m.
April 30 vs. Hobart College at 1 p.m.
May 2 vs. SUNY Brockport at 4 p.m.