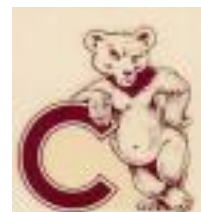




CCWW Sports Report No. 707
(March 5, 2020)
by
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Men's Hockey Headline: Big Red Sweeps St. Lawrence and Clarkson to Win Regular Season ECAC Championship.

In the end, the Cleary Cup battle was anti-climactic. There was supposed to be a showdown between Cornell and Clarkson for all the marbles on Senior Night at Lynah last Saturday. The teams had been tied in the standings but the Golden Knights faded down the stretch, losing to Harvard a week ago to fall two points behind the Big Red, and tying Colgate last Friday to give the Red an insurmountable three-point lead going into Saturday's finale. So the Red didn't need a win that night, but they got one anyway, defeating the Knights 5-1 in a game that was close until the third period. Cornell now has a week off before resuming play on March 13 with a best-of-three ECAC playoff quarterfinal series at Lynah against whichever team that survives this weekend has the worst regular season record. Three thoughts on where we stand:

- **Peaking at the Right Time.** When Cornell ran off those ten wins to start the season, I feared it might be too much, too soon, and I did not bemoan the loss at Dartmouth just before the December break. While the Big Red came back strong from the break, demolishing Ohio State in Vegas in their first game, they then went through a so-so (for them) 4-1-4 January that ended with a 5-0 drubbing at Quinnipiac. Well that was then. Since February 1, the Red have rolled, winning nine in a row and outscoring the opposition 40-12. Peaking at the right time? I sure hope so.
- **Hot goalies win championships.** **Matthew Galajda '21** got off to a strong start, posting a 1.3 goals-against average (GAA) in his first ten games. After rising to about 1.8, Matty's GAA is back down to 1.56. His rolling five (i.e., GAA in last five games), is 0.60—even better than it was after the Harvard win in December. So right now the Big Red seems to have a *very* hot goalie.
- **Next Man Up.** The Big Red have been fortunate this year from an injury perspective. Biggest in-season losses were defenseman **Cody Haiskanen '21** for six games and forwards **Kyle Betts '21** and **Max Andreev '22** for five games. All are now healthy. And the Red have been able to plug in a skater and keep on truckin'. Case in point on Saturday. When **Noah Bauld '20** got banged up on Friday, that gave **Ben Berard '23**, a healthy scratch on Friday, a chance to play the next night. Ben took full advantage of his opportunity, scoring Cornell's first, third and fifth goals for his first career hat trick.

Women's Hockey Headline: Cornell Sweeps St. Lawrence in ECAC Quarters; Stays No. 1 in Both National Polls.

The Big Red's historic season continues. The Red defeated SLU in the ECAC playoff quarterfinals by scores of 7-2 and 3-2. The first game was an easy Cornell win; the second game less so. Game two was tied into the third period, before Cornell scored twice, the second a shorthanded goal by **Grace Graham '20**. The Saints would get one back in the final minutes with the goalie pulled but that was it. The Red now face Harvard at Lynah on Saturday at 10:00 a.m. PST; win that game and the Red will be back at Lynah at 11:00 a.m. PDT on Sunday (Remember: spring ahead, fall back this weekend!) to face either Clarkson or Princeton for the ECAC tourney championship and the conference's auto-bid to the NCAA tournament.

This was the week that ECAC Hockey announced its year-end awards for women and, to no one's surprise, the Big Red racked up. First-team All-ECAC honors went to defender **Jaime Bourbonnais '20** and goalie **Lindsay Browning '21**. Named to the second team were defender **Micah Zandee-Hart '20** and forwards **Kristin O'Neill '20** and **Maddie Mills '21**. Bourbonnais was named the top defenseman, while Browning was named the Goalie of the Year. And Coach **Doug Derraugh '91** was named ECAC Hockey Coach of the Year for the fifth time.

Men's Lacrosse Headline: **Another Week, Another Win: Big Red Edge Ohio State.** This one wasn't the blowout that the first three games were but, hey, a win is a win. Cornell's 2019 faceoff difficulties resurfaced bigly but the Red found a way to overcome those problems with an efficient offense and pressing defense that forced the Buckeyes into a high number of turnovers. The game stayed close for a while—5-5 after one period and 9-9 three minutes into the third quarter. Then Cornell went on a run, outscoring the Bucks 7-1 to take a six-goal lead with less than 13 minutes to go. Game over, right? Not so fast. The Red went into a deep funk, taking poor shots early in the shot clock, losing faceoffs and giving up easy goals on defense, and OSU pulled to within three. Still, the game seemed to be under control when the Buckeyes turned the ball over with 2:19 to go. Ohio State pulled the goalie out of the cage to put pressure on the Big Red. But the Red's attempt to put the ball in the open cage (with 20 seconds left on the shot clock) missed, the shot was not backed up and the Buckeyes got the ball back and scored to get within two with 57 seconds to go. Another poor Big Red clearing decision led to an Ohio State steal and a quick goal (Shades of the game that shall not be mentioned, Gillette Stadium, Memorial Day 2009) and it was a one-goal game with 25 ticks to go. The Buckeyes won the next faceoff but **Chase Ierlan '22** made a save with four seconds to go, pinned the ball under his stick and let time expire. Never in doubt, right?

I'm not sure what to make of all this. Are Cornell's faceoff problems still a major concern? Some commentators seem to think that the Red was victimized by some rough OSU play on the scrums that the officials improperly ignored. Others thought that Cornell was just unlucky. There was a bit of an odd statistic in that Ohio State won 30 of 37 faceoffs, mostly by outmuscling the Red for ground balls, but on all other ground ball situations, the Big Red won about 18 of 21. That's just weird.

Two big tests coming up now. On Sunday at 1:00 p.m., *PDT* (Remember, spring ahead!), the Red will play No. 2 Penn State (with former Big Red coach Jeff Tambroni) in Charlotte. The game will be streamed on the Lax Sports Network. Hint: If to watch this on your HDTV, LSN is accessible through the TFT Next app which is available on an AppleTV and probably also on a Roku or Amazon Fire TV.

Other Headlines:

- **Women's Basketball Wins at Harvard for First Time Ever.** It hasn't been a great season for the Big Red women hoopsters but last Saturday in Allston (Why the Cornell athletics website continues to state, incorrectly, that Harvard's athletic teams play in Cambridge is beyond me) the Red did something they'd never done before—win a game at Harvard. After 40 straight losses in Massachusetts, it was Cornell Victorious. The Big Red was led by two women who had career games, **Kate Sramac '21**, who posted a 13 point/13 board double-double, and **Theresa Grace Mbanefo '22**, with her own double-double (11 pts./12 rebs.).

The victory broke two other losing streaks—an eight-game 2020 losing streak, and a five-game losing streak against Harvard (including both home and away games). As I've written previously, this season had gotten badly derailed. Indeed, less than 24 hours before the win over Harvard, the Big Red lost in overtime at Dartmouth. The Red will wrap up the season this weekend at home against Penn and Princeton, the Ivies' two best teams.

- **Women's Track & Field Third at Indoor Heps, Highest Finish Since 2016.** There was a time when the Big Red women owned Heptagonals, both the indoor and the outdoor variety. In the 12 years between 2002 and 2013, the Red won 17 of the 24 indoor and outdoor titles, finishing second or third in the other seven competitions. Starting in 2014, however, the rest of the league caught up and the best the Cornell women could manage since then was a second-place showing in 2016 indoor Heps. There is still some ground to make up but last weekend's third-place finish at Barton Hall—the highest since 2016—was a good place to start. The Big Red had three event winners, **Beatrice Juskeviciute '22** in the pentathlon, **Claire Kao '20** in the pole vault, and **Elle Orie '21** in the 5000. Juskeviciute and Kao each broke school records, while Orie broke the Barton Hall record. With their event wins, Beatrice, Claire and Elle earned first-team All-Ivy honors. Orie also made the All-Ivy second team for her second-place finish in the 3000, and she

was joined on the second team by high jump and long jump runners-up **Marguerite Lorenzo '21** and **Leone Farquharson '22**.

- **Men's Squash Upsets Dartmouth to Make Hoehn Cup Final.** Y'all may recall that the Hoehn Cup is the kid's table of college squash. The eight-team season-ending competition is open to the teams ranked 9 through 16. Cornell came into the tournament ranked 12th, but after winning their opening match against 13th-ranked Franklin & Marshall, they got a rematch with the No. 9 Big Green, which had defeated the Red 6-3 a month ago. This time it was 6-3 in favor of the Big Red. Cornell lost to Columbia in the final to finish as the No. 10 team in the country. It was the Big Red's first top-10 finish since 2016.

Other Results

- After an upset win over Brown a week ago, **Men's Basketball** resumed its losing ways, dropping home contests to Dartmouth and Harvard. While we knew for a while that the Big Red would not be going to the ILT, this made it official. The Red will wrap up their season on the road this weekend at Penn and Princeton. Barring some sort of miracle, Cornell will finish the season with a 6-21 record, the worst under Coach Brian Earl, and second-worst since Steve Donahue left in 2010.
- **Women's Lacrosse** is off to a 3-2 start to the season, with victories over Villanova, Marist and Harvard and losses to a ranked Penn State team and on Tuesday at Colgate. The loss to 'gate was tough to take; not only did it break a 20-game win streak over the Raiders, but the Red held an 8-4 lead before conceding the last seven goals of the game. On Saturday, the Red will host Columbia, a team they've never lost to in 23 meetings.
- Men's and Women's **Swimming & Diving** both competed at the Ivy League championships in late February. The men finished sixth, one place higher than their dual-meet standing, while the women finished last, one place lower than their league standing. The Big Red had one All-Ivy male swimmer, **Paige DaCosta '23**, who won the 100 backstroke to earn first-team honors and was the runner-up in the 200 back and 200 IM for second team honors.
- **Men's Track & Field** finished fifth at Indoor Heps. Not great, considering the dominance of this program since Y2K, but still a step forward from last winter's seventh-place finish. **Charles Smith '23** garnered first team All-Ivy honors by winning the long jump. He was joined on the All-Ivy first team by the 4x800 relay winners, **Shane Goosby '20**, **Mitchell Curl '23**, **Jonathan Plass '21**, and **Solomon Lawrence '21**.

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