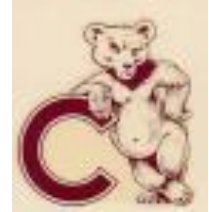




**CCWW Sports Report No. 506**  
**(October 5, 2017)**  
by  
Rich Coyle '68



I've never been much for grading individual or team performances but seeing how Cornell sports fared this past weekend made me think that maybe these ungraded reports have encouraged some slacking off. So here goes the CCWW Sports Report's first set of weekly grades. I'll do this as long as I can pretend it's doing some good, or until I get tired of the idea, which may be soon.

**A**

Sorry, no A's—or A+'s.

**A-**

As the only Cornell team that was undefeated and untied last weekend, **Sprint Football** gets an A-. Why, you might ask, after a 35-14 victory over Mansfield to go 2-0 on the young season, does that not rate an A? Well, I initially thought it did but two facts changed my mind. First, Mansfield is horrible. Not only are they 0-3 on this young season, but since joining the CSFL in 2009, they are 14-45. Worse than that, more than half of those wins were against Princeton, a team that beat no one and eventually dropped the sport. Against current CSFL members, Mansfield is 6-45. Second, even though the Mounties are not very good, they stayed with the Big Red and were only down by a touchdown late in the third quarter. So A- it is. If the Red want to get that grade up, they must take care of Penn this coming Friday.

**Women's Cross-Country** also gets an A-. At the Paul Short Run in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, the Big Red finished fifth out of the U.S. collegiate teams in the 42-team field. The only teams to beat out the Red were three top-25 teams (Utah State, Villanova and Georgia), plus Princeton. I probably would have given Cornell an A if they'd topped Princeton but the Tigers edged the Red by 10 points. Tri-captain **Erin McLaughlin '18** led the Big Red harriers with a 27th place finish. Finishing second for the Red was a first year, **Gabrielle Orié '21**, who set a new Cornell freshman record on the course. It was Orié's third race for Cornell and she has had a nice progression—fifth on the team in her first race, then third and now second.

**B+**

**Men's Soccer** now has a four-game unbeaten streak after a 1-1 tie with Penn. The Quakers are not having a good season—they were 1-6-0 coming into this game—and the Red dominated the match, outshooting Penn 14-2 in the second half and the overtimes, and probably should have won. But soccer is a funny game. Sometimes teams that dominate don't win. Still, even without the W, the effort was good enough for a B+. Also, a special shout out to Washingtonian **Caleb McAuslan '21**. Caleb is from Everett, attended Archbishop Murphy High School and came through the Crossfire Soccer program. His tying goal in the 77th minute was the second of his freshmen season and earned him Ivy Rookie of the Week honors.

**B-**

**Women's Soccer** is now 2-4-2 on the season after a hard earned 0-0 tie with Penn. Goalkeeper **Meghan Kennedy '20** made a career-high ten saves, and the Red got the draw even though they were outshot 28-10 and had only a single shot on goal. Meghan gets an A and rest of the team gets a C; that averages out to a B-. Next up are home matches with Harvard and Colgate.

**C+**

**Men's Cross-Country**, like the women, raced at the Paul Short Run in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The Big Red men finished tied for 12th out of 44 teams. Not bad but probably below where they were looking to finish, and only meriting a C+. The men had skipped last week's "Battle in Beantown" race and maybe they came into this race a bit too fired up. Cornell got off to a very fast start, leading the field after one mile, but then faded. **Dominic DeLuca '18** led the Cornell team with a ninth place showing, and his time was the second-fastest eight-kilometer time in Cornell history.

## C

**Field Hockey** split two games, losing to Columbia, 2-1, before defeating Lock Haven by the same score. The Columbia loss—the second year in a row the Red has bowed to the Lions—should not have happened. Cornell outshot the Lions by a 27-6 margin and held a 16-5 margin in shots on goal. The Big Red have now lost their first two Ivy League games and their chances at a league title and NCAA berth are long gone. This team has too many good players to be 0-2 in league play but that's where they find themselves. The convincing win on Sunday over a decent Lock Haven squad salvaged a bit of the weekend, but only a little bit. Put them down for a C.

## C-

**Volleyball** lost twice, at Harvard and at Dartmouth, each in four sets. That makes the Big Red 1-2 in Ivy play and 5-7 overall. Last year the Red split with both teams so we'll see what lies ahead. For now, two losses cinched a low C but by winning a set in each match, Cornell dodged the "D" bullet.

## D

The lone D in this report goes to **Football**, which lost to Colgate 21-7. The Big Red are now 0-3 on the season and have already lost to two of the four teams they beat a year ago. In fact, that four-win 2016 season is feeling more and more like an aberration and a distant memory. Cornell has now lost nine of its last ten. Coincidentally (or maybe not), losing nine out of ten was how the Red finished in 2015 and 2014. Something needs to be done.

Let's start on an upbeat note by discussing the defense. The Big Red held 'Gate to 270 net yards from scrimmage, the lowest total since the first game of the 2009 season, and just the sixth time since 2009 that Cornell held a team under 300 yards. As usual, co-captains **Nick Gesualdi '18** and **Kurt Frimel '18** had strong games, each with six unassisted tackles, including two sacks by Frimel. Cornell's leading tackler was linebacker **Reis Seggebruch '19**, who had nine unassisted tackles and six more assisted tackles for a total of 15. Reis has emerged as another defensive leader. The defense as a whole caused five three-and-outs—on three of those Colgate had negative yardage—and the Raiders only reached the Red Zone three times in the whole game. So the defense really wasn't the problem.

But the offense, and probably the coaching, are problems, **big** problems. Let's start with quarterback **Dalton Banks '19**. Dalton was intercepted four times and sacked nine (9) times. Those are ugly numbers, but only slightly worse than his numbers in the first two games. Delaware picked Dalton off three times and sacked him thrice. Against Yale, Banks was sacked six times and would have been picked thrice except one was negated by a roughing the passer call. Undoubtedly, responsibility for some of this, especially the sacks, falls on the offensive line, but a big share falls on Banks.

When Banks was named the starter at the beginning of last season, I was surprised. I saw **Harley Kirsch '20**, the 2015 Washington State Class 3A Player of the Year, play in high school and everything I had read suggested that he was the best QB prospect to come to Cornell in a while, and perhaps forever. Kirsch had a training camp injury and that may have contributed to Banks winning the starting job. But Dalton hit the ground running, with back-to-back excellent games against Bucknell and Yale. He had some problems against Colgate, throwing three interceptions, including two in the fourth quarter, but he also threw four TD passes, and led the Red on the final game-winning drive in the last two minutes of the fourth quarter.

After that, Dalton's play got progressively worse in each game. He briefly halted the downward progression with a solid (and winning) game against Columbia, but in the final game against Penn, Dalton threw three interceptions. Now this year. In his last 11 games, Banks has thrown 23 INTs, an average of more than two a game. This cannot continue. I've been scouring the blogs and can find no reason given why Kirsch is not playing. In fact, people who claim to be close to the program say that Harley is the "real deal" and should be playing. I have to agree. We've had a big enough sample to tell us that Banks is not the guy.

While we're on the subject of underused personnel, let's talk about running back. For the third week in a row, **Chris Walker '19**, last year's first-team All-Ivy running back, was underwhelming, at least carrying the ball, gaining just 41 yards on 11 carries, and failing to get the first down on an three third-down rushes. For the season, Walker is averaging under three yards a carry. Chris has been a bit better as a pass receiver, but even here his per catch average is one of the lowest on the team. I'm not suggesting benching Walker completely but it's past time to see who else might do a better job carrying the ball from scrimmage. Last week I pointed out that **Harold Coles '20** not only had a 90-yard touchdown run against Yale, but had never failed to gain positive yards in each of his eight career carries. Make that now nine career carries—Coles' long TD run at Yale earned him one, yes, one, carry against Colgate, on which he gained five yards. C'mon people, it's time for a change.

Which brings me to what may really be needed, a coaching change. For years I've kept my powder dry on **David Archer '05**. Coach Archer was given the head job in 2013, after Kent Austin unexpectedly bolted for the Canadian Football League. Given that the team was 4-6 in Austin's last season, and the disruption in recruiting the change in coaching could be expected to cause, I thought David deserved a pass on his first two losing seasons (3-7 in 2013, 1-9 in 2014). The one-win 2015 season was bad but then the Big Red seemed to turn a corner last year with four wins and several close losses. All the while, Athletic Director Andy Noel has continued to sing the praises of Archer, a Cornell graduate (which undoubtedly contributed to my own bias in his favor) for doing the right things to build the program.

But the blogosphere paints a very different picture of Archer and his staff. In the view of some, David was never qualified for the job, and was hired in an overreaction to Cornell losing Austin (and other coaches, e.g., Tambroni, Donahue) who were not really "Cornell guys." The administration wanted to be sure the next hire did not view the Hill merely as a short-term stepping stone. One immediate result of the coaching change was that the top QB recruit decommitted from Cornell and decided to walk on at Washington State. You may have heard of that recruit; his name is Luke Falk and he might win the Heisman Trophy come December.

There's also a player development issue. One of his Archer's first hires was his former high school coach, who had no college coaching experience, to be the quarterbacks coach. Following that move, QB **Jeff Mathews '14** had his worst season for the Red. Unfortunately, it seems that Banks is following a similar, but steeper, downward trajectory.

When one tosses in questionable playing time decisions—I've already said my piece about the lack of playing time for Kirsch and Coles—and the final result—a ghastly win-loss record, Archer's continuation as head coach is difficult defend.

But Archer will be the coach this weekend and the Big Red have a nationally (sort of) televised game on Saturday against Harvard. The game will be carried by the Eleven Sports network, which is only available here on DirecTV. But the good news is that the Ivy League Network will carry Eleven Sports professional television feed, with multiple camera angles and good replay capability, rather than the often amateurish Cornell camera work and graphics. Kickoff is at 10:30 a.m. PDT.

D-

None.

**F**

None.

\* \* \*

I don't know if they even have grade point averages at Cornell any more but I'm old school. So here it is, last week's GPA: 2.55. Somehow that seems higher than the week felt—must be grade inflation.

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