



CCWW Sports Report No. 514 (November 30, 2017)

by
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I hope y'all enjoyed Thanksgiving—the Big Red teams in action certainly did. The cornellbigred.com website has condensed versions optimized for iPads and iPhones. Open it on an iPad, click on the “RESULTS” tab, and you see something like this:

Events	Results
	November 27, 2017 / 7:00 p.m. Men's Basketball at Duquesne University WIN 78 - 71
	November 26, 2017 / 2:00 p.m. / Recap Women's Ice Hockey at Providence College WIN 4 - 2
	November 25, 2017 / 8:00 p.m. / Recap Men's Ice Hockey vs Boston University WIN 4 - 3
	November 25, 2017 / 2:00 p.m. / Recap Women's Ice Hockey at Providence College WIN 2 - 1
	November 24, 2017 / 4:00 p.m. / Recap Men's Basketball vs University of Toledo WIN 80 - 77
	November 22, 2017 / 1:00 p.m. / Recap Women's Basketball at Canisius College WIN 67 - 59
	November 21, 2017 / 7:00 p.m. / Recap Men's Ice Hockey vs Niagara University WIN 5 - 4

Actually, I don't think I've ever seen a page quite like *this* before. Look at all those WIN's. Seven wins in a row in seven days in four different sports. And each team did something at least a bit special. For Women's Basketball, the win at Canisius was their first of the season after starting 0-4. For Men's Basketball, the two wins comprised their longest winning streak under new Coach Brian Earl (I know, baby steps) and evened their record at 3-3. Men's Hockey beat Boston U. for their first victory ever over the Terriers in the Red Hot Hockey series. And Women's Hockey not only won two games on the home ice of a top-10 team, but the team—Providence College—had historically owned the Big Red, going 36-6-1 over the years. In fact, the Red had won only game ever in P.C.'s rink, and that was 20 years ago.

Let's take these teams one by one.

Men's Hockey

Cornell started the season 7-0, including wins over ranked Quinnipiac and Harvard teams. On the morning of November 18, the Big Red were the last undefeated team in the country, and had risen to as high as fifth in the national polls. Could this be the year? Well, not so fast. That night the Red was shut out by Clarkson. Three days later, Niagara, a team Cornell always beats, had the Red down by two goals five minutes into the third period and Cornell seemed headed for a second-straight defeat and a swoon in the polls and Pairwise Rankings. But, as I reported last week, goals by defensemen **Alex Green '21** and

Brendan Smith '19 knotted the score, and **Trevor Yates '18** got the game-winner with less than three minutes left. That gave the Big Red a big lift as they headed to Madison Square Garden and their biennial "Red Hot Hockey" contest with Boston University for the coveted Kelley-Harkness Cup. A win over B.U. and the season could be right back on track to glory.

History and genetics seemed to be against the Big Red. The Red had not won in five previous "Red Hot Hockey" games dating back to 2007. And the B.U. roster is made up of American hockey royalty, sprinkled with names like Carpenter, Tkachuk and Amonte. American-born and USA Hockey-bred, the fathers of Terrier players Bobo Carpenter, Brady Tkachuk and Ty Amonte played a combined fifty-five (55) seasons in the NHL. Their genes were passed on: Brady's older brother Matt plays for the Calgary Flames. Bobo's sister Alex is one of the best female hockey players on the planet and won the 2015 Patty Kazmaier Award while at Boston College. Sheesh, Alex and Bobo's father Bobby was on the cover of Sports Illustrated while he was *still in high school!* I could go on but you get the idea. In addition to these legacies, there are a dozen other players on the B.U. roster who have been selected in the NHL entry draft, including six first rounders.

So what happened? What happened is that Cornell very methodically took a 3-0 lead and held on for a 4-3 victory. **Beau Starrett '19** started the scoring in the sixteenth minute of the opening period, beating a B.U. defender to a pass from **Mitch Vanderlaan '19** and going "top shelf" on goalie Jake Oettinger, one of those first-round NHL draft selections. Cornell then got two goals in the second period, the first from Yates (his team-leading seventh of the season), the other a power-play goal by **Alec McCrea '19**. The second period ended with the Red up three-zip.

The Terriers got on the board on a power-play goal five minutes into the third period but Cornell answered seven minutes later on **Tristan Mullin '21**'s first Cornell goal. That proved to be the game-winner as B.U. scored twice more. In addition to the goal scorers, Green and **Morgan Barron '21** each had a pair of assists. **Matthew Galajda '21** stopped 35 of 38 Terrier shots. Green, who had a goal and an assist at Niagara, was named the ECAC Rookie of the week.

So Cornell is now 9-1 on the season, ranked No. 5 in both major national polls, and also No. 5 in the PWR (which is starting to become meaningful as the teams play more games). Why is the Big Red winning games so frequently? Well, they're faster than in past years. And they seem to have some players with a goal-scoring touch. But what most impresses me is the depth. The Cornell roster has 24 skaters and three goalies. Fifteen of the 24 skaters are forwards, 14 of those 15 have scored a point, and ten of them have scored at least one goal. The Big Red has skated four lines in every game, and has been able to weather injuries to **Dwyer Tschantz '18** and **Cam Donaldson '21** without missing a beat. On Saturday, Cornell's three even-strength goals were scored by three different lines and the winning goal was scored by a freshman, Mullin, who has only dressed for seven of the ten games.

The situation on defense is similar. The Big Red have typically skated three pairs of defensemen and have used seven men, five of whom have played in every game, to accomplish that. All of the five have at least one goal. Defensemen have scored 11 of Cornell's 36 goals and accounted for 24 of the Red's 95 points.

The Red go on the road this weekend for two games in Oxford, Ohio, against Miami University. I understand it's a nine-hour bus trip each way. Miami is a middlin' team (28th of 60 teams in the PWR) but they're playing at home. Two wins would be nice but a win and tie, or even a split, would be okay under the circumstances.

Women's Hockey

At the start of this year, I did not know what to expect. After five-straight NCAA tournament appearances between 2010 and 2014, and a near miss in 2015, the core group that had earned Cornell that success had moved on and the Big Red had a losing record in 2015-16. Last year, the Red bounced back, winning 20 games and making the NCAA tourney where they lost to eventual national champion Clarkson. And while the graduation and other losses were not numerically high, they included the principal goalie and

three of last year's four top scorers. Two of those scorers graduated, while one, **Micah Zandee-Hart**, likely Cornell's best all-around player last year, is taking the year off to train with the Canadian women's Olympic team.

But the Big Red have been just fine. After defeating No. 10 Providence twice last weekend, the Red are 7-3-1, the only losses coming to top-ranked Wisconsin and fourth-ranked Clarkson. The Red have done it with a stellar defense (fifth in the country in goals against average), and just enough offense from their top line, led by **Maddy Mills '21** and tri-captain **Kristin O'Neill '20**. The defense is anchored by goaltender **Marlène Boissonnault '19**, who has played all but ten minutes of the season, and is tied for tenth in the nation in save percentage. The defenders in front of her are senior tri-captains **Erin O'Connor '18** and **Sarah Knee '18**, and underclasswomen **Jaime Bourbonnais '20** and **Willow Slobodzian '21**.

The Big Red beat Providence by scores of 2-1 and 4-2. In the first game, second-period goals by Mills and O'Neill were all the offense the Red needed as Boissonnault stopped 22 of 23 shots. On Sunday, Cornell took the lead twice—first on a goal by **Diana Buckley '19** and later on a goal by O'Neill—only to have the Friars tie it up each time. But a late second-period unassisted goal by Mills and an early third-period unassisted goal by O'Neill provided the margin of victory. The Big Red are now seventh in both polls and sixth in the PWR, but face another stiff challenge this weekend as they play home-and-home against a surprisingly good Colgate team, currently sporting a 14-2-0 record and ranked third in both polls.

Men's Basketball

Cornell won twice to even its record at 3-3. On Friday, the Big Red defeated Toledo, a well-regarded team from the Mid-American Conference. On Monday, the Red got its first road win of the year, over Duquesne, a not-so-well regarded team from the Atlantic-10. I saw a little bit of the Toledo game and all of the Duquesne game so I'll give you my observations.

Against Toledo, the Red came out firing on all cylinders, shooting over 60% in the first half and leading by eleven at the break. Cornell stayed hot in the beginning of the second-half, building the lead to 21 points with seven minutes left before the Rockets mounted their comeback. Things got dicey at the end, as Toledo cut the lead to one with 15 seconds left. But **Matt Morgan '19** hit both ends of a one-and-one with seven seconds left and then smartly fouled a Rocket before he could shoot a three-pointer for the tie. The Toledo player missed the front end of his one-and-one, and the game ended as an 80-77 Big Red victory. Morgan led all scorers with 24 points on nine for 15 shooting, and **Stone Gettings '19** added 21 points, five assists and just one turnover. **Josh Warren '20** had 11 points off the bench on five for six shooting, including one for one from beyond the arc.

At Duquesne, Cornell was consistently behind from the start of the game until the eight-minute mark of the second-half—but never very far behind. The Dukes' largest lead was eight points in the first half and just six in the second half. A 10-2 Big Red run midway through the second half turned a four-point deficit into a four-point lead. After a Duquesne trey cut the lead to one, Cornell scored the next 11 points to take a 12-point lead. And the Red combined good shooting with tenacious defense, holding Duquesne without a field goal for eight and a half minutes. The Dukes never seriously threatened at the end and Cornell cruised to a 78-71 victory.

Morgan again led the Red with 24 points on 10 for 17 shooting and Gettings added 19. Gettings hit six straight free throws in the last two minutes to help kill any Duquesne comeback. All five starters had solid games as **Jack Gordon '19** had 12 points on five for seven shooting, transfer **Steven Julian '19** (who has been a really nice addition) had eight points, eight rebounds, four assists and three blocks, and **Wil Bathurst '18** had seven points, six rebounds, four assists and two blocks.

At one point late in the second half, the Duquesne announcers said something I wish I could repeat verbatim but the gist of it was what a disciplined team Cornell was on both offense and defense. Wow! The last time anyone said that about a Cornell men's basketball team was in, say, 2010. Maybe there's hope. The Big Red have one more game before the exam break, on Saturday at Northeastern.

Women's Basketball

Last Wednesday the Big Red got their first win, 67-59 over Canisius. **Sam Widmann '20** led Cornell with a career-high 27 points, and **Christine Ehland '17** added 17, also a career-high. On Tuesday it looked like the Red was going to win two in a row (and the combined basketball and hockey teams would win their eighth in a row) but a last second basket by Lafayette sent the Red to a 59-58 defeat. That spoiled yet another career performance by a Big Red cager, this time **Janée Dennis '18**, who hit a phenomenal eight for nine from beyond the arc for a game- and career-high 24 points. The Big Red's record is only 1-5 but the last three losses have all been by five points or fewer. And this remains a very inexperienced team that will only get better; the fact that in every game players have career highs in one statistic or another evidences how little they had played before. For example, against Lafayette not only did Dennis have her best scoring game ever but **Stephanie Umeh '20** also had a career-high in scoring with 11 points, **Danielle Jorgenson '20** had a career-high 10 assists and **Elodie Furey '21** grabbed a career-high 10 rebounds.

Well, that's this week's report—seven victories in a row before the law of averages finally caught up with the Big Red on Tuesday. This weekend—the last weekend before the exam break—we have hockey and basketball games, Wrestling will be out west for the Cliff Keen Las Vegas Collegiate Invitational, and there will also be swimming & diving, fencing, polo, and an indoor track meet.

GO BIG RED!