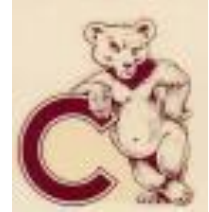




CCWW Sports Report No. 610
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by
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I hope y'all had a good Halloween! Also, this weekend it's spring forward, fall back.

Trick or Treat? There is a column that has run off and on since 1972 called "The Bottom Ten." Nowadays, the column is an ESPN product although the idea originated at the Los Angeles *Times*. Each week the column lists the ten worst teams in college football, seasoning its selections of the absolute worst teams with a smattering of underachievers and teams which suffered particularly humiliating losses. For example, last week's list included Ohio State after the Buckeyes were drubbed by Purdue.

When I saw how several Red teams did last weekend, I was reminded of the Bottom Ten. Lacking ten truly lamentable Cornell performances last weekend, I settled on a Big Red Bottom Seven. Below is my list of those teams. And, while there were more tricks than treats, I did manage also to scrape together a top seven list. Here goes.

Top Seven

No. 7. **Women's Polo** defeated Skidmore, 17-6, to go above .500 (3-2) for the first time this year. Winning always beats losing but one should not get too excited about this result. Cornell plays Skidmore multiple times almost every year and always beats them. In fact, you'd have to go back to 2010 to find a smaller victory margin than eleven goals.

No. 6. **Men's Polo** defeated something called the Gardnertown Polo Club, 23-12, to improve their record to 4-1. I've never heard of the Gardnertown Polo Club but, like I wrote above, winning always beats losing.

No. 5. The Cornell **Equestrian** team had a two-day show at RIT, finishing second the first day and first the second day. All good. This ever-improving program now has two firsts and a second in its first three fall shows.

No. 4. **Sprint Football** improved its record to 4-1 and guaranteed itself a winning season by shutting out Post, the for-profit university formerly known as the Mattoon Shorthand School. The final score was 34-0. This week the Big Red will travel to West Point, with the CSFL North division title on the line. Last year Army defeated the Red, 55-0. I doubt Vegas has a betting line on this game; if they do, I'd take Army and give the points.

Now for the teams that, IMHO, really did accomplish something significantly good:

No. 3. The **Lightweight Rowing** "A" boat took first in the Princeton Chase, a week after taking gold in the Head of the Charles Regatta. This reminds me of the San Francisco Giants of a few years back. You may recall that the Giants won the World Series three times between 2008 and 2012, winning every other year. That may be the pattern for Cornell's lightweight crew, which won IRA championships in 2015 and again in 2017. Could spring 2019 bring another national title? Stay tuned.

No. 2. **Women's Hockey** defeated Harvard and Dartmouth to open the season with three straight wins. On Friday, Cornell scored twice against the Crimson in the first period and Harvard never caught up. An extra-skater goal in the last minute of the game made it a 3-2 final but a Big Red win was never in doubt. The next day, the Red, led by **Kristin O'Neill '20's** goal and two assists, shut out Dartmouth, 4-0. Kristin leads the Red in scoring with three goals and two assists. **Micah Zandee-Hart '21** had her first goal to go with two assists on the weekend and is second on the team in scoring with four points. **Maddie Mills '21**

had an assist in each game and is tied with Micah with four points (all assists). **Marlène Boissonnault '19** stopped 69 of the 72 shots she faced in three games last week (including the Syracuse game last Tuesday) and was named ECAC Goalie of the Week. The Big Red will go on the road this weekend to face Yale and Brown. You can catch the action on ESPN+ starting at 3 p.m. PDT on Friday and noon PDT on Saturday.

No. 1. Cornell **Volleyball** kept their (admittedly slim) Ivy title hopes alive with four-set victories at Harvard and Dartmouth. These were Cornell's second and third Ivy road wins this fall, after capturing just one Ivy League match on the road last year. **Samanta Arenas '20** was named the Ivy POW. With a 7-3 record in Ivy matches, the Red is in sole possession of third place in the league. But Cornell's path to a share of the title is not an easy one and almost certainly includes winning their final four matches to get there. That means, first, beating Penn and Princeton at home this weekend (avenging earlier road defeats to both). That puts the Red into at least a tie with the Tigers for second. Then Cornell needs to defeat Yale and Brown on the road next weekend. Finally, Cornell needs the Elis to lose one of its other three remaining matches. Could all that happen? Sure. Is it likely? No. If you want to tune in to ESPN+ to see how it goes, the Penn match is Friday at 4:00 p.m. PDT and the showdown with Princeton is Saturday at 2:00 p.m. PDT.

Bottom Seven

No. 7. **Women's Cross-Country** finished disappointing seventh at Ivy Heps, just nine points out of last and 67 points behind sixth-place Harvard. The one bright spot was **Taylor Knibb '20**, who finished seventh and was named first-team All-Ivy.

No. 6. **Men's Cross-Country** finished last at Ivy Heps. 'Nuff said.

No. 5. **Men's Soccer** lost to Princeton, 2-0. Since their six-match winning streak ended, the Big Red have lost three out of four, and are now 10-5-0, and 3-2 in Ivy League matches. Cornell trails Princeton by four points with two matches left and an Ivy title this year does not seem to be in the cards. Still, it's been a great run for this team that is made up of three-fourths underclassmen. On Saturday, the Red will try to get back on the winning side of things when they host Dartmouth at 2:00 p.m. PDT on ESPN+.

No. 4. The losses keep piling up for **Women's Soccer**, now on a 13-match winless streak. The Big Red lost to Princeton, 2-0, in one-sided match that has, I'm afraid, been the norm this season. The Red were outshot 21-1 and had zero shots on goal. The Red conclude their season this Saturday in a senior-day match with Dartmouth.

No. 3. When **Field Hockey** lost, 4-0, to Princeton Saturday morning, it marked a low point in a season that, I'm sorry to say, has had many low points. Playing without their head coach, who is dealing with medical issues, the Big Red lost their sixth-straight Ivy contest. Even worse, the Red has been shut out in every Ivy game. And against the Tigers, Cornell never even came close to getting a goal. The Red were outshot 38-1 and had zero shots on goal or penalty corners. And if **Maddie Henry '20** had not made a career-high 18 saves, the most by a Cornell goalie in ten years, it would have been worse. We're talking historically (if not biblically) bad here. The Red are on the verge of a perfectly unsuccessful Ivy season—no wins and no goals in a seven-game league schedule. The only time Cornell went winless in the Ivy League was in its first year, 1986. The Red finished 0-4-2 (Columbia did not yet have a team). The 1986 Big Red team also had trouble scoring goals, but it did manage to score three in its final two games against Penn and Dartmouth.

Why, you might ask, does this team not lead the bottom seven? Fair question, and it was headed that way but two things intervened. First, the Cornell football team was even worse. Second, after men's hockey lost twice, the field hockey team rallied on Sunday for a 4-0 win over Bryant in a non-league game. Thank goodness for those non-conference affairs. The Big Red are an awful 0-6 in Ivy games but their record in other games is just 4-6 and they've scored at least one goal in seven of the ten games. The season wraps up Saturday when Dartmouth visits Ithaca.

No. 2. **Men's Hockey's** season began with a thud: two losses at home to a Michigan State team picked to finish last in the Big Ten. Cornell came into these games ranked No. 8 in the USCHO poll and they fell to No. 18—which I'm told is the largest one-week drop in the **Mike Schafer '86** coaching era. The scores were 5-2 and 4-3. Some takeaways:

- My first takeaway is not to take too much away from an opening weekend, especially when your team is playing a team that has been practicing longer and has already played two games that count. Cornell actually outshot MSU by big margins in both games; the problem was some sloppy giveaways and two subpar games from All-American goalie **Matt Galajda '21**, who ended up getting pulled in both games.
- Having said that, I do worry that our defense may have lost more than we appreciated. It's true that Galajda is back—and, hopefully, he'll get it turned around—and that all of the defensemen also return, but we may not have fully appreciated the defensive contributions made by some of the graduating forwards, especially **Alex Rauter '18** and **Jared Fiegl '18**.
- I also worry that a problem every year except last year may be reasserting itself—an inability at times to turn shots on goal into goals. But two games make much too small a sample to reach any conclusions.

The Big Red will try to get things right this weekend when they open their ECAC schedule by hosting Yale and Brown. Both Friday's and Saturday's games will be streamed on ESPN+ starting at 4:00 p.m. PDT.

No. 1. **Football** lost to Princeton, 66-0. The last time the Big Red suffered as bad a loss was in '90. That's 1890, when the program was in its fourth year, and Harvard defeated the Red 77-0. I know some Cornell fans have hated Harvard ever since. You've heard of 100-year floods or other natural disasters that occur once a century. I think this disaster was man-made and it was 128 years since the last one. I mean, Cornell got through the entire 20th century without anything like this. Again, I'm thinking "biblical." I'm not going to name names, with two exceptions. First, the problems with this program are not all the fault of Coach **David Archer '05** but I have to wonder if it isn't time to take a hard look at whether the progress he's made with the program justifies his retention. Second, we were done in again by the inconsistency of quarterback **David Banks '19**. When the Red could not stop Princeton's offense, and Banks went to the air to try to catch up, the results were disastrous. David threw 18 passes. Eight were caught by Cornell receivers for 70 yards. Four were caught by Tigers, and two of those were returned for 48 yards. Six were caught by no one. The bi-polarity of David's game came into full focus these past two weeks—his best game of the year against Brown followed by his worst game in a Cornell uniform.

No more rants from me. Cornell can still finish with a winning Ivy League record (and .500 overall) if they defeat Penn Friday night (TV on ESPNU at 3:00 p.m. PDT) and Columbia in two weeks. There's also a game against Dartmouth in there but I cannot see the Big Red being any match for the undefeated Big Green.

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