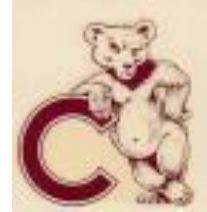




CCWW Sports Report No. 505
(September 28, 2017)
by
Rich Coyle '68



Greetings from Vermont's Northeast Kingdom, where the temperature yesterday was around 90° for the third day in a row. I'd love to believe our fearless leader that this climate change stuff is all a hoax, you know, "fake news," but it's hard. This should be the peak period for fall colors here in far northern New England but the leaves have barely begun to turn. (On the plus side, Vermont's cool July and warm September means we are still getting delicious, freshly-picked, New England sweet corn—about a month later than usual.) And while on the subject of climate, please don't forget our fellow Americans in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, even if it seemed for a while like the administration and the media had done just that—ignoring the Caribbean was apparently the only thing which Trump and CNN could tacitly agree to do. As y'all already know, the folks down there could really use our help. Here are some organizations specifically involved in Puerto Rico relief efforts:

<http://www.conprmetidos.org>.

<http://unidosporpuertorico.com/en/>.

Oh yes, Big Red sports. I often start composing these reports in my head as the weekend progresses. By noon on Saturday I was ready to write "the sky is falling." The Red had lost three straight Ivy League openers—to Columbia in women's soccer, to Penn in field hockey, and to Yale in football. But then things got better and the weekend turned into more of a mixed bag. Finally, it was clear that the success of the week would turn on Tuesday night's Men's Soccer match against Binghamton. It's not that I care that much about soccer—unlike most of my fellow Seattleites, I'm not that big a soccer fan. But I have a precept—I'll call it Rico's Bingo Rule. **No Cornell team should ever, ever lose to Binghamton in any sport.** Some haven't. For example, no Cornell lacrosse team—male or female—has ever lost to Binghamton. Neither has Men's or Women's Hockey (although that probably should not count because Bingo doesn't have hockey teams). Even the Bill Courtney-coached basketball teams, which lost to everyone, beat the Bearcats four times in six meetings. And Men's Soccer won only one game last fall but still managed a tie with Binghamton. So Tuesday's match took on some significance, at least to me. And I can report that Cornell followed Rico's Rule and emerged victorious. I'll get to that below. Anyway, here are the good and the bad from the past seven days.

Football. If we're going to discuss "the bad," this is as good a place to start as any. As the *Daily Sun* write-up put it, Cornell was "torched" by Yale. The final was 49-24. A Cornell defense that was solid in the first half wilted—big time—as the game wore on. The offense was up and down—mostly down—throughout the game.

Last week I listed three takeaways from the loss to Delaware. Other than the first, which was opponent-specific ("leave Delaware off next year's schedule"), one could take the same things away from this game. For the second week in a row, the Big Red defense played well in spots. Cornell's defensive leaders, co-captains **Nick Gesualdi '18** and **Kurt Frimel '18**, came to play, and the Yale offense was held scoreless for the first 28 minutes of the game. But at the end of the first half and throughout the second half, the Red could not make tackles, especially on Yale's elusive freshman, Zane Dudek, and for that they paid dearly.

Last week I thought the offense was "problematic," charitably calling the offensive line "a work in progress," and noting the difficulties that last year's offensive play-makers, QB **Dalton Banks '19** and RB **Chris Walker '19**, had. I'll make a similar observation about this game, although I need to downgrade the O-line from "work in progress" to "not getting it done." They opened few holes for the Red to establish a running game. If you exclude **Harold Coles '20's** 90-yard touchdown run, and even excluding the losses from a botched fake punt and Banks' scrambles, which were really not running plays, the Big Red only gained 56

yards on 23 carries. As for pass protection, Banks was under constant pressure, was sacked six times, after the last of which he left the game with an undisclosed injury.

As for the backs, Walker had a up-and-down game. Chris had five pass receptions, including a very nice TD catch, but he rushed for only 25 net yards in 11 carries. Banks was also inconsistent. The lack of pass protection, especially in the second half, was a factor but Dalton also missed his receivers and made some bad decisions, throwing to blanketed receivers. He had three first-half picks, one of which was negated by a roughing the passer call. A first-quarter INT was caused by a throw behind the receiver, resulting in a tipped ball and a pick-six for Yale's first score.

Can/should the Red make some offensive changes? I can't speak to the front line situation because I don't know what the alternatives are. But I have some thoughts about the running backs. Coles' touchdown run, the second-longest in Cornell history, was an eye-opener. Harold came to the Hill a year ago as a highly-touted recruit from western Pennsylvania but saw only limited action in his first year and carried the ball exactly twice. The 90-yard run was on the fifth carry of his Cornell career. Another fact: in all of his eight career carries, Coles has never failed to gain positive yards. Maybe Harold should be the primary tailback and Walker used more as a wide receiver—the position Chris played most of his high school career.

Then there's QB. If he's healthy, isn't it time to give Redmond's **Harley Kirsch '20**, the former 2015 Washington State Class 3A Player of the Year, a chance? Harley is a winner, who guided his Eastside Catholic team to back-to-back Class 3A titles in 2014 and 2015, going undefeated against Washington state teams both years. Banks has shown flashes of excellence but he has yet to prove that he is really "the man."

A final, and positive, note on the viewing experience. I mentioned previously that the game was televised by the Eleven Sports network, which seems to have about a billion subscribers in China but darn few in the USA. But that's okay, because the Ivy League Network carried the professional television feed, with multiple camera angles and lots of replay capability. We'll get the same experience in two weeks for the Harvard game. This week, the game (with Colgate, a 10:30 a.m PDT kickoff) will be a regular ILN stream with "Big Red Barry" Leonard behind the mike and the rather amateurish Cornell camera work and graphics.

Field Hockey lost its Ivy League opener, to Penn, by a 2-0 score. Although the Big Red came into the game with a 5-1 record, it had scored only one goal in four of those six games. The lack of offense bit the Red on Saturday. Cornell is now 5-2 overall, 0-1 in the league. At this point the Big Red probably need to win out in Ivy games to have any chance at the title. This weekend the Red host Columbia and Lock Haven.

Another team with a problem putting the ball in the net is **Women's Soccer**, which was shut out by Columbia in the Ivy opener, and also by Fairleigh Dickinson. The match with Columbia was a 2-0 loss but some stout goalkeeping by **Chrissy Mayer '20** (13 saves in her first Cornell start), salvaged a 0-0 tie with the Knights. The Red will try to even their Ivy record at Penn on Friday night.

Let's look at some things that worked out better. **Men's Soccer's** winning streak is now at three as the Big Red followed last week's upset win over No. 11 Syracuse with a come-from-behind 2-1 victory over St. Francis Brooklyn and the afore-mentioned take down of Binghamton. Credit a strong defense with the 'Cuse and St. Francis wins, especially back **Richie Hrcir '21**, who swept the Ivy League "OW" awards, winning both Player of the Week and Rookie of the Week. **Tommy Hansan '21's** second and third goals of the season accounted for all the Big Red scoring against St. Francis.

Binghamton was expected to pose a challenge as the Bearcats were coming off a 5-1 pasting of Canisius, a team Cornell lost to last week. And, in fact, Bingo scored four of the five goals in the match—the problem was two of those were into its own net, giving the Big Red a 3-2 victory. The Big Red now have a winning record (4-3-1) for the first time since the end of the 2014 season. Ivy League play begins Saturday night in Philadelphia against Penn.

Volleyball evened its record at 5-5 and got its Ivy League season off to a good start with a solid four-set victory over Columbia. The Big Red won the first set, let a five-point second-set lead get away and lost the set to the Lions, 26-24, but then easily closed out Columbia in the third and fourth sets to claim the win. **Emily Wemhoff '18's** career-high 23 kills and .405 hitting percentage led Cornell and earned her Ivy League POW honors. This weekend the Red visit Harvard and Dartmouth.

Women's Cross-Country competed at Franklin Park in Boston in the "Battle in Beantown" race and came away with a fifth-place finish against a strong 22-team field. Three of the four teams finishing ahead of Cornell were ranked in the national top-30 poll. The Big Red finished ahead of both Syracuse and Harvard, two teams that had received votes in that poll. Cornell remains No. 5 in the Northeast Region rankings, as they moved ahead of Syracuse but were jumped by Dartmouth, which finished fourth in Boston. Next up for Cornell will be the Paul Short Invitational on Friday in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

The most lopsided win by a Big Red team came from **Sprint Football**, which pounded CSFL newbie Caldwell (Formerly known as Caldwell College for Women, it's a university in northern New Jersey). The final score was 48-20, but the Red led 42-6 at one point. **Will Griffen '20's** three first-half touchdowns earned him CSFL Offensive POW honors. Next up is Mansfield University.

Finally, while most Cornell student-athletes compete for an Ivy League or ECAC championship, and a much smaller number are candidates for an individual or team national championship, world championships for Cornellians are pretty rare. So how about women's cross-country and track team member and triathlete **Taylor Knibb '20**, whom I've written about before in these pages? Earlier this month, Taylor won her second straight International Triathlon Union (ITU) Junior World Championship in Rotterdam in the Netherlands. Taylor has also started competing in senior events, has done very well in them, and may be a candidate for a Senior World Championship in the not-too-distant future.

That's all for now. **GO BIG RED!**