UNH Football: Wildcats Successful Home Opener and the Season Ahead

Dina Rathke, Sports Writer

Durham N.H.- The University of New Hampshire Football team (2-3, 0-2) played their home opener at Wildcat Stadium on Saturday, Sept. 16, to take on rival Dartmouth in the fight to retain the Granite Bowl. The Wildcats retained with a final score of 24-7 and added another win to their season that pushed them to a 2-1 record. The final score was not the only successful aspect of Saturday’s home opener, as there was a large fan turnout and support for the game.

UNH’s Director of Athletics, Allison Rich, shared with TNH the successes of the home opener, as well as her plans for the future of UNH Athletics in the coming year. “We had over seventy-five hundred tickets out, we had a lot of people who came out and enjoyed the pre-game festivities as well as the game, it was very exciting,” Rich said.

Since beginning her role as Director of Athletics last year, Rich has dedicated herself to building up UNH Athletics to not only benefit student-athletes but to strengthen our school community and reconnect students and spectators back to UNH Athletics. She cites the gameday atmosphere as the main draw for attendance, noting the importance of alumni and community members coming, students ready to cheer on the team, as well as the excitement of a new year and the hope of a new season.

“You felt the energy of the crowd, and that really helped our team”, Rich said. “You could really hear the student support. The band, the cheerleaders, the dancers, they make it such a great atmosphere, and our team is a lot of fun to watch, and all of those things together make it a great experience”.

Looking forward, Rich sees a promising future for not only UNH Football but UNH Athletics as a whole. She shared that fall athletics are already performing well and that she has observed all of the work that has gone into preparing for this year’s season and wants to continue to build off of that momentum.

UNH Athletics are more than a game and a tailgate, as Rich shared that college athletics benefit student-athletes through a great education, leadership opportunities, teamwork development, and learning how to experience failure. She also commented that athletics benefit our campus community because of the galvanizing nature of sports, and the community it creates as a group coming together to support the University.

“It unites people. No matter what [students] do on campus, no matter what [alumni] did on campus when they were students here, even if they are just community members, they come in and experience the excitement, and it’s everybody’s team” Rich said. “We are the flagship University of the state of New Hampshire, and we are New Hampshire’s team, and it is such a great fit with this community.”

The UNH Football team now sits at 2-3 on their bye-week and will return to Wildcat Stadium on Saturday, October 14th at 1:00 P.M. where they will face off against the University of Albany Great Danes (3-2, 1-0).