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# Yale men's basketball releases schedule and picks up bulletin-board inspiration for 2017-18

July 29, 2017 by Rob Browne

There was a minor shock send through college basketball earlier this week, when Jaelin Llewellyn committed to Princeton for the fall of 2018. Llewellyn, a 6'2" point guard from Canada attending the Virginia Episcopal School, is a four-star recruit that chose the Tigers over Virginia, Purdue, Northwestern, Clemson, Minnesota, Stanford, Georgetown, Georgia Tech, Wake Forest, George Washington, Creighton, Rhode Island, UNLV, and conference rival Harvard.

A few weeks earlier, the Crimson recruited its own four-star point guard for the class of 2022, Spencer Freedman. The Santa Monica native chose Harvard over USC and Washington of the PAC-12.

Following an undefeated championship conference regular season, a postseason league tournament title, and a near upset of No. 5 seed Notre Dame in 2017, Princeton lost four of the league's most outstanding players to graduation. However, the program's tremendous depth leaves them with three experienced all-league players who will help the Tigers challenge for the top spot in 2017-18.

After five straight regular season league titles between 2011 and 2015, including two NCAA Tournament victories, Harvard dropped to fourth in an injury-plagued season in 2016. In 2017, the team rebounded to a second place finish with the help of many players who were part of a recruiting class that was ranked, nationally, in the top 10. With a year of experience, the Crimson look to bring the title back to Cambridge in 2018.

The addition of two more elite recruits for the fall of 2018 increases the likelihood that Princeton and Harvard will continue to compete for Ivy dominance as well as mid-major prominence.

Earlier this week, Joseph Nardone at FanRag Sports [noted](#) the success of these two programs and the importance they play in the growth of the league. While it is understandable for him to relate this situation to Gonzaga, St. Mary's and the West Coast Conference, the writer fails to note that the Ivy League has a third team that should be included in this conversation.

Over the last four seasons, Yale has won 67 percent (82-41) of its games, including 75 percent (42-14) of its league contests. The Bulldogs were conference co-champions in 2015 and solo champions in 2016. In their first appearance in the NCAA Tournament since 1962, the No. 12 seed Bulldogs upset the No. 5 seed Baylor Bears and almost shocked the No. 4 Duke Blue Devils. After losing four starters from the 2015-16 team, the team looked to rebuild around the last remaining starter from that team, Makai Mason. Unfortunately, Mason, a 2016 first-team All-Ivy and 2017 Player of the Year candidate, suffered a season-ending injury in the preseason. With five new starters and major minutes from two first-years, Yale was able to secure an 18-11 record, third place in the conference regular season and an upset victory over Harvard in the postseason tournament semifinal.

The 2016 recruiting class included a three-star point guard, Eric Monroe, and a four-star forward, Jordan Bruner, who chose Yale over Richmond, Georgia, UCF, Temple, Tennessee, and Clemson. Another first-year, Miye Oni, earned a spot on Yale's starting five and the Second-Team All-Ivy team. For this upcoming season, the Bulldogs are bringing in a strong five player class, headlined by 6-10 forward Paul Atkinson, the Sun Sentinel's South Florida Player of the Year, and 6-0 combo guard Azar Swain, the Massachusetts Gatorade Player of the Year.

For the class of 2018, Yale has received its first commitment from Eze Dike-Nwagbara, a two-star recruit with four-star confidence. "First I'm coming for that Yale degree and an NCAA title and then I have my heart set on the NBA or pro level overseas," Dike-Nwagbara [told](#) North Pole Hoops last month.

Makai Mason will return for the upcoming season. He stayed in school during his missed 2016-17 season in order to graduate in 2018 and preserve a year of athletic eligibility as a graduate transfer. Based on his first two years of play, as well as his strong performance in the 2016 NCAA Tournament, major powers were fighting to secure his services for the 2018-19 season. In the end, Mason chose Baylor over 2015 National Champion Duke, 2017 National Runner-Up Gonzaga and perennial power Notre Dame.

participants (Harvard at home; Princeton and Penn on the road) over the next four games. Yale will then face Cornell and Columbia four of the next six games with road contests against Harvard and Dartmouth in between. The Bulldogs will end the regular season at home against Penn and Princeton, before an expected conference tournament semifinal game at the Palestra on March 10.

Earlier this summer, Mid-Major Madness [made note](#) of the strength of the Ivy League's upper echelon, listing the Crimson, the Tigers, and the Bulldogs as the top mid-major programs in each school's state. By the end of the 2017-18 campaign, the Elis hope to claim the conference title as well as the conference's NCAA bid while showing the nation that the Ivy League is a top mid-major conference and that they themselves are an established power that deserves to be mentioned in the same breath as Princeton and Harvard.

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## 1 thought on “Yale men’s basketball releases schedule and picks up bulletin-board inspiration for 2017-18”



**Alan Dvorkis**

July 31, 2017 at 6:39 pm | Reply

I am thrilled that Princeton got Llewellyn. It is refreshing to hear that some kids still care about education. I am not thrilled that the author cares that the ivy becomes a “top mid major conference”. I hate the term mid major. It feeds into the rigged game college hoops has become. TPTB continue to create the haves and the have nots. It ends rivalries. Sick of the ridiculous seedings and draws they get, Wich st joined Creighton in leaving the Mo Valley. Davidson and other schools from smaller conferences have done the same. It is a sad state of affairs. Even though the Ivies joined the fray with their beyond ridiculous ivy league tournament, I doubt, that any school will be leaving the league soon. Princeton could soon make an NCAA run. Henderson has won with less talent. He will tweak his offense to make the pg more relevant. I look forward to their success. However, I remain ill that money has driven this once pure game, to a glorified NBA minor league. I can not wait for the next rule change that favors the more talented teams. Luckily Princeton will show, that smarts and hoops can work together to win. I doubt Roy Williams could ever fathom that concept.

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