



CCWW Sports Report No. 606
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by
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Wow!

Where do I start? How about at the beginning of the weekend—Friday evening—with Cornell **Volleyball's** four-set victory over Harvard? I watched the first two sets, which the teams split, and thought that Cornell was the better team. I was right; after the break, the Big Red convincingly closed the Crimson out, winning the third set, 25-19, and the fourth by 25-17. After Harvard led 14-13 in the third set the Red outscored them 37-22 the rest of the way. The Big Red then went out the next day and put together a dominating three-set performance for a 25-19, 25-18, 25-13 win over Dartmouth. The Big Red are now 3-0 in Ivy League play and tied for first with Princeton. This weekend the Red have home matches against Brown on Friday at 4:00 p.m. PDT and Yale on Saturday at 2:00 p.m. PDT. Both matches will be streamed on ESPN+.

Last week, I ranted about how Cornell was overlooked in the weekly Ivy honor roll. This week, I was sure, would be different after two impressive Big Red wins. Wrong! Once again, just one Cornellian was named—again, it was **Carla Sganderlla '19**. Dartmouth, which was shut out by Cornell (and lost its match to Columbia in four sets) managed to get two players on the honor roll. Oh well....

Final random thought. Cornell needs to get some volleyball announcers. It seems like the other Ivy teams have play-by-play announcers for volleyball. All Cornell does is show the matches with an open mic to catch some background noise and superimpose a primitive graphic. It would be a shame if this turns out to be the best team in the league but with the worst presentation.

Speaking of teams that may stay in the race for an Ivy League title, **Men's Soccer**, fresh off a 6-2-0 record in non-conference matches, won its Ivy opener, 1-0, at home over Penn. It was a typical Big Red nail-biter (to the extent anyone gets excited enough about soccer to bite his or her nails), with the Red scoring in the third minute of the second overtime for a 1-0 victory. **Emeka Eneli '22** got the game-winner; it was his team-leading fifth goal of the season. For his work in this game and in last Tuesday's victory over Colgate, Emeka got a twofer of Ivy honors—Rookie of the Week and co-Player of the Week. And speaking of honors, the Big Red made it into the coaches' poll top-25; they're No. 24, the only Ivy League team in the top 25.

The Big Red will try to stay atop the Ivy League when they play at Harvard (which also won its league opener) at 1:00 p.m. PDT on Saturday. Then on Tuesday at 4:00 p.m. PDT, the Red have a non-league match at Colgate, which is currently ranked No. 20 in the same poll. Saturday's match will be on ESPN+ and Tuesday's match will be streamed for free on the Patriot League Network, which is available through the Stadium app.

Okay, let's get to the game that elicited my "Wow!" that headlines this report. That would be **Football's** blowout victory over Sacred Heart. I was at a tailgate party with friends in Evanston before the Northwestern-Michigan game (We won't talk about *that* game) and did not get to see the Cornell game. When I first checked the score, however, it was late in the first half and the Big Red led 36-10. Wow! Cornell scored on its first six possessions. The Red led by 26 at halftime and then started the second half by forcing a three-and-out and taking the ball fifty yards in two plays for another TD. 43-10! From then on it was garbage time, as the Big Red emptied its bench and the Pioneers scored touchdowns late in the third quarter and again late in the game to make the game look closer than it really was.

Keys to the Game? Here are a few:

- Cornell established its running game. And how! The Big Red rushed for 267 yards on 43 carries—an average of over 6 yards per attempt. Its ability to move the ball on the ground allowed the Red to pass selectively. Cornell threw just 17 passes (and completed 13 of them) for 161 yards. **Harold Coles '20** gained 121 yards on 8 carries, the biggest chunk of that coming on an 85-yard touchdown run. Coles now has two of the six longest touchdown runs in school history. Harold got help from **Jake Derderian '21** (for whom I have a soft spot as he went to my high school in Rhode Island) and **SK Howard '21**. Jake carried the ball 14 times for 55 yards, and SK gained 42 yards on 10 carries. Sacred Heart came into the game ranked eighth in the country in total defense, fourth in passing defense and 22nd in rushing defense.
- Quarterback play. Not needing to do too much, **Dalton Banks '19** and **Mike Catanese '20** were quite efficient, completing almost 80% of their passes for an average of 14 yards per completion. Each threw a TD pass and neither passer was intercepted. For Banks, it was his best game since the back-to-back Brown and Princeton games last fall. And, as in those games, Dalton was able to pass less because the running game was so effective.
- Big Plays. Cornell had four plays of 40 or more yards to just one by Sacred Heart. In addition to Coles' long run, **David Jones '20** had a punt return of 46 yards and an interception return of 48 yards for a touchdown. And Catanese and **J.D. Pickell '19** combined on a 43-yard catch and run play for Cornell's final score.
- Turnovers. Winning the turnover battle never hurts and the Big Red won this one bigly. Cornell had zero turnovers (In fact, the Red has not turned the ball over all season) and three takeaways. Jones, in addition to his pick-six—the first by the Big Red since 2011—had another interception, giving him five in his last four games going back to last season. And **DJ Woullard '19** forced a fumble which **Malik Leary '20** recovered. Not surprisingly, Jones was named Ivy League Defensive Player of the Week.

This week the Big Red host Harvard. Cornell must win if it hopes to become a factor in the Ivy League title race. The Crimson are 2-1. After convincing wins over San Diego and Brown, the Cantabs were defeated last Friday, 23-16, by a surprisingly good University of Rhode Island team. (Another hometown plug: URI, the *alma mater* of both of my parents, is 3-1 and ranked 17th in the FCS coaches' poll, with its only loss coming in the last minute to FBS UConn.) Last year, the Big Red defeated Harvard behind a huge defensive effort and a solid running game. That could be the formula for success again. The game will be streamed on ESPN+ at 10:30 a.m. PDT.

Not everything was rosy last week. **Women's Soccer** continues to struggle. Most recently, they were shut out by Penn, 2-0, to fall to 1-7-1. On the plus side, the Red did manage to generate nine shots, compared with the one shot they had against Columbia a week ago. They have two matches this week, at Harvard on Saturday and at Colgate on Tuesday. **Field Hockey** also lost, 1-0, to Columbia to go to 2-7 on the season. I chuckled when I read the cornellbigred.com headline: "Career-Day From Henry Not Enough As Columbia Downs Field Hockey." Pravda has a way of putting a positive spin on everything. **Maddie Henry '20** is the Cornell goalie and her having a "career day" is a nice way of saying that she was barraged with shots. Yup. Columbia took 29 shots and put 16 of those on goal, giving Henry the opportunity to set a career-high in saves. (For perspective, Cornell took just nine shots and put four of them on goal; Columbia's goalie Dempsey did not have a "career day"—she didn't need to.) Next up for the Big Red is an Ivy League game at home versus Yale on Saturday and a nonleague game at Lehigh on Monday.

Finally, both the men's and women's **Cross-Country** teams raced last weekend at Lehigh's Paul Short Invitational. I'm not sure what to make of the results, at least for the men. There are four separate races for each sex, with the gold race being the most competitive. Racing with six freshmen and just one senior, the Cornell men elected to run in the brown race—one step down—and finished second of the 44 teams competing. But only one other Ivy league team, Columbia, was in this race. Yale and Penn were in the

gold race. Although it's dicey to compare times of runners who were not going head-to-head, it looks like Cornell would have finished about 15th in the gold race, behind Yale but ahead of Penn.

The Cornell women did compete in the gold race and finished fourth in the 41-team field behind race winner Yale and two other nationally-ranked teams, Georgia and Utah State. Penn and Columbia were also in the gold race and finished further back—but Columbia, at least, may have sent its better runners to a meet at Wisconsin. Noteworthy for the Big Red was that **Taylor Knibb '20**, fresh off winning her world U-23 triathlon championship, finished first for the Red and ninth overall in her first meet back.

That's it for this week. **GO BIG RED!**