



**CCWW Sports Report No. 601
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by
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I'm back.

I hope y'all are having a nice summer and I'll try not to ruin it by telling you what's in store for the Big Red's fall sports teams. But it's time to write something: Cornell students are back in class, and the teams are practicing for their upcoming seasons. In fact, Women's Soccer has already played a game that counts; last Friday, they traveled to Olean, New York, came from behind for a 2-1 overtime win over St. Bonaventure. Three more teams—Men's Soccer, Volleyball and Field Hockey—play their first games this coming weekend.

Let's review the bidding for this quartet. **Women's Soccer** is coming off a 2-9-3 record in Coach **Dwight Hornibrook's** first season. The Red were winless in Ivy League play (0-5-2) and scored only five goals in 14 matches. Ugh! Unsurprisingly, the Big Red are picked for last in the Ivy pre-season media poll. BUT, with almost nowhere to go but up, the Big Red got to open the season against a team which also won only two matches last season. And for one match at least, the Red got it done. Cornell fell behind the Bonnies in the first half but tied it up in the 65th minute on **Naomi Jaffe '21's** first career goal, and won it in the last minute of the first overtime on a free kick goal by **Kaili Gregory '20**. The season continues this week with a home match against Buffalo Friday and a visit to Siena Monday afternoon.

In contrast to the women, **Men's Soccer** had a six-win improvement last fall in Coach **John Smith's** second season. The Big Red finished 7-8-2, after winning just one game in 2016. And they did this with a team that had just two seniors earning significant playing time. The Red had just nine upperclassmen on the roster and 14 freshmen. This year, Cornell will add another eleven freshmen. But the outlook may not be all roses. Although Cornellbigred.com has not yet issued either a preseason report or a report on the Red's two upcoming games this weekend, at Bingo on Friday and at St. Francis (Brooklyn) on Sunday, the roster is posted and I noticed two concerning omissions. Mercer Islander **Ryan Hill '19**, who was the team's second high scorer last season with three goals (including at overtime game winner at Syracuse) and two assists, is not on this year's roster. Also missing is **Richie Hrcir '21**, who was second-team All-Ivy as a freshman. I have no idea what gives on either player. On the Ivy League sports website, the Big Red is picked for seventh, although Hrcir is mentioned as one of Cornell's top returning players.

Field Hockey is coming off a somewhat disappointing season. Although the Big Red won ten of its sixteen matches, the fifth straight year with double-figure wins, the Red was just 3-4 in Ivy games, and its fifth-place finish in the league was its worst since 2011. Cornell lost its two best players and top goal scorers, **Sam McLwrick '18** and **Krysten Mayers '18**, to graduation, but returns two other All-Ivy selections, second-team goalkeeper, **Maddie Henry '20**, who was fifth in the country in save percentage, and honorable mention midfielder **Maddy Conklin '20**. In the Ivy pre-season media poll, the Big Red are picked to finish fifth again.

The good news story of last fall was **Volleyball**, which posted an 8-6 record in the Ivy League (12-11 overall) and finished tied for third in the league. This was the Big Red's first season with winning records both in the league and overall since 2006. Graduation losses, including first-team All-Ivy libero **Kiley McPeek '18**, were significant, but a solid core is back. Six of the ten players who appeared in at least three-quarters of Cornell's 88 sets played return, led by All-Ivy second teamer **Jenna Phelps '20**, a middle blocker. Those returnees will be supplemented by a first-year class that includes two honorable mention Under Armour All-Americans and a Western Washingtonian—**Kelly Behrbaum '22**, from Mercer Island. (I went back through on-line rosters and Kelly appears to be the first volleyball player from Washington in this century.) And, most importantly, also back is Coach **Trudy Vande Berg**, who last fall was named Ivy league coach of the year in her third season on the Big Red sideline. Cornell used to dominate Ivy League

women's volleyball (five straight titles from 1989 to 1993 and a three-peat from 2004 to 2006) and it would be great to see the Red back in the league title mix. The pre-season poll has the Big Red tabbed for fourth. Cornell opens the season this weekend with three home matches in the Cornell Invitational. The Red will face Buffalo, Siena and St. John's. This will be a good test for the Big Red as Buffalo and St. John's come into the weekend with a combined 7-0 record.

Enough about these four teams. For 2018-19, the big news for the Cornell nation diaspora is the replacement of the unlamented Ivy League Network with a new deal with ESPN. The same events (and maybe more) that were carried for the past five years on the ILN and its predecessor, the ILDN, will now be available on a new service called ESPN+. This is a big step forward for fans. First, cost. ESPN+ costs just \$49.99 per year (\$4.99/month if you subscribe monthly) compared to an ILN annual cost of \$89.95 for Cornell only or \$119.95 for access to the entire league. Second, expanded coverage. An ILN Cornell subscription got you all of Cornell's home games in various sports plus road games at other Ivy schools. An ESPN+ subscription will include all of those games, *plus* Cornell games at the venues of many other conferences' teams, including teams from Conference USA, Atlantic-10, America East and MAC, *plus* other Ivy games of interest. My guess is that for everyone with ESPN on cable or satellite and an ESPN+ subscription, 90-95% of all Cornell football, soccer, basketball, hockey, wrestling and lacrosse games will be available without additional cost. NO, I'm not suggesting that you watch 90-95% of those games—even I don't do that—but there's a high likelihood that whatever you do want to watch will be available.

That's it for this week. A new year beckons. **GO BIG RED!**