



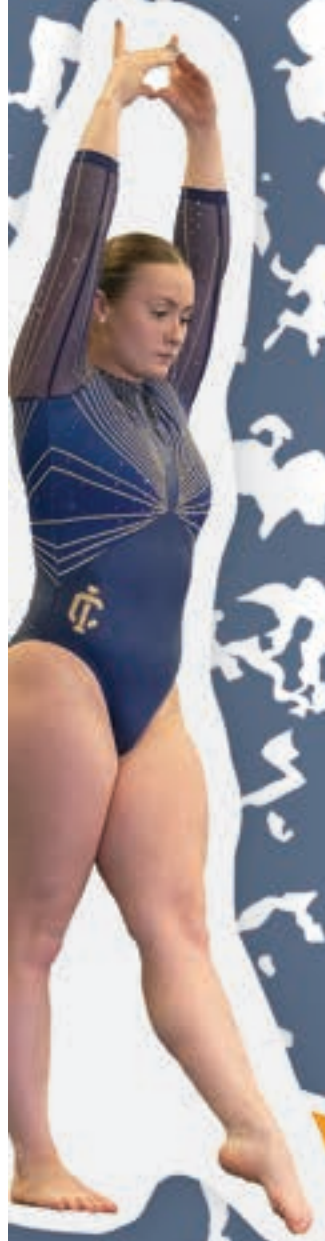
THE ITHACAN

WINTER

SPORTS - PREVIEW

2024-25

Accuracy, Independence, Integrity - 8 Pages
11 in x 17 in - Made in Ithaca



EMILY KOBUSKY '26



EVAN CABRAL '27

SHAUN HERLIHY '24



KAILEE PAYNE '25



LAURA SUPPA '25



MEN'S BASKETBALL READY FOR ACTION DESPITE INJURIES

BY JACOB INFALD
STAFF WRITER

After missing the playoffs in the 2023–24 campaign, the Ithaca College men's basketball team looks to return to its winning ways with a mix of youth and upperclassmen leaders, as it battles through early season injuries.

Last season was the first since the 2016–17 season that saw the South Hill squad miss out on postseason action. However, head coach Waleed Farid said there is optimism among his squad that it will bounce back.

"One of the benefits that came out of last year was a lot of our freshmen got thrown into the fire right away," Farid said. "Did they have their rough times? They did, but I think they've come out of that in a good spot."

Two of the now-sophomores that Farid is talking about are guard Evan Cabral and forward Alex Penders. Last season, Cabral was the starting point guard for the Bombers and put up an impressive 8.5 points per game on 46% shooting. He said his team was not satisfied with the results last season and are ready to bounce back strong.

"Everybody's just been brought in, and we're just growing, building chemistry," Cabral said. "Just focusing on attention to detail, just the little things that matter will translate to bigger things in the game."

Penders provided a spark off the bench last season with his efficient

scoring: his 49% field goal percentage and his 37% shooting on 3-point shots both ranked second on the team.

Last season, the Bombers got off to a strong 4-1 start in Liberty League competition. However, the team struggled down the stretch, losing five of their last six games, with four of those defeats being by five points or less. Additionally, the Bombers average margin of defeat in the 13 games they lost was around 8.5 points. Penders said he believes winning those tight games will be an emphasis this season.

"I think that those experiences going into being a year more mature, a year more to grow, that's really going to help us in the long run of this upcoming season where in those games we will have the tools to be able to pull those games out," Penders said.

Unfortunately, Penders sustained a mid-ankle sprain in practice a couple of weeks ago and will be sidelined for the start of the season. Penders recovers alongside his other injured teammates, including sophomore guards Jose Padilla and Yoav Regev, sophomore center David Luberoff and senior guard Bryce Bleibtrey. Penders said none are expected to be season ending and he and his teammates trust the healthy players to win early games.

"We're rallying behind the guys that we trust, [they] are gonna step up and make plays for us," Penders said.

Historically, Farid-led teams are known for their run-and-gun playstyle, allowing the guards to run the

season, Farid wants his team to put an added emphasis on the defensive end to compliment their high-flying offense.

"Improvement defensively would have helped us in some of those games," Farid said.

reinforcements on that end of the floor this season, as they added sophomore transfer David Luberoff to play center. Luberoff played at Division II Adelphi University last season where he averaged six points per game, four rebounds a game along with 15 blocks, which would have led the Bombers last season. Luberoff is another Bomber who is currently injured, but is expected to be an impact player upon his return.

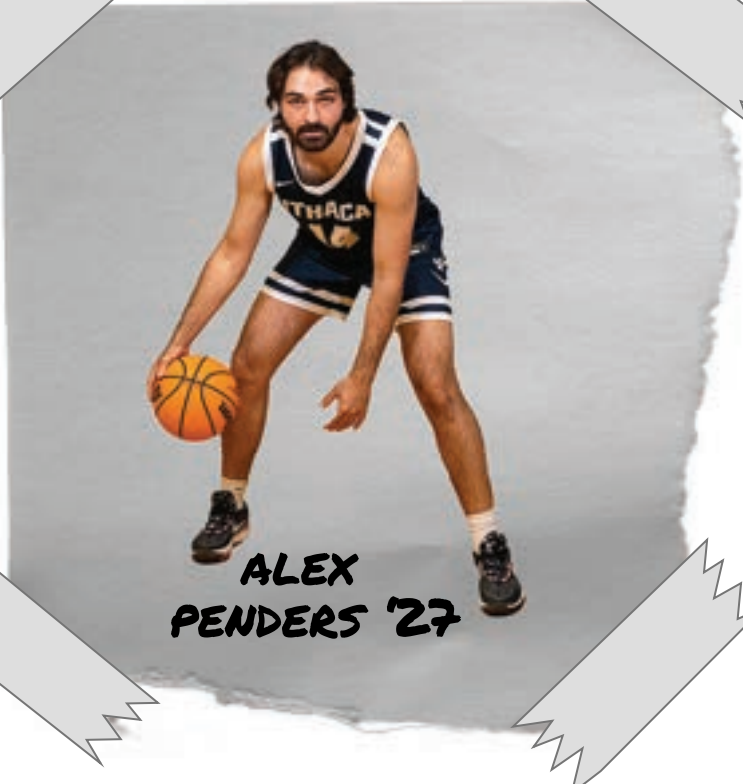
Guards Aidan Holmes and Bryce Bleibtrey join Wendell as the three seniors on the roster, with Wendell and Holmes being the team captains. Their roles as leaders will be pronounced this season on a roster that features 10 underclassmen.

Despite the underclassmen, the Bombers do not consider themselves to have a lack of experience.

"As much as you may say that we're young, I think that even in our youth we're experienced because a lot of these guys have been in game situations before," Penders said.

Farid said he is excited for the rest of the Ithaca community to see how hard his team worked in the offseason.

"Knowing that we were as prepared as we could be for that game, we played as hard as we could in that game and we were the best teammates we could be. ...I think that puts us ahead of a lot of other teams," Farid said.



ALEX PENDERS '27

floor and make plays early in the shot clock. This will once again be the case this year with Cabral and senior guard Logan Wendell in the back court.

However, heading into this

"I think we're really focused on the defensive side in terms of making sure we're not skipping steps and trying to be as detail oriented as we can."

The Bombers will be getting

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WOMEN'S BASKETBALL EYES LIBERTY LEAGUE REVENGE

BY KHARI BOLDEN
STAFF WRITER

Ithaca College seems to have a "redeem team" of its own this season as the women's basketball team aims to return to the summit of the Liberty League Championship Tournament.

The 2023–24 season marked a serious low point in the program's recent history, as it lost in the semifinals of the Liberty League Championship Tournament for the first time since the 2017–18 season. More pressingly, the team failed to make the NCAA Tournament for the first time since the 2015–16 season

Tournament when we got to the end of the season."

The highest scorer on the 2023–24 team was now-graduate student guard June Dickson, a transfer from Division I Cal Poly, who put up 12.2 points per game. She said that few on the team realized it was the end of a run more than the graduating class.

"It was really sad, especially for the seniors who've put in so many years and so much work into this program," Dickson said. "For them to not achieve that final goal of making it to the NCAAs — that was just devastating."

For a season like that, Dickson said he and the staff knew it was time to make significant changes to the team.

They ended up electing captains, which is something that isn't done in years," Raymond said. "We came up with a new format for our summer program that was more engaging. From a coach's perspective, there's only a limited amount of things that we can usually be involved with in the summer, but I think the leadership really kind of steered the focus for the program overall."

One of the most notable changes to the squad going into the upcoming season is the turnover in the roster where the turnover has been substantial. The team graduated three players, including Liberty League second-team guard Camryn Coffey '24. Coffey was the team's second-highest scoring guard and best shooter from

beyond the arc, hitting an efficient 38.6% of her 3-pointers last season.

Replacing her production along with that of assist leader Hannah Polce '24 may seem like a tall order, but the Bombers are more than reinforced this season. Extensive recruiting has caused this squad to rise to 19 players, up from 14 last season. Senior forward and team captain Anya Watkins, who was an All-Liberty League honorable mention in 2023–24 and led the team in rebounds last season, said the added depth has only made the players work harder.

"There's a lot of competition," Watkins said. "Everybody wants to win, but it's making us all better. Everyone's got a ton of talent, and so no one's comfortable. Every practice you're being pushed by a different person."

Six new players are first-year students, but the Bombers have turned to transfers coming through the transfer portal for an immediate impact.

It's not just about the new blood going into the 2024–25 season, though; the Bombers return eight of their 10 leading scorers from last season, including senior forward Annabella Yorio, junior guard Zoraida Icabalceita and senior captain guard Jillian Payne. Additionally, Raymond said he expects the sophomore class to step up this season.

"[Sophomore guard] Tori Drevna, [and sophomore forward] Elizabeth Majka, I think they're both going to be people that you'll see more on the floor," Raymond said. "I also think [sophomore guard] Grace

McNamara is going to get some opportunities this year for us."

Looking at the upcoming schedule, three of the Bombers' upcoming non-conference games are competitors from last season's NCAA Tournament, something Raymond said was decided intentionally to test how good the team is against national collegiate players.

However, as it did the previous season, the team's biggest threats may lie in the Liberty League.

The Bombers lost six games last season; two were to Vassar College and three were to Skidmore College.

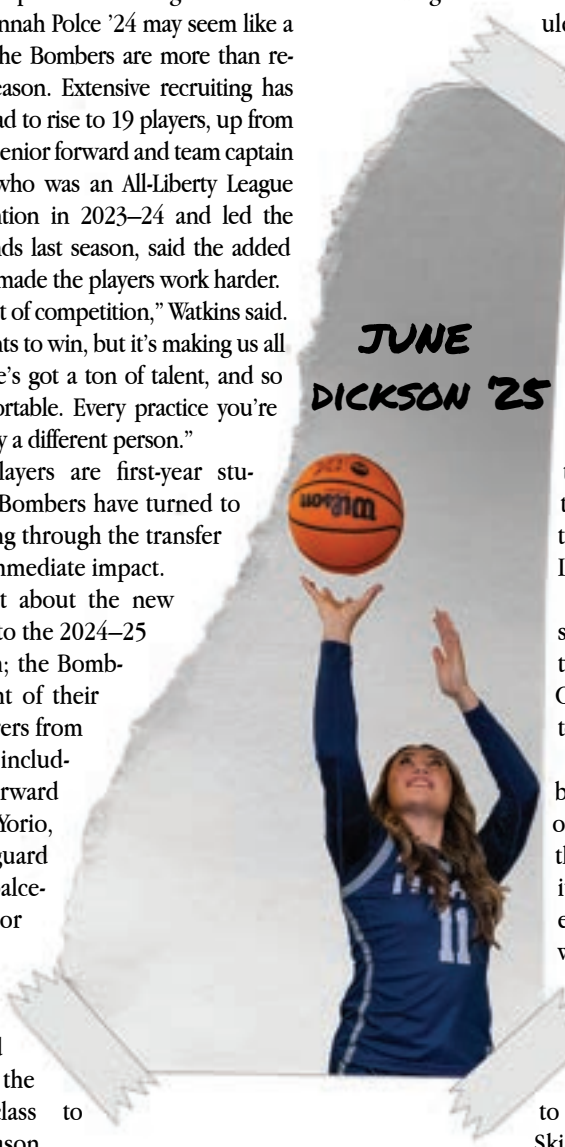
"We want to come back and redeem ourselves, show that that was a fluke, that it never should have even happened that way," Watkins said.

"I think it goes across the whole team. Everybody wants to beat Vassar and Skidmore — ask anybody on the team. The next game is always the most important, but those girls have a target on their back."

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ANYA WATKINS '25



JUNE DICKSON '25

WRESTLING AIMS TO PIN DOWN A NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

BY JACOB INFALD
STAFF WRITER

After sending five athletes to the NCAA National Championship meet in the 2023–24 season, the Ithaca College wrestling team is locked in this year as it strives to put enough individuals on the podium to win the long-eluded NCAA Division III Wrestling Team Championship — something the team has not secured since 1994.

The Bombers are returning four national qualifiers from last season; juniors Isaias Torres and Ryan Galka who wrestle at 133 and 197 lbs respectfully, along with seniors Wen-chard Pierre-Louis and Jackson Gray who wrestle at 149/157 lbs and 174 lbs, respectfully.

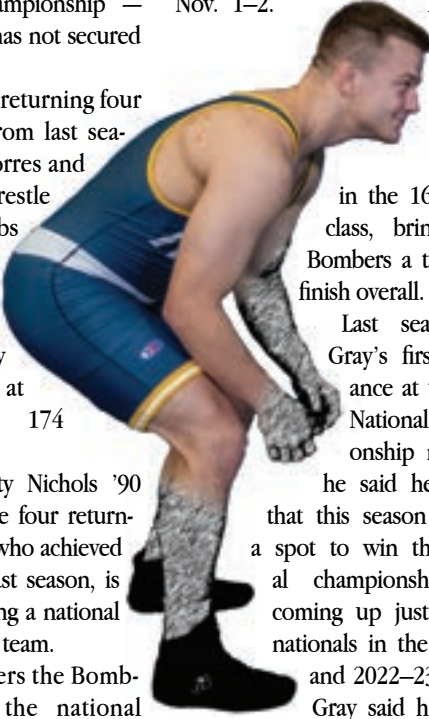
Head coach Marty Nichols '90 said that having these four returners, including Torres who achieved All-American status last season, is a great start in building a national championship caliber team.

The more wrestlers the Bombers can send to the national championship meet, the more opportunities they have to score points and get on the podium. Last year, Torres scored 12.5 points with his seventh place finish in the 133 lb weight class,

leading the Bombers to a 29th place finish overall.

“To have those four guys, different weight classes, wrestling with the other guys on the team is a huge help,” Nichols said. “Brings everyone’s level up across the board.”

The South Hill squad got off to a strong start this season at the annual Ithaca Invitational from Nov. 1–2.



JACKSON GRAY '25

They were led by junior Konrad Parker who won in the 165/174 lbs class, bringing the Bombers a third-place finish overall.

Last season was Gray’s first appearance at the NCAA National Championship meet and he said he believes that this season he is in a spot to win the national championship. After coming up just short of nationals in the 2021–22 and 2022–23 seasons, Gray said he learned to enjoy the process rather than putting too much pressure on himself.

“There’s no reason to get caught up in how you’re doing in the regular season,” Gray said. “You just gotta get better everyday.”

Gray said that his teammates are in great shape and that their preseason preparation over the summer is showing. However, what has stood out to him is the strong first-year class of 10.

“They’re bringing the energy this year, and they’re very committed,” Gray said. “I haven’t felt that with a freshmen class before.”

This large incoming class adds to an abundance of youth in the room as the Bombers also return 10 sophomores, one of them being Jake Jones.

Jones took the country by storm as a first-year student, placing fifth at the NCAA Mideast Regional Championships in the 184 lb weight class, as well as leading the team in falls with 24.

Jones said he is not satisfied with these results from last season. He has slimmed down drastically and is

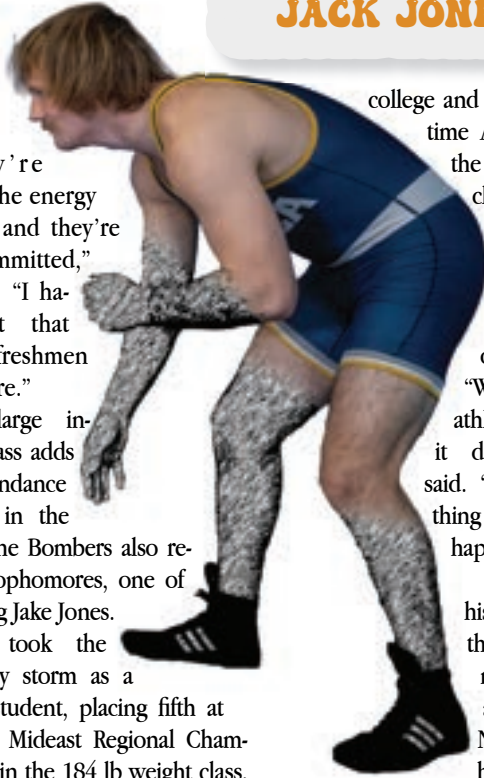
looking to wrestle in the 157 and 165 lb weight classes this season.

He said the weight loss is leaving him feeling more confident.

“Stuff’s different this year,” Jones said. “I’m ready to take on the country.”

Nichols, who won a team national championship as an athlete at the

JACK JONES '27



college and was a multiple time All-American in the 150 lb weight class, understands what it takes to succeed at the highest levels of the sport. “We have the athletes to get it done,” Nichols said. “I think something special could happen.”

Outside of his four athletes that qualified for nationals and are returning, Nichols said he believes there are plenty of other strong athletes like Jones, Parker and senior Xavier Pommells (174/184 lbs). Pommells is in his second season as a Bomber after wrestling for two years at

Nassau Community College, where he was a national qualifier in 2022–23 and a district champion in 2021–22. Pommells’ last season was cut short because of an injury.

Jones credits much of the team’s success to his coach. He said Nichols is one of the best coaches he has been trained by and his enthusiasm helps elevate the squad.

“Coach Nichols, he’s an artist of the sport,” Jones said. “He makes the practices fun and he really helps us learn from what our mistakes are.”

Last season the Bombers defeated No. 23 Springfield College, won the New York State Championships and took second place at both the SUNYAC and Mideast Regional Tournaments. Despite these strong results, the South Hill squad found themselves left outside the national rankings most of the season.

“I feel like we’re not getting the recognition we should, but it just creates more of a desire for us to build something special,” Jones said. “We want to prove to the country that we’re to reckon with.”

Gray said that this year a national championship win does not seem as out of reach compared to years past.

“I truly think that the room is different,” Gray said. “The energy is so much more focused and I really think we can pull it together this year.”

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GYMNASTICS BALANCES DEPTH AND TOUGH COMPETITION

BY JOHNNY LISI
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Almost — that was the theme of the 2024 season for the Ithaca College gymnastics team. Razor-sharp margins at each meet, but it wasn’t enough.

In their seven team losses last season, the Bombers had an average margin of defeat of 2.918 points. Their closest meet came against rival SUNY Cortland with a paper-thin defeat of 0.3 points. One of the consistent gymnasts last year was junior Emily Kobusky on the balance beam.

“Last year we were a strong team,” Kobusky said. “We just had some confidence issues, and a lack of confidence in our own training.”

Last season, the Bombers were plagued by injuries and a lack of depth on the uneven bars. On bars, the team averaged about 9.213 points out of 10.

They came in fifth out of six teams at the Empire State Collegiate Championships hosted at Cornell University and fourth out of seven teams at the National Collegiate Gymnastics Association East Regional Championship hosted at Ben Light Gymnasium. This season, the team should be much deeper on the uneven bars with three first-year students.

Senior Nicole Lonski, representing the team on the uneven bars, floor exercise and vault, said early success is important for the directory of the whole season.

“I think last year we were a little bit lax on getting routines together,” Lonski said. “So then that goes back to affecting our confidence. Getting ready earlier will have people being more competitive.”

This season, unlike last year, the team has five graduating seniors after losing no seniors last season.

Lonski said she has embraced the

leadership role and treats it very seriously.

“As the upperclassmen we have just been working on making sure that the first-years feel included,” Lonski said. “[We are] making sure that they feel confident in their position on the team.”

This team is led by Ithaca College Hall of Famer, head coach Rick Suddaby, who is entering his 40th year coaching the team.

On his team are multiple All-Americans: Kobusky on balance beam, junior Grace Murray on floor exercise, senior Skye Cohen in the all-around and senior Jillian Freyman on beam.

“I have a good sense of sitting back and seeing the whole picture,” Suddaby said. “I have experience in helping athletes build confidence and how to get an athlete to be more coachable and how to pull a team together and unify us. ... We can have little successes, but we don’t really succeed till we go as a team. And so to build that team unity, the team vision, the team goals, the team support system, it’s just all very critical.”

Suddaby referenced depth as a reason for why the Bombers struggled last season.

“If someone is injured or sick, and we have to replace them, we want to be able to replace them with someone who can score almost as much as the person who is being replaced,” Suddaby said via email. “This makes us deep and increases our ability to be competitive at any given meet. In our second meet, we lost our top bar worker to a season-ending knee injury. We lost what was likely to be a 9.7.”

Consistency was also an issue for the team as they only had three gymnasts out of a 21-person roster that averaged a score of 9.5 or better. Those athletes were sophomore Lauren Babineaux (9.468),

senior Abby Chesshire (9.483) and Kobusky (9.650).

Depth is very important in the sport of college gymnastics, especially when you are going against top competition at every single meet.

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senior Abby Chesshire (9.483) and Kobusky (9.650).

Depth is very important in the sport of college gymnastics, especially when you are going against top competition at every single meet.

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their biggest competitor this season.

The Brockport Golden Eagles have won the last four NCGA East Region Championships and have a history of success.

“Of course we’re dying to beat Brockport,” Lonski said. “They’ve been the league forever, and we just want to be at that competitive level. ... We’re after. And we have to be good at what we do and be confident, and then we could win.”

Two times that the South Hill squad faced Brockport during the previous season, they came close to the first meet, losing by just 0.05 points while the Golden Eagles scored a 4.775-point victory during the second head-to-head matchup.

Bombers have only beaten Brockport seven times and have lost 18 meets against them.

Still, the South Hill squad wants to be competitive and in the adversity of being at the bottom of the NCGA East Regional Championship last year, and not being a team for the NCGA Championships.

“I’m really excited,” Kobusky said. “Our training looks good, and I think that we have a great shot

at our training looks good, and I think that we have a great shot at winning the season-opening meet for the Ithaca College Gymnastics team on Wednesday, Feb. 2 p.m. Jan. 12 against Brockport at home in the Ben Light Gymnasium. With much at stake, the Bombers are looking to turn around the way they had last season.

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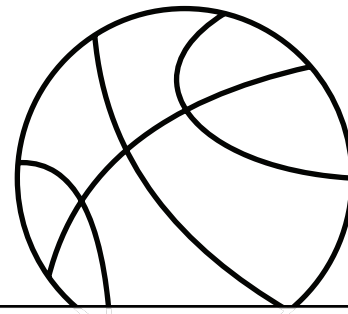
NICOLE LONSKI

NOTABLE STATISTICS 2023-24

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL



RECORD: 21-6
HIGHEST 3-POINT SHOT PERCENTAGE IN THE LIBERTY LEAGUE
MOST POINTS PER GAME IN THE LIBERTY LEAGUE
MISSED NCAA TOURNAMENT FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 2015-16



MEN'S BASKETBALL

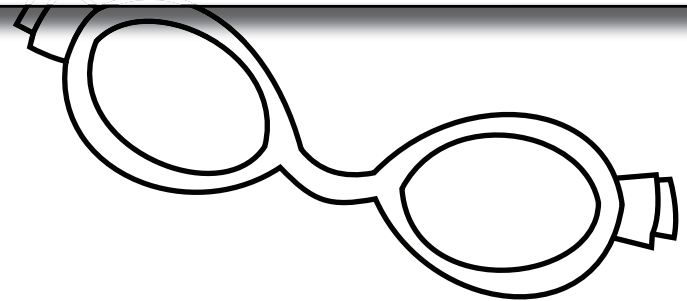


RECORD: 12-13
SECOND IN LIBERTY LEAGUE FOR POINTS PER GAME
MOST 3-POINT SHOTS MADE IN THE LIBERTY LEAGUE
MISSED LEAGUE PLAYOFFS FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE 2016-17 SEASON

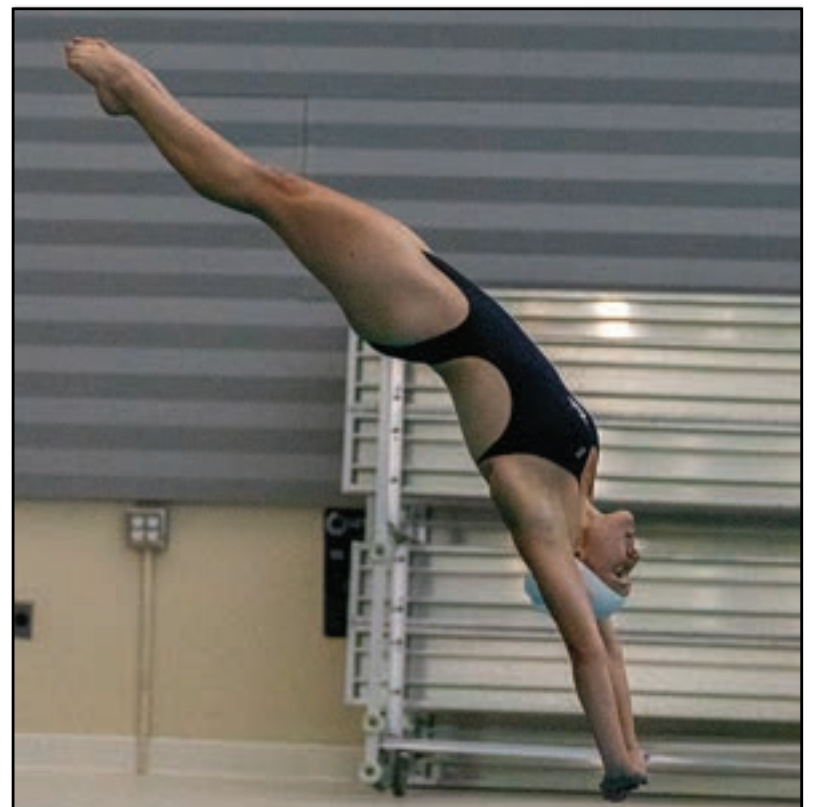
MEN'S SWIM AND DIVE



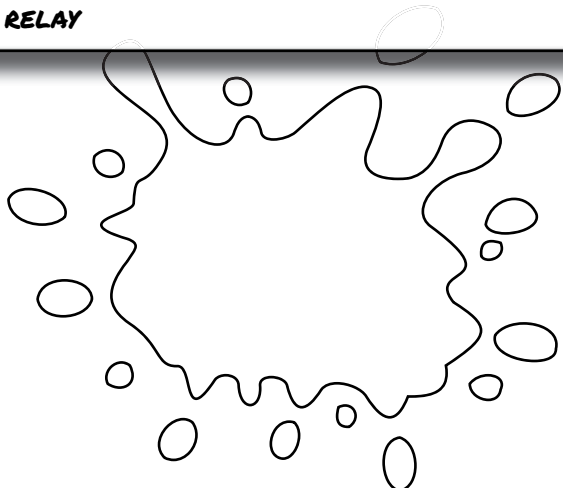
RECORD: 10-4
PLACED SECOND OUT OF 10 TEAMS IN THE LIBERTY LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIPS
QUALIFIED FOR NATIONALS IN THE 200-METER TEAM FREESTYLE RELAY



WOMEN'S SWIM AND DIVE



RECORD: 10-4
ACCOLADE: TEAM LIBERTY LEAGUE CHAMPIONS
KAILEE PAYNE: NATIONAL CHAMPION IN 1- AND 3-METER DIVING EVENTS



MEN'S TRACK AND FIELD



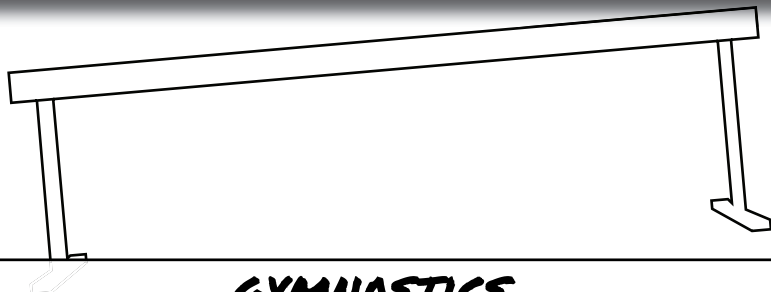
PLACED SIXTH AT THE LIBERTY LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIPS
PLACED 20TH AT AARTFC CHAMPIONSHIPS
THREE INDIVIDUAL USTFCCA INDOOR ALL-REGION HONORS BY EVENT

1	2	3	4	5	6

WOMEN'S TRACK AND FIELD



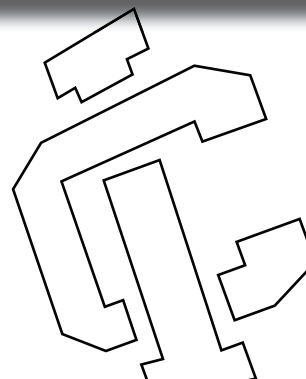
PLACED SECOND AT THE LIBERTY LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIPS
PLACED 11TH AT AARTFC CHAMPIONSHIPS
SEVEN INDIVIDUAL USTFCCA INDOOR ALL-REGION HONORS BY EVENT



GYMNASTICS



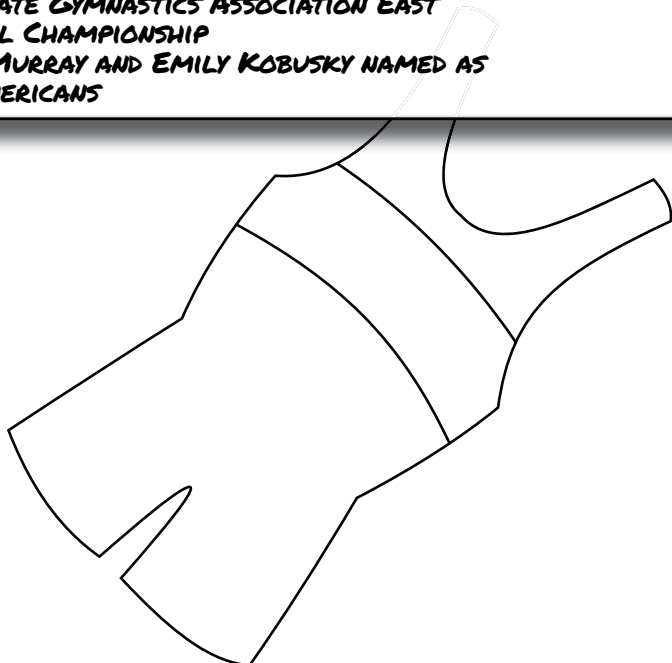
3-7 SEASON RECORD
PLACED FOURTH OUT OF SEVEN TEAMS AT THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE GYMNASTICS ASSOCIATION EAST REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
GRACE MURRAY AND EMILY KOBUSKY NAMED AS ALL-AMERICANS



WRESTLING



RECORD: 14-5
PLACED SECOND OUT OF 21 TEAMS AT THE NCAA MIDEAST REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
FOUR INDIVIDUAL NATIONAL QUALIFIERS



WOMEN'S SWIM AND DIVE OVERPOWERS ITS OPPONENTS

BY DAVID SCHURTER

ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Despite having no pool in the preseason, the Ithaca College women's swimming and diving team has started the regular season off strong with a 3-1 record so far — demonstrating that the Bombers are ready to compete for a sixth straight Liberty League Championship win.

The team faced some challenges in 2023-24 with its first season under head coach Mike

Blakely-Armitage '00, finishing with a 10-4 record and losing many top-performing seniors to graduation. Last season, despite the Bombers winning the Liberty League, the team finished 5-2 in conference competition, just short of the expectations set by the previous undefeated season.

This season, the team has defeated the Scranton University Royals, the Worcester Polytechnic Institute Engineers and the Roger Williams University Hawks, along with a loss to the Rensselaer

Polytechnic Institute Engineers.

After a tough defeat at the hands of the RPI Engineers, Blakely-Armitage said the competition within the Liberty League will be the toughest challenge on the schedule for the team this season.

"We had a lot of promising performances by both swimmers and divers against RPI," Blakely-Armitage said via email. "I am confident that the performances that we had this weekend put us in a good position to be a top team in our league this year."

Sophomore butterfly/IM swimmer Kathleen Papiernik broke the team record by 1.71 seconds in the 200-yard butterfly at the Liberty League

Championship last season. She said the team spent the preseason outside of the pool because some scheduled maintenance caused the Kelsey Partridge Bird Natatorium to be unavailable. She said the team trained with exercises they do not normally try,

such as running to maintain aerobic strength. Despite not having a pool, the team was still prepared for the opening month of the season.

Papiernik is off to a strong start this season. The sophomore swam a 2:36.21 in the 200-yard breaststroke in the season-opening win over the Royals, as well as a 2:16.74 in the 200-yard IM against the WPI Engineers and Hawks.

Familiar to the national stage is senior diver Kailee Payne, who transferred to the college from Division I Marshall University in 2023. She said she is looking to build off of an impressive first season with the Bombers where she won the national titles in both the 1 and 3-meter diving events.

"Of course I'm looking for a repeat of last year because that would be an incredible end to my diving career," Payne said. "We are such a power force when it comes to Ithaca College swimming and diving. We are truly a family and it feels so special."

Payne said the sense of community and the team's like-minded commitment to sending a large group to nationals is what led to her joining the Bombers as a junior.

"[The team was] really with me every step of the way when I reached some pretty low lows, even my high highs," Payne said. "It's also this work

ethic that I have and I've had since day one. I want to keep pushing myself and I want to be at the top."

Diving coach Chris Griffin said the team is hoping to send another large group of divers to nationals with a heavy upperclassmen presence and some new first-year students.

"We have some very strong returners," Griffin said. "We've got some young up-and-comers who were training to help start to refill in those ranks as some of our seniors graduate out."

Following last season's championship, Blakely-Armitage said the team is emphasizing building consistent performances during the season and recruiting to fill gaps and eliminate weak points.

"In order to have a consistent presence, it means that your depth also has to be really good," Blakely-Armitage said.

Blakely-Armitage said for the team to reach its dominant presence, the team needs to maintain the mindset that every race is a championship.

"The consistency in training is something that truly makes people better and faster over the long term," Blakely-Armitage said. "They're learning about being competitive when it matters the most, and not only just being fast at our championship meets, but being consistently fast throughout the year."



KATHLEEN PAPIERNIK '27

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MEN'S SWIM AND DIVE CHALLENGES TTC ADDED CAPTEC

BY BILLY WOOD

STAFF WRITER

Coming off a fifth consecutive second place finish in the Liberty League Championship Tournament last season, the Ithaca College men's swimming and diving team is looking to rely on mental strength and a selfless squad to challenge the daunting Rochester Institute of Technology this season.

One of the key differences on this season is the absence of numerous performers that were with the team year. To employ the depth approach Blakely-Armitage will look to everyone up and down the roster, but there are particular swimmers who have stood out in taking the reins thus far. Blakely-Armitage said many swimmers will be involved in leading the team forward.

"I would say that one of our seniors [senior freestyle/butterfly] Matt Mitros is definitely going to be a leader in the pool looking at," Blakely-Armitage said. "I'm looking at people like [sophomore freestyle/backstroke] Alec Kutsner. I think [sophomore freestyle/backstroke] Marshall Adan [sophomore backstroke] Evan Wardrop going to be in the mix there."

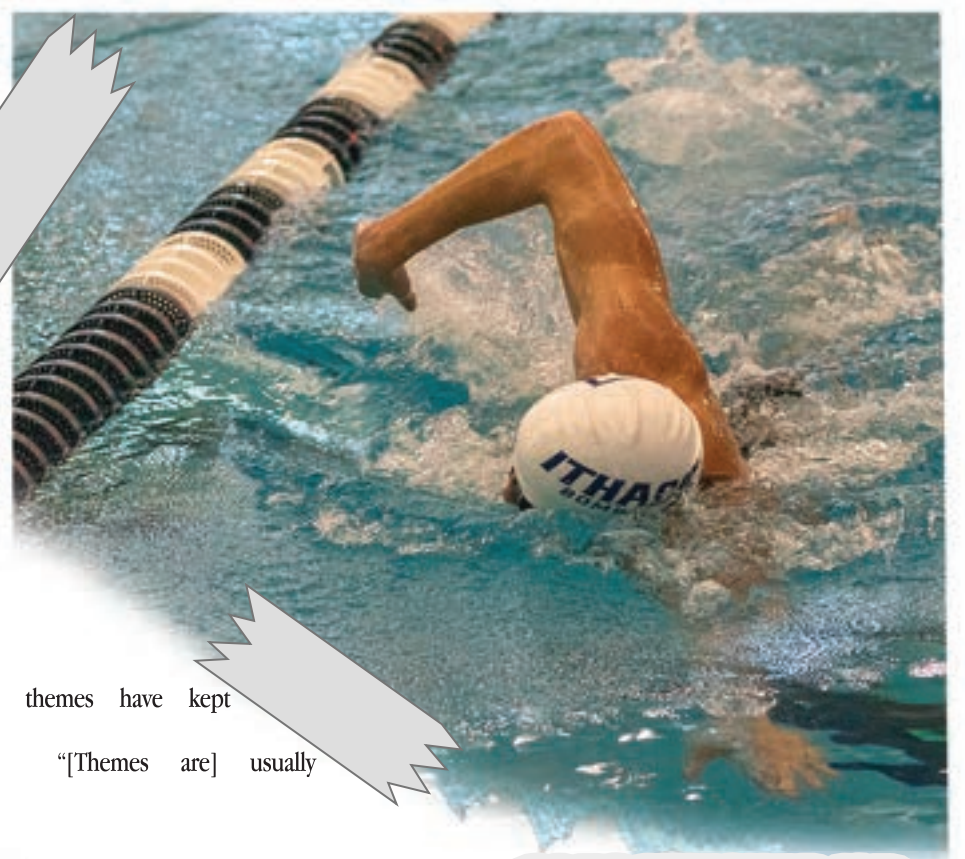
With an 18-to-15 ratio of underclassmen to upperclassmen, many underclassmen like Kutsner, Adams and a drop have earned their way into prominent positions on the team.

"The first-years and the guys that are returning recognize that they have to earn their spots," Blakely-Armitage said. "At the end of the day, somebody would rather have the team win than have to have that accolade whatever. They want the team wins."

Kutsner said the team used an app over the summer to track lifts and workouts.

"We started preseason when we got here," Kutsner said. "It was mainly just lifts and then we did team activities. Then we really got into swimming and we had Scranton for our first meet, so it's been a while since we started swimming."

Blakely-Armitage said the coaching staff has instituted themes based on the book "Wolfpack" by Abby Wambach each week. Senior diver Samuel Smith said the



themes have kept

"[Themes are] usually

ALEC KUTSNER '27

last season, which include Smith, senior Ethan Godfrey and junior Kian Long. Both Godfrey and Long competed at regionals last season.

Smith is entering only his second year of diving after he was discovered by divers on the team. Smith has found a natural knack for diving and coach Chris Griffin emphasized the tightness of the group, saying he is looking forward to how far the team can go.

"We got a strong group," Griffin said. "I'm interested to see how this group of guys really just develop through the season. We got big competitions against RIT and SUNY Geneseo.

both these teams have some of the top swimmers in the country."

While men's diving has been around the top of the Liberty League for the past five years, the women's team has been dominant. Griffin said he is trying to invigorate the men's side to get to that same point.

"We have a very strong women's diving culture here and the men's diving culture has been something we're trying to build those numbers on," Griffin said. "It's great to have a group of guys who are focused."

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SAM SMITH '25

NEW AND OLD FACES FUEL WOMEN'S TRACK AND FIELD GOALS

BY CHARLES SCHAFF

CONTRIBUTOR

National and Liberty League title for the women's track and field team. With powerhouse coaching, the team's dominance at the national championships.

The team's performance, which Herlihy said is a squad more than an individual, ranked the 2024 Liberty League Indoor Championships is ready to win.

Senior Cecelia Suppa said, "[Winning the championship is] something we haven't gotten to do. It's a little bit of a down year last year, but we're definitely taking that as motivation."

Last season, the team placed 14th in the hurdles. Earlier in the season, she placed fifth in the 100-meter dash at the Liberty League Indoor Championships.

Suppa said she wants to improve on her performance this year. "I want to win individual events and make another national appearance."

at the national championships.

their events and putting in all the time. "We're going to get better and make a name for ourselves at Liberty League by that."

In pole vault, junior Bree Boyle was the Bombers' top performer, finishing fourth at both the 2024 Liberty League Indoor and Outdoor Championships.

Junior distance runner Kyla Eisman is also set to make an impact. In the 2023 cross-country season, Eisman qualified for nationals and took first place in three events during the 2023-24 indoor season, including the 5,000-meter race at the Liberty League championship.

With the goal of winning the Liberty League championship, the team has also made some changes to the coaching staff. Stargell Williams is the new throwing coach for the team and Dom Mikula '24 is coaching pole vault.

Prior to coaching, Mikula was an athlete for the college, setting multiple school records for pole vault with multiple All-American awards. Head coach Jennifer Potter was coaching hurdles before, but has now added the role of coaching sprints. Erin Dinan, the head coach for men's and women's cross-country, is coaching distance events.

Potter said the team sought out new short sprinters, an area where they struggled last year. Potter said she is excited to see how athletes like first-year student sprinters Ella Tucker, Aynisha McQuillar and Marykate Rudnicki perform.

"I really feel strong about the depth," Potter said. "I feel like we're going to do very well

scoring in all event areas ... from sprints and hurdles to jumps and distance and throws."

With all of these returners, the Bombers will also feel the absence of standout thrower Lily Seyfert this season. Last year, Seyfert earned Liberty League Indoor Honorable Mention in shot put and was named to the USTFCCA Indoor All-Region team for shot put.

Some teams the Bombers are anticipating tough competition from are the University of Rochester Yellowjackets, the Rochester Institute of Technology Tigers and the Vassar College Brewers.

Last season, the Yellowjackets claimed first place in the 2024 Liberty League Indoor Championships, while the Tigers and Brewers finished third and fourth, respectively.

However, winning the Liberty League Championships is not the team's only goal, according to Potter.

"There's a lot of tradition of excellence within our program," Potter said. "As an alum and someone who ran here, it's exciting to see the continuation and the elevation of the level of success of the program. I think that continuity and that belief is really strong for us in that we don't want to just win Liberty Leagues, we want to perform at the national level."

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MEN'S TRACK AND FIELD GEARS UP FOR REBOUND SEASON

BY FLYNN HYNES

SPORTS EDITOR

Finish times for the Ithaca College men's track and field team fell hard last season — its lowest results in former head coach Jim Nichols' history of coaching the team. Looking ahead to the season, senior pole vaulter Shaun Herlihy said the team is out for vengeance.

"It was more of a wake-up call than anything," Herlihy said. "I think we knew it was a little bit of a down year last year, but we're definitely taking that as motivation."

With a fresh leader and a packed roster, the Bombers are back with the goal of rising toward the top of the Liberty League again. Last season, the Bombers had a sixth-place finish in the 2024 Liberty League Indoor Championships and a tie for 20th at the All-Atlantic Region Track & Field Conference Indoor Championships.

This result was unusual. Under Nichols, the Bombers were a powerhouse, winning 19 indoor conference championships over 36 seasons. In the regional championships, their lowest finish before last season was 10th place, and they placed in the top five in 28 regional championships.

After the season, Nichols retired, opening the position to head coach Stargell Williams.

"I'm excited to lead my own program," Williams said. "It's sad leaving somewhere you worked for so long, but at the same time, it's time for me to spread my wings and fly."

Before joining the college, Williams spent six years at Ursinus College, where he served as associate head coach, throws coach and recruiting coordinator. As an elite student-athlete, he was a two-time All-American at Coffeyville Community College and a three-time national champion thrower at Florida State University, where he graduated in 2015.

Williams said it is clear that every athlete on the team has the drive to be

a fierce competitor.

"I think we got kids that are just hungry to get better," Williams said. "Change is different and it's difficult, but ... I can kind of see them this year just being hungry to get better and just improve."

The team's roster inflated from 38 members to 53 members, including 20 new first-year students. Herlihy said the first-year students have a high level of potential. Williams and Herlihy said they are expecting first-year student multi Rhys Tickner to have a good season. With that, the Bombers also have some key performers returning from injuries, like Herlihy, junior pole vaulter Rob George and junior hurdler and jumper Brett Atkin. Herlihy said the injuries largely affected the team last season.

"In the fall, we were able to see them and see what they're going to do," Herlihy said. "Then this spring came around, we just weren't actually able to see

Outdoor Field Performer of the Year twice, a seven-time NCAA Qualifier and Indoor Niagara Region Field Athlete of the Year. Mikula transitioned from student-athlete to assistant coach to benefit the team in a different way.

Then-sophomore CJ Jones, who had last season's best 200-meter time, has also left the team. Even with the turnover, Herlihy said he thinks the team has the potential to make a deep run in the Liberty League.

In addition to a revamped roster, the Bombers have expanded their coaching staff beyond Williams. Mikula will coach pole vault, and Jennifer Potter, head coach of the women's track and field team, will oversee sprints, hurdles and relays for both teams. Erin Dinan, head coach of men's and women's cross-country, will handle distance events

squad, replacing former assistant

coach from a recruiting perspective for us. [I'm] definitely excited for all facets of [the coaching staff]."

Some key returners the Bombers have are sophomore Joseph Napolitano in hurdles and jumps, juniors Noah McKibben and Matt Lokshin as multis and junior Ben Buffone in the distance events. Last season, McKibben and Lokshin were the Bombers' strongest performers in the heptathlon events, placing third and fourth in the 2024 Liberty League Indoor Championships, respectively.

For this year's Bombers' squad, sophomore sprinter George Nilson said it is the chemistry that separates them from the rest of the league.

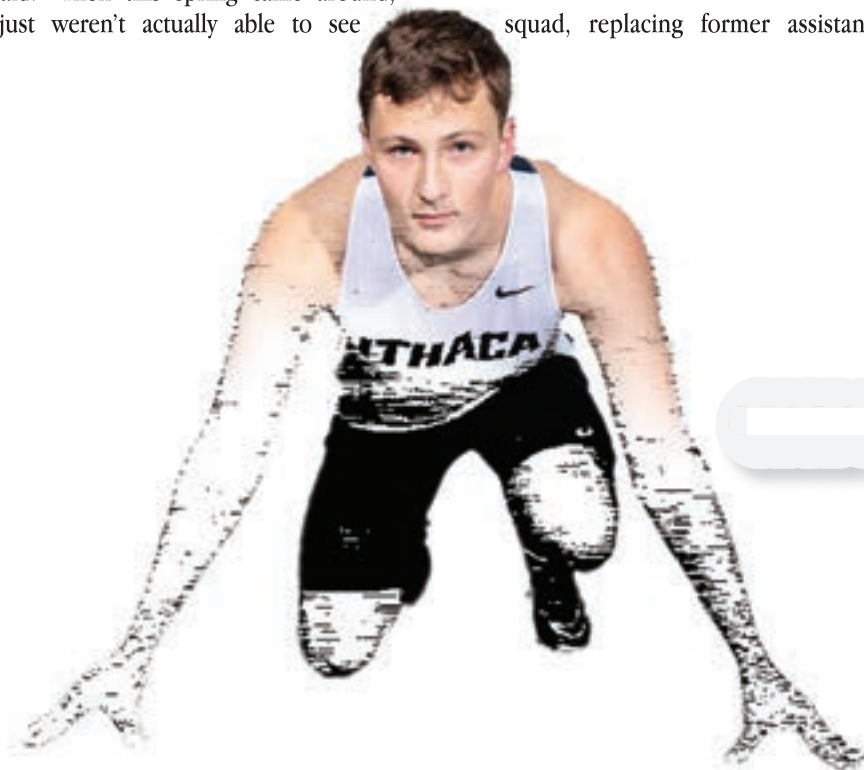
"We've just grown closer because we spend more time together, and we've all tried to really welcome the large freshman class," Nilson said. "We're also closer with the women's team, because we're just working closer together and we're all coached by the same coaches now. So I think that will help the team dynamic of us supporting each other."

To capture the Liberty League title, the Bombers will face tough competition, including the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Engineers, who won last season's indoor Liberty League championship by 47.5 points and the outdoor league titles by 95.5 points. Additionally, the Bombers will have to go against

the University of Rochester Yellowjackets, a team that placed second in both the indoor and outdoor league titles. Nilson said tough competitors are a core part of the Bombers' motivation.

"I think it's good that there's good competition everywhere in each event, because all that competition pushes our guys," Nilson said.

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HOME CALENDAR 2024-25

MEN'S BASKETBALL

NOV 13 VS CORTLAND
 DEC 6 VS VASSAR
 DEC 7 VS BARD
 DEC 10 VS HAMILTON
 JAN 4 VS CARNEGIE MELLON
 JAN 17 VS CLARKSON
 JAN 18 VS ST. LAWRENCE
 JAN 31 VS HOBART
 FEB 1 VS UNION
 FEB 7 VS SKIDMORE
 FEB 8 VS RPI
 FEB 11 VS RIT

TRACK AND FIELD

JAN 4: ITHACA COLLEGE ALUMNI CELEBRATION
 JAN 18: ITHACA COLLEGE QUAD
 FEB 1-2: BOMBER INVITATIONAL
 FEB 28 - MARCH 1: LIBERTY LEAGUE INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS
 MARCH 7-8: AARTFC INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

SWIM AND DIVE

NOV 2 VS RPI
 NOV 9 VS CORTLAND
 NOV 23 VS RIT
 DEC 6-8: BOMBER INVITATIONAL
 JAN 25 VS GANNON
 JAN 26: DICK COMANZO DIVING INVITATIONAL
 FEB 8: GENECA DIVING INVITATIONAL
 FEB 19-22: LIBERTY LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIPS

WRESTLING



JAN 5 VS OSWEGO
 JAN 5 VS NASSAU COMMUNITY COLLEGE
 JAN 5 VS VERMONT STATE CASTLETON
 FEB 12 VS CORTLAND
 FEB 19 VS ST. JOHN FISHER

GYMNASTICS

JAN 12 VS BROCKPORT
 FEB 12 VS CORTLAND
 FEB 16 VS BROCKPORT
 MARCH 2 VS SPRINGFIELD

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

NOV 13 VS CORTLAND
 NOV 19 VS ST. JOHN FISHER
 NOV 23 VS NEW PALTZ
 DEC 6 VS VASSAR
 DEC 7 VS BARD
 JAN 17 VS CLARKSON
 JAN 18 VS ST. LAWRENCE
 JAN 31 VS WILLIAM SMITH
 FEB 1 VS UNION
 FEB 7 VS SKIDMORE
 FEB 8 VS RPI
 FEB 11 VS RIT



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