

FIRST TO FOUR

A year removed from a third consecutive Ancient Eight crown, Harvard football returns with an eye on obtaining the first ever four-peat in Crimson history.



ON THE COVERS



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PREVIEW FOOTBALL 2016



SPREAD
WHAT TO WATCH FOR

As Harvard football looks to claim its fourth consecutive Ancient Eight crown, the team deals with integrating a new quarterback, as well as the loss of 14 All-Ivy selections.

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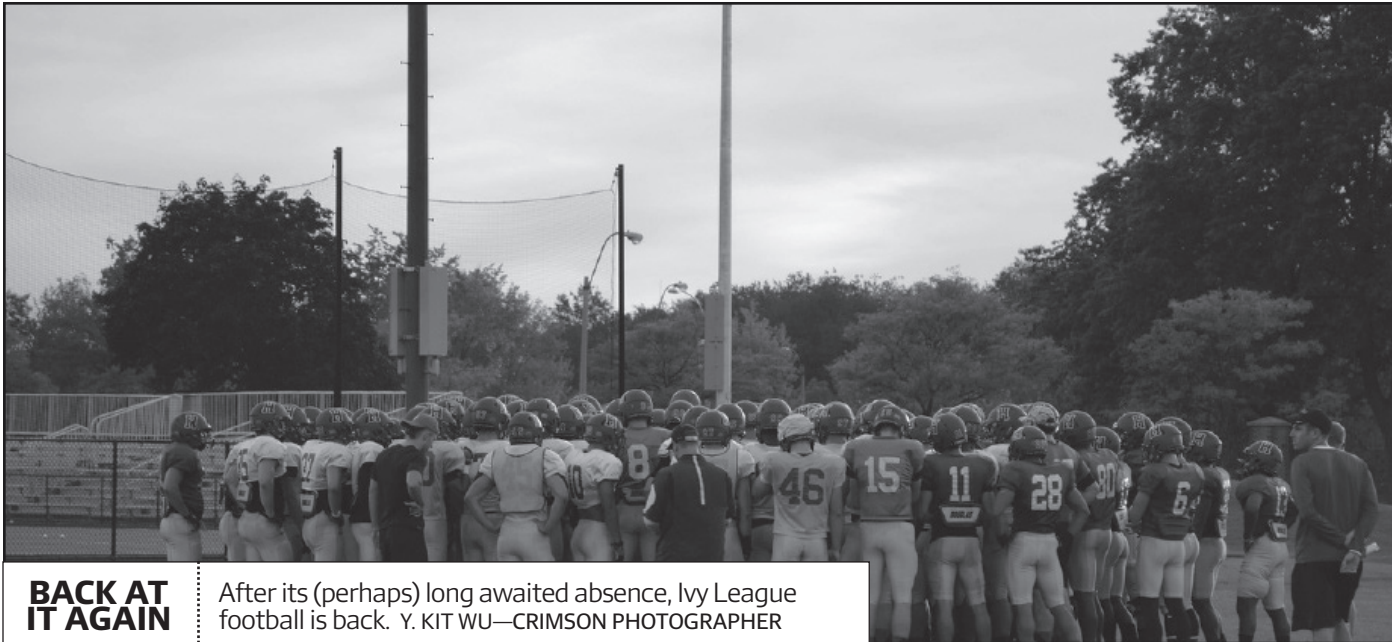
FROM THE EDITORS

Football season is always an exciting time at The Crimson. School is finally starting to fall back into its usual pace, the leaves are starting to change, and Harvard-Yale marks the one time the entire board feels like we go to an actual sports school. For the seniors on the board especially, we have come to expect nothing less than excellence from our three-time Ivy League Champs during our time here in Cambridge and would like to finish our tenure without giving up the title.

The Ivy League may have taken measures this season to change the game such as make modifications in practice style and moving the kickoff of the 40 yard line, but The Crimson sports board will look past those changes to have the same expectations of dominance from the boys from Cambridge as there have been in the past.

— SD, GP, JS, JF, ASV

A LEAGUE OF ITS OWN



BACK AT IT AGAIN

After its (perhaps) long awaited absence, Ivy League football is back. Y. KIT WU—CRIMSON PHOTOGRAPHER

By **W. GANT PLAYER**
CRIMSON STAFF WRITER

There's something special about fall. Millions of kids across the country begin school, young adults leave their families for the first time to go off to college, the leaves start to turn, and—perhaps most importantly—it's football season.

Tell me, what's better than a little Ivy League action this Saturday? I mean, excluding the big SEC matchup of Ole Miss and Georgia. Or Wisconsin-Michigan State. Or Alabama-Kent State. Or staring at a blank wall.

Seriously, Ivy League football is boring. Take it from the guy who has to watch all 10 Harvard football games, most of which take place during actually good college football games—like the kind that people pay money to watch on TV. Not that I'm bitter.

Here's a thought experiment: Remember what it was like to take the SAT? You spend hours staring at this blank sheet of paper, realizing you forgot to learn trig. So you decide to sit back and stare at the clock ticking. The only respite are the snack breaks. That's what watching Ivy League football is like.

Ivy League football is kind of like the previews at movies. Actually, check that—Ivy League football is like the part before the previews where everyone is talking instead of watching the ads.

Speaking of movies, have you ever been to one by yourself? I'd never tried it until this summer, but WOW. Really good stuff.

Yeah, it feels a little weird at first. But once you get in the theater and turn off your phone, it's like you're in another world. When you go with people, you're always wondering what they're thinking. God forbid you're on a date. Then you spend the first hour trying to figure out some move you can use to put your arm around your date. And the last hour you end up fidgeting while your arms fall asleep. Another metaphor for Ivy League football, I guess.

Man, I haven't been on a date in a while. Something about college and work and all that. Or maybe it's the fact that all my Saturdays are spent traveling the Northeast to watch football (shoutout to my editors). Really, who knows?

But I digress. Ivy League football is back! Let's get excited! After a shocking opening weekend in which Harvard won and Columbia lost, we finally get some league action. So sit back, crack a beer, and get ready for some sub-par college football.

HARVARD AT BROWN

So maybe I was a little harsh. Harvard football is exciting. Yeah, all my friends will be in the stands at Bryant-Denny Stadium watching the top-ranked team in the nation battle Kent State (bold prediction: Alabama wins), but like, this is cool too.

The Crimson is coming off its third straight Ivy League title, and now the team finally returns to conference action against the Bears. Harvard has a shiny, brand-new quarterback named Joe Viviano. He's 6'5", fast, and reminds people of Johnny Football. (If you want to learn more, see my last

article. It's a pretty fun read. I make some really interesting comparisons, and frankly it's just really well composed. God, I'm a gifted writer.)

There's more, too. For the past two seasons, the Crimson has had a defense that has shut out more people than male single-sex social organizations. It's almost like watching the Steelers in the 70s. Except, again, it's not. But close enough.

Brown is decent this year. Quarterback Kyle Moreno put up some big numbers in 2015 when Harvard beat up the Bears. The offensive line is full of large men, meaning large enough to outweigh two Gant Players.

Anyway, the Crimson has beaten Brown for the last five seasons. None of those contests was decided by a single possession. That'll happen again this year.

Prediction: Harvard 42 - Brown 17

YALE AT CORNELL

This game. What a matchup! As per usual, Yale finished behind the Crimson last season. I wonder what that's like, always coming in second. At some point I should talk to my older sister about that. Yikes.

And Cornell! What a season last year! After losing their first eight games, they didn't let it get to them! They came out strong against Ivy League powerhouse Columbia and put on a show! That 3-0 win was riveting.

Prediction: Yale 24 - Cornell 7

PRINCETON AT LEHIGH

Mediocrity. That's what defines this year's Princeton squad. Ranked in the mid-

dle of the pack in the Ivy League after a [insert adjective here] 2015 campaign. But it is 1-0 after eking out a victory against a Lafayette team it demolished last year. So while Tiger fans should be able to rest easy knowing their team beat Lehigh 52-26 last season, think again! Also, Lehigh beat Penn last week, and those Quakers are supposed to be the Crimson's biggest challenge this season.

Prediction: Lehigh 35 - Princeton 24

PENN AT FORDHAM

So this game is actually interesting for Harvard fans. Not that it matters. Non-conference games are pretty dumb. But Penn lost last week to Lehigh, so the Crimson's biggest opponent this season might end up being themselves. We'll see if Penn can beat Fordham. The Quakers are supposed to be pretty good, but what does that mean anyway?

Prediction: Penn 31 - Fordham 16

DARTMOUTH AT HOLY CROSS

Picture this: a team is down two touchdowns in the fourth quarter. After a miraculous series of drives, the team pulls out a one-point victory. One of those teams is Dartmouth.

Sounds kind of like the 2015 Harvard-Dartmouth contest, right? But that was actually the Big Green's game last week in which they barely beat New Hampshire. Pretty interesting circle there, I guess. I'm not really sure what I'm supposed to write about anymore. I really hate thinking about the Ivy League.

Prediction: Dartmouth 30 - Holy Cross 14

COLUMBIA AT GEORGETOWN

Columbia is bad. Like, my grandmother's desserts bad. For reference, my grandma likes to throw together basically anything she finds in her house and call it a dessert (lemon drywall was a family favorite).

Luckily for the Lions, Georgetown is also bad. Last season, the Hoyas took down mighty Columbia in a thrilling 24-16 win, but don't sleep on the Lions this year. According to a preseason media pool, the team ranks at a whopping seventh among the Ancient Eight! I guess the only place you can go is up when you're at the bottom.

Prediction: Columbia 16 - Georgetown 14

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No Contact Zone

In an effort to cut down on the number of head-related injuries and their long-term effects, the Ivy League implements new measures.



W. GANT
PLAYER

DON'T HATE THE PLAYER

Anyone who has ever played football has gotten hurt. Be it a broken bone, concussion, or just a bruise that stings a little the next day, football players repeatedly come home with aches and pains. That's the nature of such an inherently violent game.

Personally, I can't count the number of injuries I sustained playing football. In fifth grade, I started playing as a running back and defensive end. Eventually I settled as a safety and receiver in high school, playing three years on varsity and starting for two. So for eight years, every fall morning was tinged with a little bit of pain as I tried to recover from the previous night's practice. I broke my finger, sprained my ankle, separated my shoulder, and had more bruises than I could count.

Most of these injuries wound up being relatively minor, though. Bones healed; scrapes went away.

But some injuries last much longer. My dad, for instance, played college football. A linebacker, he gained a reputation for physical play despite an under-six-foot stature. Late in his career, he blew out his

knee, which effectively ended his playing days. Because of the severity of the injury, he no longer has cartilage in his knee, making a lot of everyday activities difficult for him. Even walking up the stairs is a struggle.

While physical injuries can be serious and have a profound impact on one's life, the ability to heal these injuries or diminish obstacles associated with them has progressed. The brain, and our understanding of how contact affects it, is different. So, understandably, concussions are the topic of discussion throughout football.

For the past few years, there has been an intensifying movement to promote safety in the game. As low as high school, some teams now require players to take a standardized baseline concussion test before every season. If they sustain what might be a concussion, they aren't allowed to practice until they can replicate their baseline.

In March the Ivy League made headlines by announcing a policy of its own: a ban on to-the-ground tackling in practices during the season.

According to Ivy League Executive Director Robin Harris, internal studies found that 49.6 percent of Ivy League concussions occurred during practice. 58 percent of those were helmet-to-helmet hits, and only four concussions occurred during non-contact practices.

"I know the rule has just been implemented this season," senior defensive tackle Doug Webb said. "But honestly, we haven't [tackled] since I've been here."

This year another policy takes effect. The same Ivy League study discovered that while kickoffs account for 5.8 percent of all plays, they account for 23 percent of all concussions in games. As a result, conference officials petitioned the NCAA to allow kickoffs from the 40-yard-line. The rule will apply only to in-league matchups.

"We understand there needs to be a balance between preparing our student athletes for the competition that's going to occur but also protecting their safety during the course of the year," Harris said. "While we don't have all the answers when it comes to concussions, we are proud that these policies take proactive steps to enhance our student-athletes' safety."

The increasing concern over concussions and other head injuries is a recent phenomenon. Not until the early 2000s did scientific studies begin to train attention on concussions in the NFL in a systematic way.

"The culture was such that there was no such thing as a concussion," Harvard coach Tim Murphy said. "It was not even in the equation."

There is no question that Murphy, who played football at Springfield College from 1974 to 1977, grew up during a different time with regard to concussions. The nine-time Ivy-League-winning coach knows that he suffered at least two concussions during his career—one during pickup hockey and one after a blindside hit on a kickoff return. In neither case did he skip his next practice.

"Compared to the game I played... it's
u n -

believably more safe," Murphy said. "The culture [back then] was such that if someone complained of a headache, it wasn't the coach who got after him. It was his teammates, his peers."

So the decision by the Ivy League to eliminate tackling is a relatively unheard of and important move in football. The lack of tackling means that players only have one day a week of full hitting, and that's during games.

Harvard had been one of the schools at the forefront of this movement. Well before the Ivy League decided to limit hitting in practices, Murphy and his staff were running "NFL-style" practices with limited hitting and no full contact.

These measures reflect the consensus concerning the dangers of head trauma. Concussions and other brain related injuries sustained by football players are long-lasting. Pervasiveness of an injury throughout life doesn't mean much. My ankle still cracks every time I take a step, but I'm still able to live my life fully. It's the degeneration, the debilitating symptoms caused by CTE that make changing the game important.

"I'm one of those guys who've seen both sides of it," Murphy said. "The culture is so extraordinarily different in a positive way. Why? Because everybody talks about it... [But] you keep having to improve it."

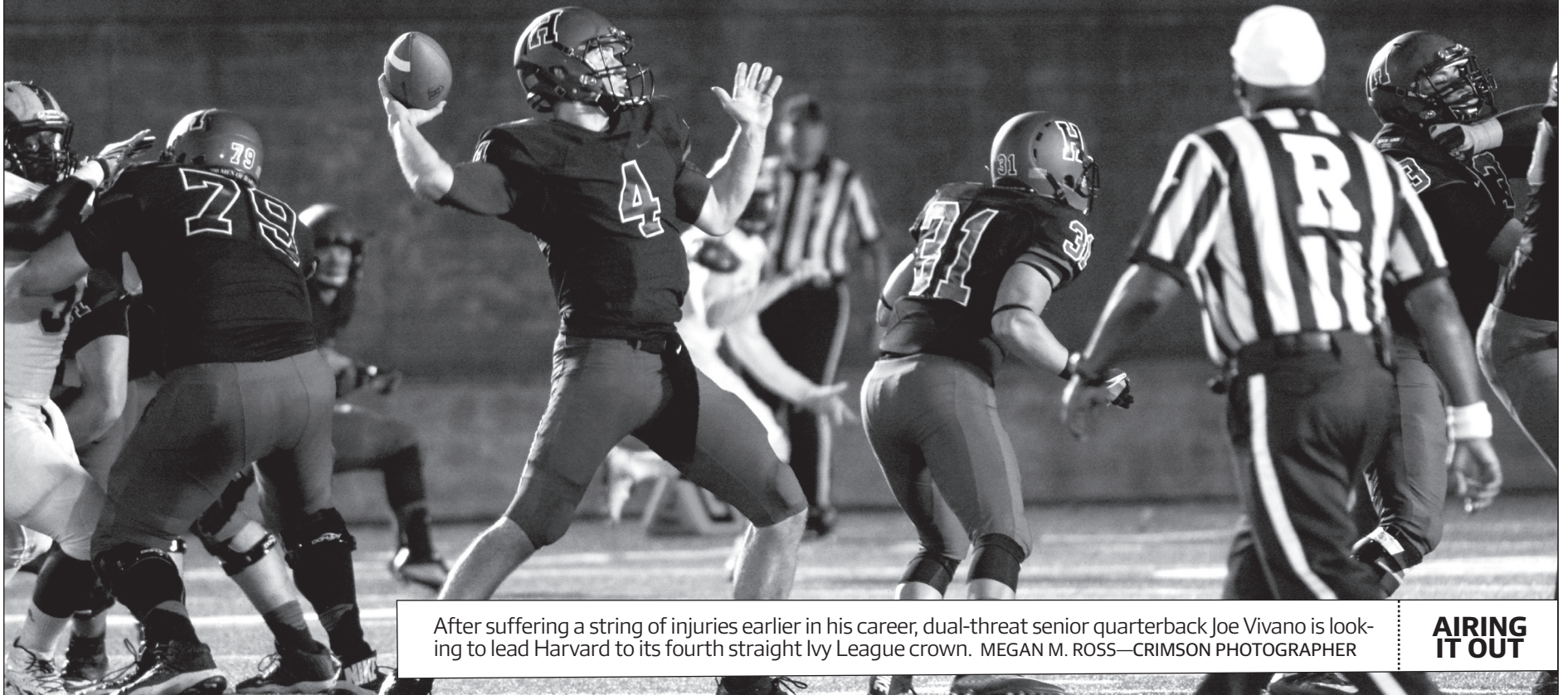
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The offensive linemen are charged with one job—stopping the defense. Y. KIT WU—CRIMSON PHOTOGRAPHER

LINE OF
DUTY

VIVA VIVIANO



After suffering a string of injuries earlier in his career, dual-threat senior quarterback Joe Viviano is looking to lead Harvard to its fourth straight Ivy League crown. MEGAN M. ROSS—CRIMSON PHOTOGRAPHER

**AIRING
IT OUT**

By **JACK STOCKLESS**
CRIMSON STAFF WRITER

Sometimes, things are just meant to be.

Despite breaking bones in both his left and right feet in separate incidents within the past year, senior quarterback Joe Viviano finds himself at the helm of Harvard's offense for the 2016 season.

Yet, needless to say, the Berwyn, Pa. resident's path to the starting job certainly has not been a linear one.

Despite being heavily recruited out of high school, Viviano—like many freshmen—did not see game action during his inaugural year in Cambridge.

One year later, the young quarterback did make it to the field but threw only one pass and record three carries in relief. That said, it was last season that was perhaps the most trying for the 6'5" signal caller.

Heading into camp, Viviano was expected to provide a strong challenge to fellow quarterback Scott Hosch '16. But suddenly, Viviano's career stagnated.

Before coach Tim Murphy had to choose his 2015 week one starter, Viviano suffered another setback in the preseason, falling victim to a foot injury in the waning weeks of preseason.

Given the fact that injured feet could spell trouble for a quarterback like Viviano, who relies almost as much on his legs as he does on his arm, it would not have been a surprise to see an intense battle for the starting job this fall.

But, Viviano has been a special talent in Murphy's eyes for a long time now, and his impressive performance throughout the preseason led the coach to suspend the competition and choose Viviano to suit up against Rhode Island in the opener last Friday.

"He's had multiple setbacks—very challenging ones that have been frustrating for us and even more frustrating for him—but there's never been any 'woe is me,'" Murphy said. "He's bounced right back. He's got a short memory, and he's fought through it. That's what you want from the leader of your offense."

Along with his raw talent, Viviano's ability to put his struggles in the rearview mirror and forge ahead made the decision a no-brainer for Murphy.

Furthermore, to Murphy and his staff, character and resiliency are two of the most important components of success on and off the field. In interviews they express the feeling that Viviano epitomizes both of those virtues.

During the recruitment process, Murphy would call Viviano each and every Sunday morning. Those phone calls only served to confirm Murphy's favorable opinion of the Conestoga High School quarterback's game.

"He was....that rare, really big quarterback that was an exceptional dual-threat athlete," Murphy said. "He had not only the ability to do all the things you ask of your quarterback, but he also had that improvisational ability."

Just as much as Murphy was enamored with Viviano's physical ability and skill set, Viviano was

impressed with the program Murphy had created and the legacy he had produced for himself in Cambridge.

"He was a huge influence in where I went to school," Viviano said. "He was very open in the recruiting process. There were a lot of good things about the program."

From the end of his high school career to the start of his first season in the driver's seat of the Crimson offense, Viviano had not taken many snaps in game action or in practice.

Despite throwing for 290 yards and three touchdowns in last Friday's matchup against Rhode Island, projecting his performance over the rest of the Crimson's more challenging slate is nearly impossible.

He is as much of an unknown commodity as is possible for a senior. Viviano, however, seems unfazed by the pressures inherent in his role.

"It feels great to finally just be out there playing," Viviano said. "I've waited a long time for it. Obviously there's been a bunch of setbacks, a bunch of adversity in between, but it was good to finally be out there playing with the guys."

Only time will tell whether Joe Viviano will be able to lead Harvard to a fourth straight Ivy League title, but Murphy has already given a ringing endorsement of his newest field general.

"He's going to be a good player in our league," Murphy said. "I'm absolutely certain of that."

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A STAKE IN HISTORY

THE CRIMSON LOOKS TO CEMENT ITS PLACE AMONG SPORTS DYNASTY STREAKS ON THE ARM OF A BRAND NEW QUARTERBACK AND AN EXPERIENCED LINE.

By **SAM DANELLO**
CRIMSON STAFF WRITER

Heavy rests the crown for the 2016 Harvard football team.

After two decades of steady success and three especially acute years of dominance, the Crimson confronts a question common to all victors: What next?

Having won its last 15 road games, what land remains to be conquered? Having hoisted three straight league titles, what opponents remain to be vanquished?

No longer do Harvard players need to grab top-dog status; that happened in 2013, with the first of three consecutive Ivy League titles.

Nor do they need to thwart criticisms of being a fluke success; that happened in 2014, with the second Ivy League title.

Nor do they need to buck odds and establish a dynasty; that happened in 2015, with the third Ivy League title.

Under the guidance of coach Tim Murphy, the Crimson has skipped from victory to victory, scoring at least 10 points in the last 62 games. Again in 2016 media pundits picked Harvard to top the Ancient Eight. But in its wake, the Crimson has left a trail of embittered opponents, all of them salivating at a chance for revenge.

Heavy rests the crown.

"We're everybody's rival," Murphy said. "Everybody hates our guts. Because of that, you can never, ever, ever take anyone for granted."

The crown weighs especially on senior Joe Viviano, anointed quarterback of Harvard's offense.

He's a large guy—6'5", 220 pounds—

but for three years, his stat line could fit into a fortune cookie. One pass thrown. No completions. No starts.

Last Friday rejiggered those numbers, as Viviano got the nod against Rhode Island and went 24-for-32 and 290 yards. Most noticeably, he scrambled for 51 yards—an upgrade over his solid but physically unexceptional predecessor, Scott Hosch.

Still, one battle doesn't win a war. As a freshman, Viviano entered campus as the 51st quarterback in the nation according to ESPN. He carried heavy expectations, and four years later, those expectations linger.

A season ago, Viviano nearly won the first-string job in training camp before breaking his foot. Now the undisputed starter, he will try to exhibit the play-making ability and cannon arm that attracted Murphy and other scouts.

It is a case of ability without experience, power without comfort. And there are no dry runs.

"I believe 100 percent in him," captain Sean Ahern said. "He's definitely ready."

Similarly crucial is Ahern, a defensive back. He's a fifth-year senior who plays like a fifth-year senior—calmly, quickly, and with physical dominance.

In the last two seasons, he has matched up against some of toughest opposing receivers and emerged both times as a member of the All-Ivy first team. Also a key special-teamer (he co-led the Ancient Eight with two blocked kicks last year), Ahern sets the temperament of the defense. He is the anchor, connecting Harvard to past seasons of defensive excellence.

"Sean's a potential All-American,"

Murphy said. "He's one of the best corners we've ever had."

Viviano and Ahern comprise two small parts of a larger team, one in which all players shoulder the duty of defending the Crimson's dominion.

As a program, Harvard preaches a next-man-up philosophy—that no personnel loss is absolute because replacements always wait in the wings. Following the graduation of 15 starters and fourteen All-Ivy players, 2016 marks a test of this philosophy. The next man in line truly is up.

"Whatever our talent level is, that's something we have no control over," Murphy said. "But we can control what our character is. That's what we hang our hat on."

Last year, running back Paul Stanton Jr. capped off a historic career with an 809-yard season; this year rushers Semar Smith (Junior), Charlie Booker (sophomore), and possibly others will share snaps. The by-committee approach worked against the Rams, as Harvard churned out 244 yards on the ground. But the deceptively physical Stanton will be missed when competing against Ivy League defensive lines.

Last year, the Crimson handled such defensive lines by trotting out senior offensive linemen Anthony Fabiano, Adam Redmond, and Cole Toner, all of whom signed NFL contracts at the end of the season; this year Harvard features less muscle and more youth upfront. While senior Max Rich and junior Larry Allen, Jr. provide some consistency, growing pains are inevitable.

A trio of seniors also staffed the linebacker unit during last year's campaign,

leading a defense that allowed a nation-low 84.4 rushing yards per contest; this year a number of fresh faces—especially juniors Luke Hutton and Chase Guillory—man the position. And the unit only got younger a week-and-a-half ago when senior Eric Ryan tore his meniscus, forcing the stalwart out of the lineup for the foreseeable future.

"We had a ton of huge parts of our defense graduate," Ryan said. "A lot of young guys [are] filling the voids.... It's been a huge preseason. We've been all in as a team."

Amidst this roster transformation, it's easy to overlook what remains the same. Two names stand out in particular: senior tight end Anthony Firkser and sophomore wideout Justice Shelton-Mosley.

Three of the Crimson's last four tight ends have caught on as professional players, and Firkser has the potential to continue this trend. He's a 230-pound race car with leather-soft hands.

Meanwhile, Shelton-Mosley is fast, period. Harvard freshmen rarely see significant game action, but last year the Sacramento, Ca. native totaled 1,140 yards and returned punts, including one for a score. Against Rhode Island, the game plan targeted Shelton-Mosley early and often, resulting in nine catches.

Both receiving threats eclipsed 100 yards that Friday night, perhaps prefiguring a season of a two-pronged aerial attack.

More than players, what remains the same are the fundamentals of the program. Wake up early and work hard. Exhibit character. And never, under any circumstances, let go of the ball.

That final commandment lays at the

center of Harvard's success. Murphy told the story of the 2003 Crimson, a potent offense that averaged 462 yards a game but finished 7-3 thanks to 19 turnovers. The next season, the coach abandoned all other metrics besides turnovers—and ended up finishing undefeated.

"Really the only benchmark we talk about as an offensive staff is ball security," Murphy said. "If we have zero turnovers in every game, we will win every single game."

These days, at the start of every season, all players receive a laminated sheet with personalized instructions for ball security. And since 2000, the team is 32-0 when not committing a turnover.

In 2016, the irony of this turnover emphasis is striking: A program that has nightmares about bad snaps and interceptions must face the greatest turnover of all—the loss of arguably the most dominant senior class of all time.

In the game of football, turnovers hurt because the ball changes possession; in the game of life, turnovers hurt because change challenges consistency.

The central question for the 2016 Crimson is whether the program can weather such a sea-shift. And there is only way to find out: by accompanying Harvard down the eight-game journey that starts at Brown on Friday, in the Ivy League season opener.

"We get everybody's best shot," Murphy said. "We're going to be the team that plays the hardest every week. We're going to be the team that is the grittiest.... It's all about our identity as a program."

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A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN | On the tails of a one-loss season, the Crimson looks to rebound this year. Y. KIT WU—CRIMSON PHOTOGRAPHER

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TEAM'S CURRENT RANKING IN THE FCS COACHES' POLL

5

RETURNING ALL-IVY PLAYERS TO THE ROSTER

290

TOTAL PASSING YARDS BY JOE VIVIANO IN SEASON OPENER VS URI

1ST

TIME HARVARD COULD TURN IN A FOUR-PEAT IN IVY LEAGUE TITLES

HIS FATHER'S SON



After moving on from St. Xavier High School and its dominant football program, Sean Ahern has landed himself the captaincy at Harvard. MEGAN M. ROSS—CRIMSON PHOTOGRAPHER

**SAINT X GON'
GIVE IT TO YA**

By **SAM DANIELLO**
CRIMSON STAFF WRITER

St. Xavier High School in Cincinnati may be a Jesuit school, but on Friday nights, football reigns supreme.

Depending on the opponent, depending on the weather, up to 6,000 spectators pack into Ballaban Field—so named after a long-time coach—to watch their Bombers play. Blue-and-white battalions flash prepaid tickets, browse the in-stadium souvenir shop, juggle hot concessions, and finally settle in to root for a program that has captured two state titles in the last 11 years.

On the field, illuminated by enormous stadium lights, nearly 400 kids from St. Xavier shiver and sweat. They shoulder an enormous legacy, one that has produced at least 13 NFL players, including three-time Pro Bowler Luke Kuechly of the Carolina Panthers.

Here in southwest Ohio, football isn't life-or-death. But it can be your life.

Sean Ahern, the 143rd captain of Harvard football, understands this fact. Put more simply: "Football is a big deal where I come from."

Over the last two years, however, the converse has proven equally true—that where Sean Ahern comes from is a big deal for football. After all, it was Ballaban Field that shaped Ahern into who-

he is today, meaning a shutdown cornerback, a first-team All-Ivy selection for two straight years, and the bedrock of the Crimson's defense.

"[I want to be] a high-energy guy," Ahern said. "Someone who brings it every day. Someone who, once game day rolls around, is super-focused and locked in."

Many of those ambitions took root at St. Xavier, a 184-year-old private school whose football program has enjoyed national prominence since the mid-2000s. In 2005, when the program claimed its first state championship, the city of Cincinnati established "St. Xavier High School Day."

Part of St. Xavier's success on the gridiron relates to pure size. Roughly a quarter of the 1,600-person, all-male student body joins the football team. About 120 players stick around as upperclassmen, making the high school squad one of the largest in the country.

Even before Ahern reached ninth grade, odds were that he'd join this army. His father played defensive back at Brown, coincidentally joining the Bears around the same time as Tim Murphy. Back then Murphy worked as a part-time assistant; now he's the Harvard head coach.

College football left a real impact on Ahern's father and, in turn, shaped his

son.

"We bonded through [the sport] for many years," Ahern said. "Still do. He's definitely my number one fan."

Despite his athletic lineage, however, Ahern didn't think seriously about college football until recruiters started to call. The Crimson entered the fray during his junior year.

At that point, Ahern's father adopted a new role. Previously a third-grade coach, constantly an enthusiastic supporter, he then evolved into a chief consultant.

"He's been there throughout the whole process," Ahern said. "He made me realize that there was a door out there to play football and get a good education."

This, in short, was how Ahern ended up in a Harvard uniform. In 2012, he opened preseason at 175 pounds—20 pounds lighter than he is now.

College competition soon jolted to a stop, however. After appearing in the season opener, Ahern tore his pectoral muscle. Season over.

"It was definitely a challenging time being a freshman," Ahern said. "The level of the game was just so much different, something I did not anticipate. And being hurt, I kind of felt separated from the team."

Rehab relieved that sentiment. So did on-field success.

As a junior, Ahern started for the

Crimson, leading the team with six pass break-ups as Harvard battled to an undefeated campaign. In the 2014 Game—yes, that epic 31-24 slugfest with the championship at stake—he had the best contest of his year, preventing two catches and recording seven tackles.

"Corners make their money, so to speak, by being great cover corners," Murphy said. "He is that, but he's a tough, physical guy. He plays physically like a safety with a corner's ability."

The next year, he returned as the top cover guy for a Crimson defense that allowed 13 points a game, the second-stingiest mark in the nation. On special teams, Ahern added another accolade: kick blocker par excellence. He rejected two boots to rank first in the Ancient Eight.

In both 2014 and 2015, postseason voters recognized this dominance, tapping Ahern for consecutive All-Ivy first teams.

These days, as a fifth-year senior, Ahern remains one of the few holdovers from last season's overpowering unit. He mans a secondary short on experience, though not enthusiasm.

As of last fall, Ahern is also Harvard's captain, the 11th straight defensive player to earn this post. (New York Jets quarterback Ryan Fitzpatrick '05 was the last exception.)

"He's naturally taken to being the captain," Murphy said. "He's one of those guys that everyone respects.... He doesn't mind holding his teammates accountable to the same high standards that he holds himself."

As one might expect for a fifth-year player, these high standards reflect years of watching and playing alongside talented players. Ahern cited a number of defensive mates as role models, including linebacker Matt Koran '16, defensive back Norman Hayes '15, and defensive back D.J. Monroe '13, who died last October.

Still, perhaps the most intense idol is the one who has accompanied Ahern during his entire journey, from Friday night epics at Ballaban Field to Saturday afternoon nail-biters at Harvard Stadium. Certainly Ahern's father has seen a lot, including most Crimson contests over the past two seasons, and barring the intervention of injuries or fate, he stands to see nine more.

Much has passed between father and son in all these years, but at least one question remains unanswerable: Who's the better player?

"Oh definitely me," Ahern said. Then he paused, making sure that he got his words right. "He might've been a harder hitter."

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FOOTBALL FOCUSES ON FITNESS

By **JACK STOCKLESS**
CRIMSON STAFF WRITER

A simple Google search of “Harvard’s first football team” returns images of a collection of 13 rather ordinary looking college-aged men. If the inaugural 1873 team managed to transport itself to the 21st century and walked through the Yard, it would be a surprise if anyone managed to identify the members as football players from among the throngs of students and tourists.

Today, members of any collegiate football team are highly-trained athletic specimens. They are fine-tuned to do their specific job on the field, whether that be plugging up the gaps in the line or sprinting downfield to beat the secondary and make leaping catches.

Of course, hours upon hours of work in the gym are necessary to become physically dominant enough to compete in Division I football. To assure that the Crimson football team is in the best possible shape it can be, coach Tim Murphy enlists James Frazier, Harvard’s Director of Strength and Conditioning.

Frazier’s work with the team over the offseason is designed to enhance the Crimson’s competitive advantage over its opponents.

“I respect the man a lot,” said senior defensive tackle Doug Webb. “He’s got a great staff alongside him. When you have little running backs and wide receivers squatting X-amount of weight, you know it’s pretty impressive.”

At Harvard, the vast majority of drills and lifts have a clear football-related focus. There is also a definite emphasis on injury prevention, which Webb calls “prehab.” Beginning the rehab process before injuries even oc-

cur and taking care of the extreme strains on the players’ bodies throughout the season goes a long way toward keeping everyone as healthy and in-shape as possible.

The main philosophy Frazier, Murphy, and the rest of the staff have on offseason workouts is using a diverse array of workouts to get the players accustomed to the grueling 10-week fall schedule. Speed training, lifting, and conditioning are all components of the weekly programs.

Although there is a great variation between the body type of an offensive lineman and a cornerback, for example, Frazier and his staff generally view all the players on the roster as football players. Training maturity is the biggest factor in the difference between each players’ workouts, as each member of the team will naturally progress through a series of four programs, one for each of their four years in Cambridge.

While the Crimson may not boast the same extravagant facilities as many top FBS schools, the Palmer Dixon Strength and Conditioning Center gets the job done for Harvard.

“Palmer Dixon, I absolutely love it,” Webb said. “I love how there’s a lot of room in there. I can get in there, get a good workout in, and call it a day.”

The strength and conditioning center across the river in Allston has a 24,000 square foot weight room and training facility, which the football team utilizes for team lifts both in-season and over the offseason.

“We have some of the best strength and conditioning facilities in the entire Ivy League,” Frazier claimed. “Harvard has done a great job in terms of supporting us, giving us the personnel and the people that we need.”

To incentivize going above and beyond during offseason workouts, Frazier and his staff recognize some

of the top performers with “hard worker” awards. This offseason, senior defensive tackle Miles McCollum was the summer MVP, while sophomore wide receiver Justice Shelton-Mosley, junior safety Tobe Ezeokoli, sophomore cornerback Wesley Ogsbury, and senior offensive lineman Max Rich also made significant strides.

Even during the spring semester and during the eight weeks of training leading up to camp, the team holds early-morning lifts. The main motivation behind scheduling the sessions practically at the crack of dawn is building camaraderie and character.

“When you’re walking across that bridge at zero dark thirty and the wind chill is minus seven degrees, you’re going to have to be really committed,” Murphy said. “It strengthens the resolve of the kids who are really into reaching their potential.”

Personal fortitude and team bonding are two important by-products of early lifts; these intangibles translate to the field in tangible ways.

With the Crimson likely facing pressure from Ivy foes Penn and Dartmouth for the Ancient Eight championship, any slight edge will be instrumental to the outcome of Harvard’s season. However, the Crimson’s offseason training under the direction of Frazier should prove to be much more impactful than just a slight edge.

“When our kids walk out of the locker room at 7:45 in the morning to go get breakfast or go to class, they really feel like they’ve accomplished something,” Murphy said. “You do that enough as a team, and it’s tough to quantify, but it makes you mentally tougher.”

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Harvard hopes its offseason work will give it a competitive advantage. MEGAN M. ROSS—CRIMSON PHOTOGRAPHER

**WEIGHT
FOR IT**

EIGHT TEAMS, ONE CUP

In 2016 a constellation of stars sparkles across the Ivy League. In this eight-game gauntlet, no team is an easy out.

DATE	SCHOOL	LOCATION	TIME / RESULT
16 Sept.	RHODE ISLAND	CAMBRIDGE, Mass.	W, 51-21
24 Sept.	BROWN	PROVIDENCE, R.I.	2 p.m.
30 Sept.	GEORGETOWN	CAMBRIDGE, Mass.	7 p.m.
8 Oct.	CORNELL	CAMBRIDGE, Mass.	1 p.m.
15 Oct.	HOLY CROSS	WORCESTER, Mass.	1 p.m.
22 Oct.	PRINCETON	PRINCETON, N.J.	1 p.m.
29 Oct.	DARTMOUTH	HANNOVER, N.H.	1:30 p.m.
5 Nov.	COLUMBIA	CAMBRIDGE, Mass.	1 p.m.
11 Nov.	PENN	PHILADELPHIA, Pa.	8 p.m.
19 Nov.	YALE	CAMBRIDGE, Mass.	12:30 p.m.



Senior quarterback Joe Viviano, shown here against Rhode Island, has yet to start a league game. Y. KIT WU—CRIMSON PHOTOGRAPHER

JV ON VARSITY

HARVARD

The 2016 edition of the Crimson has big shoes to fill. After graduating 15 starters, nine of whom were first-team All-Ivy players, Coach Murphy and co. have to answer a slew of questions: Will Joe Viviano replicate Scott Hosch's production at the quarterback position? Will the linebacker corps be able to slow down high-powered offenses like their predecessors did? Will Harvard four-peat as Ivy League champions?

PLAYER TO WATCH JUSTICE SHELTON-MOSLEY

Sophomore wide receiver

GP	REC	YDS	TD
10	40	589	6

Last season the then-freshman averaged 114 total yards a game.

I'm excited to see what the offense is going to do. Being a defensive guy, this might've been the best offensive preseason we've had in a while.

SEAN AHERN

Captain and defensive back



CORNELL | OCT. 8

The fact that the most promising player on Cornell's roster is a punter may hint at another disappointing campaign for the Big Red. The team's sole victory in 2015 came against Columbia, and these two teams seem primed to contend for the number eight spot in the Ivy League in 2016. However, senior linebacker duo Jackson Weber and Miles Norris could be a diamond in the rough for Cornell.

PLAYER TO WATCH CHRIS FRASER

Senior punter

GP	AVG	50+	Long
10	44.8	16	67

Fraser has made the All-Ivy first team three years in a row and earned unanimous selection last season.



BROWN | SEPT. 24

The Bears garnered one first-place vote in the preseason poll, despite cumulatively being projected to finish sixth overall. With all five starters returning on the offensive line, junior quarterback Kyle Moreno will likely have good protection as he targets senior wideout Alexander Jette. Jette was Brown's sole representative on last year's All-Ivy squad.

PLAYER TO WATCH KYLE MORENO

Senior quarterback

GP	YDS	TD	INT
9	360	2	2

Moreno served as a backup last year, only seeing major time at Harvard. In that game, he threw for 307 yards and two scores.

PRINCETON | OCT.

The Tigers' up-tempo offense under coach Bob Surace will have quite a bit of firepower this fall. Junior John Lovett can line up at quarterback or running back, and fellow running back Charlie Volker is a school record holder—for the track team. As opposed to Yale, Princeton will likely win games in spite of its defense, not because of it.

PLAYER TO WATCH JOE RHATTIGAN

Senior running back

GP	RUSH	YDS	TD
9	122	612	7

A second-team All-Ivy player last year, Rhattigan averaged over five yards per go as the Tigers' primary running option.



With its first conference game against Brown this weekend, the Crimson will start the long road towards the Ivy crown. Y. KIT WU—CRIMSON PHOTOGRAPHER **ROAD AHEAD**



DARTMOUTH | Oct. 29

The Crimson's most closely contested matchup last year was against the Big Green, a 14-13 victory capped off with a blocked field goal. Like Harvard, Dartmouth has experienced a significant amount of roster turnover, and a quarterback battle will provide an interesting storyline in New Hampshire early on in the 2016 campaign.

PLAYER TO WATCH
FOLARIN ORIMOLADE
Senior linebacker

GP	TK	SK	FF
10	36	8.0	4

A captain for 2016, Orimolade is the lone starter remaining from last year's defense.



PENN | Nov. 11

Penn received nine first-place votes to Harvard's seven in the annual preseason pundit poll, and accordingly many are projecting the Quakers to unseat Harvard in the Ancient Eight. The lethal duo of senior quarterback Alex Torgersen and junior receiver Justin Watson should prove to be a nightmare for any opposing defense.

PLAYER TO WATCH
JUSTIN WATSON
Junior wide receiver

GP	REC	YDS	TD
10	74	1,082	9

The third-team All-American totaled 249 yards last year at Harvard Stadium in the Crimson's lone loss.

We're everybody's rival. We get everybody's best shot. Everyone hates our guts. Because of that, you can never, ever, ever take anyone for granted.

TIM MURPHY
Harvard coach

COLUMBIA



COLUMBIA | Nov. 5

Legendary coach Al Bagnoli returned to the sideline in 2015, but not even the all-time FCS wins leader could spark a turnaround for the Lions. Columbia looks to improve on last year's two-win season, relying heavily on quarterback duo Skyler Mornhinweg and Anders Hill. The Lions only lost to Harvard and Dartmouth by a combined 12 points, so football might just be on the upswing at Columbia.

PLAYER TO WATCH
SCOOTER HOLLIS
Senior wide receiver

GP	REC	YDS	TD
10	51	515	1

Despite playing for the two-win Lions last year, Hollis tallied over 10 yards a catch.



YALE | Nov. 19

The Bulldogs have an even foggier outlook at the quarterback spot than Dartmouth, as there are four challengers for Morgan Roberts' vacated position. On the other side of the ball, Yale has more to work with. Twelve of the team's top 14 tacklers are returning to New Haven, so the onus will be on the Bulldog defense to overcome the reigning top three in the Ivy League.

PLAYER TO WATCH
DESHAWN SALTER
Junior running back

GP	RUSH	YDS	TD
9	129	561	7

In his third game as starter last year, the 212-pound Salter ran for 233 yards against Lehigh.

