



**CCWW Sports Report No. 532**  
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by  
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Happy Belated Father's Day!

I'm back from Reunion Weekend in Ithaca, where I celebrated the big "five-oh." The campus was beautiful as always, I huffed and puffed a bit more than I used to going up libe slope, and parking around campus remains a challenge. I'm showing my age, but when I was a student it was pretty easy, if you were just on campus for a one-hour class, to slip into a metered space next to the bookstore (then in Barnes Hall). Ah, the good old days! I never misplaced my car keys in those days either. That was partly due to the absence of incipient dementia but mostly to the fact that my keys were always right where I left them—in the ignition. Yes, times have changed.

I devoted some time while I was in Ithaca to learning as much as I could about the happenings on the athletic front. I attended the Athletics Department reunion reception (where men's hockey coach **Mike Schafer '86** and fencing coach **Daria Schneider** were speakers) and also a small group meeting with men's basketball coach **Brian Earl**, his assistants, and athletic director **Andy Noel**. I learned a lot, some of which I can pass on. Here are a few tidbits of interest:

- Shortly before I arrived in Ithaca the news broke that TD Ierlan, Albany's stud faceoff specialist, intends to transfer and that Cornell was at or near the top of his list of proposed landing sites. This is a BIG deal. Ierlan set an NCAA record this past year by winning almost 80% of his draws. Against Cornell back in March, he won 24 of 24 faceoffs—an unreal performance. On Thursday, we learned that Albany had agreed to release Ierlan from his scholarship without condition, making him eligible to play right away wherever he transfers. A rising junior, he would have two years of eligibility.

During the weekend, I learned that Ierlan was visiting two schools, Cornell and Yale. Cornell would seem to have two things going for it: first, TD's younger brother, Chayse, a goalie, is an incoming Cornell freshman; and second, with its returning talent, Cornell can win a national-championship with Ierlan supplying the missing piece. Yale is, of course, Yale, and the Elis *are* the defending NCAA champ, but some key talent, led by Tewaaron Trophy winner Ben Reeves, graduated. So we'll see. As of Monday afternoon, there were conflicting reports about where Ierlan might be headed.

- The basketball meeting was interesting and informative. The coaching staff described the incoming players—two junior college transfers and four first years—and showed video clips of each. The official announcement on those players came out today. It looks like three of them, including the two juco transfers, will add some needed length and athleticism. Coach Earl candidly acknowledged a need for the Red to get better on defense. The other three players are smaller shooter types; one of them may be able to help this year.
- There was a fair bit of discussion about the loss of **Stone Gettings '19**. As I wrote a few weeks back, Stone will not be using his last year of eligibility at Cornell. As Stone was the Big Red's second leading scorer, and a second-team All-Ivy last year, this is a significant loss. OTOH, **Matt Morgan '19**, who declared for the NBA draft, *is* coming back. Coach Earl also mentioned that **Troy Whiteside '19**, who lost most of last season to injury, seems to be healed and could provide some scoring punch to offset the loss of Gettings.

- There was also an update on Cornell's men's basketball schedule. The Big Red will play four "guarantee" games, *i.e.*, games against power conference teams who want to fatten their records by guaranteeing the Red a fee to play at their home arenas. (Last year you may recall that Cornell played games at Syracuse (ACC), Auburn (SEC) and Duquesne (Atlantic-10); all were guarantee games. Interestingly, while the Big Red lost to 'Cuse and Auburn by wide margins, they actually beat Duquesne.) This year's guarantee games are at Syracuse, UConn, Wake Forest and Southern Methodist.
- On the subject of guarantee games, Andy Noel mentioned that Cornell football will play one such game, its opener at Delaware on September 15. It will be part II of a two-year deal. (Readers may recall that one of my takeaways from last year's 41-14 beatdown by the Blue Hens was that Cornell should leave Delaware off this year's schedule, although I'd heard that the Red had already committed to do it again. We'll it's true. But at least we're getting paid for it.)

### **2018 Rowing Wrap-up**

It was not a good spring on the water for Big Red crews. The men's heavyweight Varsity 8 finished 13th at the IRA championships. (Cornell's second and third varsity did not fare much better, both finishing 12th.) This was the third straight year that the Varsity 8 finished 12th or 13th, the longest stretch of low finishes since the five-year span of 1995-1999. Before that, Cornell had finished out of the top ten in the country only twice in its rowing history going back to 1895.

The lightweight crew did not fare much better. After winning two of the past three IRA titles, the Big Red had injury woes and struggled all season. Ranked No. 1 pre-season, the Varsity 8 lost cup races to Harvard, Princeton and Columbia. At Eastern Sprints in May, the Red lost to those three crews, as well as Penn, whom Cornell had earlier defeated, and Navy, dropping the Red to sixth. At IRA's, the Red fell even further, finishing behind all the boats that defeated them at Easterns, as well as Yale and Mercyhurst.

Finally, the Cornell women rowers continued to scuffle. The Big Red had a new interim head coach this year but the results were pretty much the same. For the second straight year the Big Red lost all their regular season races, and for the third straight year, the Red finished last at the Ivy League championships.

### **2018 Sailing Wrap-up**

Staying with water sports, the Cornell sailing program had a solid season in its fourth year of varsity competition. The team, which is listed on the Cornell Athletics web site as a women's team, is actually co-ed. The collegiate rowing world has three championships, the Sperry Women's National Championship for (you guessed it!) boats with two-women crews; the Gill Coed National Championship for boats with a one man-one woman crew; and the LaserPerformance Team Race Nationals, which is also for two-person co-ed boats. For the first time in its brief history, the Big Red qualified for all three national championships. The women's team finished seventh (out of 16 qualifiers) at their championship, their highest finish since achieving varsity status in 2014. (You may recall that in 2013, as a club team, the Red finished an amazing third at nationals, the only club team in the top eight.) The co-ed team, competing at nationals for the first time, was eliminated in the national semifinals. In the LaserPerformance Team Race Nationals, Cornell finished tenth in its first year of qualifying for this event.

### **2018 Polo Wrap-up**

For a program that makes winning national championships (or at least playing in the championship match) a regular occurrence, the 2017-18 season ended in disappointing fashion. The men had a solid year, winning Northeast Regionals, and coming into nationals with a 15-3 record, and just one loss (back in October) to a collegiate team. But the men were ousted in the semifinals by SMU, a team the Red had defeated in their season opener. The women also came into nationals riding high. Their record was 16-3, and they won 14 matches in a row before losing to the Central New York Polo Club just before nationals.

But in the national semi-finals, the Big Red faced traditional rival UVA, with whom they had split two earlier matches, and lost by a 13-8 score.

### 2018 Equestrian Wrap-up

Like their fellow mounted Cornellians on the polo teams, Cornell's equestrian riders had a strong season blemished by a disappointing finish. The regular season was great; the Big Red was the high point team on seven of eight days, and then won the regional championship in a show at Cornell in early March. That performance qualified the Red to compete in the zone championships as a team and Cornell also sent several individual riders to zones to compete for places at nationals. Unfortunately, Cornell took a rail at zones, finishing fourth, and failing to qualify as a team for nationals. After making it to nationals in 2016 as a team, and finishing seventh, the Big Red have now missed qualifying the past two years. As for the individual riders, only one, **Emily Selland '19**, qualified for nationals. (The Big Red has had as many as five individual riders qualify for nationals in recent years.) Selland placed tenth at nationals in the Novice Flat class. Two weeks after zones, the Red was able to put that disappointing result behind them by winning the Ivy League championship for the second straight year.

### 2018 Golf Wrap-up

After finishing second in the Ivy League a year ago, Cornell fell to fourth this year. Still, the fourth place finish meant that the Big Red finished in the top half of the Ivy League in three-straight years, a program first. **Mike Graboyes '18**, the medalist at last year's Ivy championships, almost repeated, eventually finishing third, just one stroke behind two golfers from Yale. This finish earned Mike first-team All-Ivy, the first Cornellian in history to be named All-Ivy for four years. Graboyes was also named to the PING All-Northeast Region team. **(Jack) Tianyi Cen '19** finished tied for eighth, thereby making the All-Ivy second team. And Coach **Matt Baughan** was named the Ivy League Coach of the Year for men's golf.

### 2018 Track & Field Wrap-up

This was an off year for both the men and the women—two programs that have dominated the Ivy league and been competitive nationally over the years. I typically use three metrics to measure the program against past editions: first, finish at outdoor Heptagonals; second, number of athletes qualifying for NCAA Eastern Regionals; and, third, number of athletes qualifying for NCAA championships. By all of these metrics, the Big Red was far down from its peak years.

- **Outdoor Heps.** The men finished third, their lowest finish since 2002. That followed a fifth-place finish at indoor Heps, also the lowest finish since 2002. The women finished fourth, an improvement over last year's sixth-place finish but a far cry from the 10 titles and two runner-up finishes in the 12 years between 2002 and 2013.
- **NCAA East Regional Qualifiers.** The men sent just one athlete, hurdler **Austin Lyons '19**, to the east regionals in Tampa. Compare that with the average of 16 male athletes who represented Cornell at regionals in the five years from 2013 through 2017. The women did a tad better, sending 11 competitors to regionals, the most since 2015.
- **NCAA Championship Qualifiers.** No Cornell male qualified for the NCAA championships in Eugene, the first time the Big Red had been shut out since 2010, when the regional system was instituted. One woman, **Shannon Hugard '18** (a Rhode Islander--yea!) advanced to the finals in Eugene in the 1500, where she finished 20th to earn All-American honorable mention.

What else happened? **Alex Rodriguez '18** (no, not *that* A-Rod) won the men's long jump at Heps to pick-up first-team All-Ivy honors. **Michaela Smith '18** won the women's shot put at Heps and set a new Cornell record in the process. At the ECAC championships, Hugard won the 1500 and **Briar Brumley '19** won the steeplechase. Another school record was set by **Brittany Stenekes '20** in her third-place showing in the Heps 100 hurdles.

That's it until late summer. **GO BIG RED!**