



CCWW Sports Report No. 517
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Hockey, Hockey, Hockey. That's all we Cornellians really care about sports-wise, right? Well, it's time to get focused because this could be a very special year for Big Red **Men's Hockey**. Cornell returned to ECAC action last weekend, played two games and came away with four points. And speaking of the number four, that is currently the Red's national ranking in both major polls and in the Pairwise rankings. So it's not unreasonable to start thinking about an ECAC championship, the NCAA tournament and (gasp!) the Frozen Four (to be held on April 5 and 7 in St. Paul, Minnesota, if you're interested)

Last weekend, Cornell hosted Princeton and Quinnipiac on Friday and Saturday. Friday's game showed why this Cornell team is very good. The Big Red skated the Tigers right out of the rink, dominating the play and winning by a score of 7-1. The seven goals were the most the Red had scored in a game since 2007 and, adding in the six goals Cornell scored against Canisius, the 13 goals in two games was the Red's highest two-game total since 2004. And the scoring continues to be spread around. Last week, I mentioned that none of the six goals against Canisius came from the top line; that changed on Friday as the top line of **Mitch Vanderlaan '19**, **Anthony Angello '19**, and **Brenden Locke '21** scored three times (two by Angello, one by Vanderlaan, with Locke assisting on all three). Cornell also got two goals from the **Kyle Betts '21-Alex Rauter '18-Jeff Malott '20** line (one scored by Rauter and the other by Malott), a goal from **Cam Donaldson '21** (back from injury and getting his first of the season) with assists from linemate **Morgan Barron '21** and goalie **Hayden Stewart '18**, and a power-play goal (which proved to be the game-winner) from defenseman **Yanni Kaldis '20**. Hayden, starting his third consecutive game, faced just 22 shots and stopped all but one for the win.

If the Big Red's performance on Friday showed how good they can be, what they demonstrated on Saturday was something else a very good team needs—the ability to salvage a win when not playing very well. Quinnipiac dominated the early play, helped out by some early Cornell penalties, including a five-minute major just nine seconds into the second period. But the Red hung tough. Stewart, who seemed to have won back the starting netminder job, had a back problem and **Matthew Galajda '21** was called upon to start. Aided by some heavy metal (The Bobcats hit the posts or crossbar four times), Matthew posted a shutout, his third of the season, becoming only the second Cornell freshman goalie in history to record three shutouts. And a second-period goal by **Trevor Yates '18**, his team-leading 11th of the season, was all the scoring the Big Red needed. Q-Pac had more shots than the Red—28 (plus those four pipes) to 20—but Cornell had the only shot that went in.

Right now everything is clicking. Except for defenseman **Ryan Bliss '18**, a regular as a freshman and sophomore who missed all of last year with an injury and has yet to play this season, the Big Red seem to be quite healthy. (There's even talk that Bliss may be able to play some this year.) Cornell has been able to skate four productive lines and three sets of defensemen. The depth at forward is so great that on Saturday the healthy scratches were a senior assistant captain (**Jared Fiegl '18**) and a guy with one of the Big Red's two hat tricks this season (**Noah Bauld '20**). And to put the Red's current No. 4 national ranking in perspective, this is, as best I can tell, the highest Cornell has been ranked this late in the season since 2009.

Cornell will now play five of its next six games on the road, with two trips to New England broken up by home-and-home games with Colgate. The Red will be at Yale this Friday and Brown on Saturday. If you want to check out the team and don't have an ILN subscription, Saturday's game at 4:00 p.m. PST will also be on ESPN3.

Women's Hockey did not fare as well, for reasons that are entirely understandable. As I wrote last week, Cornell had to play at Princeton and Quinnipiac last Friday and Saturday without its starting goalie and

three of its top skaters, all of whom were in Europe with two Canadian national teams. The Big Red fought valiantly but could muster little offense and lost both games, to the Tigers by a score of 5-2, and to the Bobcats by a 4-0 margin. Fortunately, by Tuesday's game at Syracuse, the three players—**Marlène Boissonnault '19**, **Jaime Bourbonnais '20**, and **Kristin O'Neill '20**—who had been skating with the U22 team at the Nations Cup in Germany were back with the Red. Goaltender Boissonnault got credit for the 6-3 win, and O'Neill got a shorthanded goal to set a new Cornell career record with seven shorties. The Big Red also got major contributions from **Amy Curlew '20** (a goal 28 seconds into the game and an assist); **Lenka Serdar '19** (a goal and two assists), **Erin O'Connor '18** (a short-handed goal and an assist); **Joie Phelps '21** (who followed up her first collegiate goal at Princeton on Saturday with the goal that put Cornell ahead of Syracuse for good); **Kendra Nealey '21** (whose first Cornell goal would be the game-winner); and **Paige Lewis '20** (two assists).

With most of its regular team back (**Willow Slobodzian '21**, playing with Canada's U18 team in Russia, will be gone another week), Cornell should be fine going forward but the two league losses dropped the Big Red to sixth in the ECAC, giving the Red some ground to make up to get a home series in the ECAC tournament. The losses also put a dent in the Big Red's PWR—dropping them from fifth to seventh—which could bite them come NCAA selection time. Curiously, none of the pre-game or post-game articles on Cornellbigred.com even mentioned the absence of key players. I would like someday to figure out what their test for newsworthiness is. (Andy Noel's weekly email did point out that Cornell was missing key players, although he had the facts a bit garbled.)

That was pretty much the main action for the week. Wrestling and Women's Basketball were off. **Men's Basketball** played one game—against Central Penn College, a non-NCAA, non-NAIA team—and won easily, although perhaps not as easily as they should have. The main point of interest is that **Matt Morgan '19** scored 21 points in 28 minutes to stretch his streak of 20 point-scoring games to 12. Now the Big Red have to go back to playing real games—indeed, Ivy league games—starting this weekend with a trip to Penn and Princeton. At this point, Penn and Princeton are the only Ivy teams with better RPI's than the Big Red so a split would be really nice (but probably not in the cards). The Princeton game will be on ESPN3 at 4:00 p.m. PST on Saturday, the same time as the men's hockey game.

Not to go off on a rant here, but I really think it's time to end this sham of an annual game against a non-Division I team. After the current NCAA system of divisions was created in 1973, Cornell continued to play the University of Rochester, a D-III school, every year for another decade. Rochester was a long-term traditional opponent. The Big Red have also played games against other New York schools that were not D-I. By my quick count, the Red played Ithaca College five times; RPI (4x); Clarkson (3x); Elmira, Skidmore and Utica (2x each); and single games against CCNY, Keuka, Hobart, Manhattanville and Adelphi. Since the last game against Ithaca College in 2007, however, the opponents have become more obscure and the games more pointless. Coach Steve Donahue's agreeing to play Ursinus, his own alma mater, was a nice gesture and I got a kick out of Cornell playing Oberlin, a peer institution academically, if not athletically, in 2014; but there is no justification for playing Alfred State in 2015 (a 107-29 Big Red win), Fisher College (quick, guess what state it's in, no peeking) in 2017 or Central Penn this year. Enough is enough.

To complete the weekly picture, Big Red men and women competed at home in Track & Field in the Southern Tier Collegiate Open and dominated the field; competed against Yale in Swimming & Diving and lost pretty badly (The men won four of 19 events, while the women won just one of 19); and sailed in the Rose Bowl Regatta, finishing a respectable seventh in the 28-team field.

That's it for this week.

GO BIG RED!