



CCWW Sports Report No. 614
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by
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I'm rushing to get this week's report out because at the end of the week I'm off to—of all places—Ithaca to catch a few Big Red contests in person. I've been contemplating this trip for a while and when Sherilyn scheduled a female family weekend at our house I decided this was a good time to get out of Dodge. So, if the weather and Delta Airlines cooperate, I will see the Red wrestle against Ohio State on Friday, play hockey against Union on Saturday and play lacrosse against Lehigh on Sunday. Wish me well! I'll give y'all a report next week on my reconnaissance trip.

Regression to the Mean?

Last week I suggested that Men's Hockey seemed to have it together, Women's Hockey wasn't where I had hoped, and Women's Basketball was hanging on by a thread. What do I know? Women's Hockey and Basketball each swept a pair of games, while Men's Hockey landed with a thud. So where do things stand and what does it mean? And what about Wrestling and Men's Basketball? My take follows:

Men's Hockey. In the first 40 minutes last weekend, the Big Red scored three goals, gave up none and outshot their opponent, 21-13. In the next 85 minutes, the Red was outscored, 8-2, and outshot, 51-36. The result was a 3-3 tie with a mediocre Brown team and a 5-2 thumping by good-but-not-great Yale. (In fairness, Brown, after starting the season 1-6-3, was 9-4 in the 13 games before it faced the Big Red.)

For now, I think we need to take the long view. Cornell did not suddenly become a lousy team last weekend. I'm sure the recent injuries to **Cody Haiskanen '21** (out for the season) and **Cam Donaldson '21** hurt, but the Big Red has overcome similar injuries this season and I expect they'll do the same again. Donaldson could be back this weekend (which would really help the offense) but **Max Andreev '22**, who suffered a broken collarbone on January 18, is not ready to return. What's as crucial as getting these players back is for **Matt Galajda '21** get his mojo back; Matt gave up seven of those eight goals.

This week the Big Red play their last two home games of the season, hosting RPI and Union. Both games are at 4:00 p.m. PST on ESPN+. The Saturday game with Union is senior night. I'll be there and give y'all my unbiased view of things.

Women's Hockey. A week ago I consigned the Big Red to suffering a first-round NCAA tournament loss after not winning the ECAC regular season, not winning the ECAC tournament and not getting to play that first-round NCAA tourney game at home. Well, that was *last* week—before the Red swept Brown and Yale and, perhaps more importantly, before Princeton and Clarkson each lost a game. Now Cornell has moved up to fourth in the USCHO poll, has the fifth best “adjusted” PWR, is in second place in the ECAC going into the final weekend, and can win the ECAC regular season title (and home ice advantage for the entire ECAC tournament) with wins over RPI and Union, and a Clarkson win at home over Princeton.

Cornell put together solid performances to dispatch the Bears and the Bulldogs. Against Brown on Friday, the Red took a first-period lead on **Gillis Frechette '22**'s first career goal and then broke a 1-1 tie with two goals in a 1:15 span in the second period, added another insurance goal in the third period, and cruised to a 4-1 victory. **Maddie Mills '21** had two goals (both on the power play) and assisted on Frechette's goal for a three-point game. **Micah Zandee-Hart '20** also had three points—all assists. The Red poured 49 shots on the Brown goal, while **Marlène Boissonnault '20** faced only ten shots and stopped nine of them. On Saturday, Boissonnault saved all 15 Yale shots on goal in posting her sixth shutout of the season, while **Kristin O'Neill '20** scored twice in the 4-0 victory. Mills leads Cornell in scoring with 39 points (16g, 19a), while O'Neill is second in points and leads the team with 19 goals.

The Big Red should wrap up the regular season with wins this weekend at RPI and Union; when Cornell played these same teams three weeks ago the Red won the games by a combined score of 11-0. You can watch both games online; RPI provides a free stream and the Union game will be on ESPN+. Friday's game is at 3:00 p.m. PST and Saturday's game is at noon PST.

Women's Basketball. I did not see that coming. Coming off a five-game losing streak, and on the road at Brown and Yale, the Big Red won twice. It was the Red's first Ivy weekend road sweep in ten years. Like I said: I did *not* see that coming. **Laura Bagwell-Katalinich '20**, the transfer from Penn, led Cornell in scoring in both games and just missed posting back-to-back double-doubles (14 pts., 14 reb. vs. Brown; 17 pts. 9 reb. vs. Yale). With the two wins, Cornell now has a 9-10 record and is 3-5 in league play. The Red are still two games out of the last Ivy League tournament spot, and four of their last six games are on the road. So I don't have much optimism that the Big Red can make the ILT. But who knows? This weekend Cornell visits Princeton (which beat the Red in Ithaca earlier this month by 29 points) and league leader Penn. Both games are the first half of double-headers with the men's games. Friday's matchup with Princeton starts at 2:30 p.m. PST and Saturday's game at Penn starts at 1:30 p.m. PST. The Big Red really need at least a split to have much of a chance to make the ILT. Both games are on ESPN+.

Men's Basketball. Cornell split its two games, defeating Brown in overtime and losing to league leader Yale by six. The Big Red is now 13-11 overall, and tied with Princeton for third in the Ivy League with a 5-3 record. This week the Red visit Princeton and Penn. Each game is the back half of a double-header with the women, with the tipoff on Friday scheduled for 5:00 p.m. PST and on Saturday at about 4:00 p.m. PST. Cornell leads Penn by two games so it is likely that a pair of losses would put the Big Red in a tie with the Quakers for the fourth and final ILT spot. On the other hand, a victory in either of these games should put the Red in a good position to capture a spot in the ILT. You can catch all the action on ESPN+.

As for last weekend's games, the split was probably what we should have expected. Brown had only won once (The Bears won a second game on Saturday, besting Columbia by two when Stefanini missed a trey at the buzzer) but with **Matt Morgan '19** having an off night, the Bears took an early lead and had a double-figure lead most of the first half. The Red ended the half on a 7-0 run to cut the Bear's lead to four, but Brown started the second half with an 8-3 spurt to build the lead back up to nine. A layup by **Jimmy Boenheim '21** with 8:44 left gave the Big Red its first lead of the night. Cornell never trailed after that but the game stayed close and Brown tied it up with 45 seconds left. A Cornell turnover allowed Brown to hold for the last shot but they missed and game went to OT. The Big Red scored the first seven points of the extra period but Brown scored the next six to cut the lead back to one. A layup by **Terrance McBride '21** and consecutive steals by **Steven Julian '19** sealed the 70-66 win. With Morgan held to "just" 15 points, the Red were led in scoring by Boenheim with 21 points and **Josh Warren '20** with 18.

On Saturday, the Big Red gave Ivy leader Yale a battle but came up a little short, losing by a score of 98-92. Morgan had his shooting touch back as he hit 10 of 18 shots from the field (including five of nine from beyond the arc) and all ten of his free throws. Matt's 35 points set a Newman Arena record. Boenheim had a career-best 24 points and **Jack Gordon '19** scored 15 points in 14 minutes, hitting three of four shots and eight of nine free throws.

Wrestling. The Big Red went south last weekend for dual meets with two ranked ACC teams, No. 14 Virginia Tech and No. 13 North Carolina. Tech put up a real fight; UNC not so much. The Friday meet with the Hokies ended with the teams tied with 16 points but Cornell prevailed on the tiebreaker. I got to watch the entire meet. It started off with a huge win at 184 by 13th-ranked **Max Dean '21**, who not only beat the No. 3-ranked wrestler but his 9-0 major decision gave the Red a bonus point. **Ben Honis '19** followed that up with a win at 197 but then Tech got on the board with a close win between two evenly matched heavyweights. Cornell won the next three matches (125, 133, 141), including an 8-3 victory by 13th-ranked **Chas Tucker '21** over the Hokie wrestler ranked just behind him. On the down side, I was a tad surprised that neither 8th-ranked **Vito Arujau '22** nor top-ranked (and defending NCAA champion) **Yianni Diakomihalis '21** could earn bonus points. So at this point the Red led 16-3. Then it became hang on time. Cornell had to use a substitute at 149 (**Will Koll '19**, who had been injured all season) and he lost—but avoided a major decision which would have given Tech an extra point. The Big Red also lost at 157, 165 and 174, but only gave up a bonus point at 165. That made the score 16-all and Cornell

prevailed on the third tie-breaker, most points scored in all the matches. In retrospect, I'm surprised Cornell was ranked seven places ahead of Virginia Tech; the Red were only clear favorites in three bouts and Hokies looked to be favored in at least three matches. Only Dean's big upset gave Cornell the win.

The meet with UNC went more smoothly. The Tar Heels 4th-ranked wrestler won by a tech fall in the opener at 149 and that was all the points the Heels would get. Cornell won the next nine bouts, including upsets over ranked wrestlers at 157 and heavyweight and major decision victories by Honis and Arujau, and won 29-5.

This Friday the Big Red host No. 2 Ohio State. First, let me explain that No. 2 ranking—it is OSU's *tournament ranking*; the Buckeyes' *dual meet ranking* is sixth, just one spot ahead of Cornell. The difference is that dual meet rankings are based on a team's ability to win head-to-head bouts against another team, whereas a team's tournament ranking is a prediction of how it would do in the NCAA tourney which depends more on how many *really good* wrestlers the team has. Since Ohio State has six wrestlers ranked in the top six in the country, the expectation is that they will go deep into the tournament and earn bonus points along the way.

Head to head, there's less of a spread between the teams. Cornell should be favored at 125, 141 and 174, and the Big Red has a decent chance of winning the bouts at 184, 197 and heavyweight and an outside chance of winning at 133. So it could be interesting. I'll give y'all a full report next week.

That's it for now. I had hoped to get into some of the other winter sports in this report but that will have to wait another week. In the meantime, **GO BIG RED!**