

Rise to the Top The Crimson Sports Comp

“I had enjoyed my time on my high school newspaper, and I had heard great things about The Crimson. So, I decided to give it a try—and it was, hands down, the best decision that I made in college. I met many of my closest friends at The Crimson (and on the sports board in particular), and I learned more from The Crimson than I did from any class—how to work as/lead a team, how to push forward initiatives, how to ask the tough questions, etc. Without a doubt, these are lessons that have import and ramifications well outside the world of sports and journalism.”

Robert S Samuels '14

Current: LiveRamp, Special Operations Manager
Past: President, The Harvard Crimson

“Crimson Sports offered a great opportunity to stay attached to the Harvard Sports scene and get to know like-minded people. As with any deadline driven task, writing for the Crimson taught me discipline and focus. It was a great experience, and many of the people with whom I still keep in touch were Crimson Sports writers.”

David H Stearns '07

Current: Assistant General Manager,
Houston Astros
Past: Director of Baseball Operations, Cleveland
Indians
Past: Manager, MLB Labor Relations Department

ON THE COVER



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The Harvard Crimson Sports Board's SPORTS COMP 2015



FROM THE COMP DIRECTORS

The 2014 Harvard football team has accomplished nearly all of its goals. Fueled by a staunch defense, the team has rattled off nine wins in nine games. This past Saturday, Harvard captured a share of the Ivy League championship with a victory over Penn. But ask the team, and it'll tell you none of that really matters. Because it's time for Yale. The last game of the season will be the Crimson's most important yet, as the Bulldogs arrive in Cambridge with a high-flying offense and lurk just one game behind in the conference standings. While Harvard has emerged victorious seven straight times against the Elis, the 2014 contest seems up for grabs. Indeed, everything comes down to Saturday—sole possession of the Ivy title and an undefeated season hang in the balance for Harvard. The 131st playing of The Game is set up to be one of the most memorable in a long time.

- SL, DS

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CRIMSON SPORTS COMP

COMP REQUIREMENTS



Here's the full checklist of article requirements for the comp process—with 15 articles in total, the comp amounts to about a story and a half a week.

Former Crimson sports chair Martin Kessler '13 wrote 306 articles in his 4 years on the board. Fellow 2013 grad Scott A. Sherman wasn't far behind, with 300 of his own.

Three (3) Live Gamers (can include gamers, sidebars and notebooks). One of these must be a non-chronological sport (i.e. track/cross country, squash, tennis)

- LIVE GAMER 1
- LIVE GAMER 2
- LIVE GAMER 3 (NON-CHRONOLOGICAL)

The beat writer is your first resource for stories. They can get you numbers, help you out with an angle, and they'll be the ones to live-edit your stories. They will also accompany you to cover games live. If you don't know who the beat writer is for a sport you're covering, or if you're having trouble getting in touch with them, talk to one of the comp directors.

Three (3) call-in stories (game stories for away contests)

- CALL-IN 1
- CALL-IN 2
- CALL-IN 3

Call players & coaches as early in the week as you can to make sure you can get in contact with the 2 requisite contacts for each story. Remember to identify yourself as a Crimson reporter when you call, and always ask if it's okay to record the call. Don't be afraid to call back if they aren't returning your messages, but try not to be obnoxious. If you're having a lot of trouble getting in contact with a source, talk to the beat writer, and the comp directors if necessary.

Two (2) previews of an upcoming game or series of games for a specific team

- PREVIEW 1
- PREVIEW 2

Features tend to be longer than regular game-related content stories. The shorter ones are 800-1000 words while the longer-form pieces can run from 1000-2000 words each. Sportinies, which take anywhere from a month to two months to research and write, are often more than 2000 words.

Two (2) features (more in-depth pieces spotlighting specific athletes or coaches, spotlights on specific team experiences, human interest stories, etc.)

- FEATURE 1
- FEATURE 2

- If you pick up a story Wednesday-for-Thursday, the article is due Wednesday night and will print in Thursday morning's paper
- Word count, deadline, etc. will be in a dayslot email sent out by the exec on page duty that night.
- In general, weekday stories are due at 7 pm and 650 words. If it's after 2 pm and you still haven't received a dayslot email, let a comp director know.
- There isn't a dayslot email for the weekend section – stories are always due at 2 pm on Sunday unless you're covering a Sunday game, which should be turned in within a few hours of the game's finish.

Two (2) additional full-length sports stories of any type

- ADDITIONAL STORY 1
- ADDITIONAL STORY 2

Two (2) blog posts to post on The Back Page, the Crimson Sports blog

- BLOG POST 1
- BLOG POST 2

Blog posts are shorter in length than other sports articles at around 300-600 words. Quotes are not required, and topics covered span things like Ryan Fitzpatrick's recent performance to interviewing US Men's National Soccer Coach Jürgen Klinsmann to a Crimson sports classic—Tweets of the Week.

One (1) news article for the News Board

- NEWS STORY

CHECKLIST

Article Checklist

You're almost about to cross the finish line—but wait, make sure you make sure you've done everything on this list before you click send on the article!

- Quoted at least two sources
- Included "who, what, when, where" and team records in the first few paragraphs
- Mentioned the year and position with the first mention of each player, used only the last name or epithet thereafter
- Spelled players' names correctly
- Used "_____ said" with 4 words or less and "said _____" with 5 words or more
- Spelled out the numbers one through nine, and wrote numerically 10 and up
- "Crimson" is always singular
- Alternated Harvard and Crimson as well as other Schools and their Mascots (and Ancient Eight/Ivy League)

INTERVIEWING

How to Interview



Cross Check Don't get caught up against the boards because of your interviews! SARAH P. REID—CRIMSON STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

You've gotten your pitch and wordcount—now what? Who do you talk to? How do you talk to them? What's the best way to approach a phone call? What questions should you ask? Here's a primer to get you started—but remember, the only way to get good at interviewing is practice (sorry Allen Iverson).

How do you talk to sources?

— The Sports board only prints full articles with at least 2 sources (excluding briefs and blog posts).

— Never ask a question that can be answered by a 'yes' or a 'no.' If you say, "Did outplayed in the second half?" the coach can just answer, "Yep." Instead, ask why or how the team was outplayed, for example.

— Begin with the most important, then the key details. Our first question consistently is, "How did you feel about the game overall?" or "Can you share your thoughts on the game?"

Pro Tip: Texting

When texting coaches and players, be careful what you say and when you say it. 10pm on a Friday or Saturday night might not be the best time for many teams, and be careful of autocorrecting—texting a coach, "Can we talk about today's shame" after their team's 30 point loss is probably not something you want to do (true story).

This way, especially for call-ins where you won't always know what happened, you can let the source direct you.

— Be specific once you have an idea of what was important. Ask about big plays, turning points, player performances, court atmosphere, etc.

— Keep digging until you get what you want. If you say, "What stood out about the second period?" and the coach replies,

"Well, our power play was in control, we lost Stevie, and they scored twice," follow up with "What happened to Stevie?" or "What made your power play better?" or "Were the goals busted plays, or screens, or what?"

— Ask about both the bad and the good. Don't be antagonistic about it, but don't feel like it's your job to find the positive in a loss. It's your job to be objective—if they win, they win, if they lose, they lose.

— Be smart in your approach. If you're worried that a team is upset after a tough loss, consider opening with some positives, such as, "It seemed that the team picked it up in the second half" before getting into the tougher details.

— Be prepared for generalizations if you ask about negatives. A coach is unlikely to point the finger at a specific player—sometimes the coaches slip up, because they're human, but more often, rather than, "So-and-so took a penalty that cost us the game," they'll say "stupid penalties cost us the game."

— Develop trust with your contacts. Some are talkers, and some aren't. Some are really media savvy and speak in sound bites, and some don't. The more time you spend covering a team, the better a sense you'll get, and the more trust you'll build. Once you get to know a coach well, he'll/she'll be more open with information, including off-the-record stuff.

Rules of the Game

— Always identify yourself before you interview. 'Hi, I'm so-and-so, I'm a writer for the Crimson, I'd like to ask you some questions...' It is a must—on phone messages, after games, etc. If it's a press conference, it's implied, but if you go up to a player after a game for a quote, you must introduce yourself.

— It's **ILLEGAL** to tape phone conversations unless you have permission from the other person in Massachusetts. In an interview, when you stick a recorder in someone's face and he/she keeps talking, it's implied that he has consented.

— **ASK** a source to clarify any and all confusion. The are terms that are applied differently by different people, so when in doubt, ask! In general, if a source consents to be recorded, it's on the record unless they say otherwise.

OFF THE RECORD: You cannot use the information or the source name, and the conversation "never happened," as they say.

ON BACKGROUND: The information is given to you to be used anonymously, as in "a source close to the team said."

DEEP BACKGROUND: You get info from a source, but you can only use it if it is confirmed by a second source, and the second source must be credited (**NOT** the first).

ON THE RECORD: All's fair.

Conflict of Interest

Abbreviated from the full Crimson policies:

"Crimson staff may not report on or edit stories involving their roommates, blockmates, family members, close friends, employers, romantic partners (past or present), advisers, or teachers.... In general, staff may not be involved in coverage of individuals, organizations, or subjects that they are unable to cover impartially and dispassionately.... [Staff] are not permitted to gamble on events—such as sports games or presidential search outcomes—that they cover."

General Sports board comment:

We realize that in a small community and it's common to be friends with athletes on teams that you cover. Do your best to find quotes from players who are not your friends, and definitely avoid covering a team you are on.

QUOTING

How to Quote

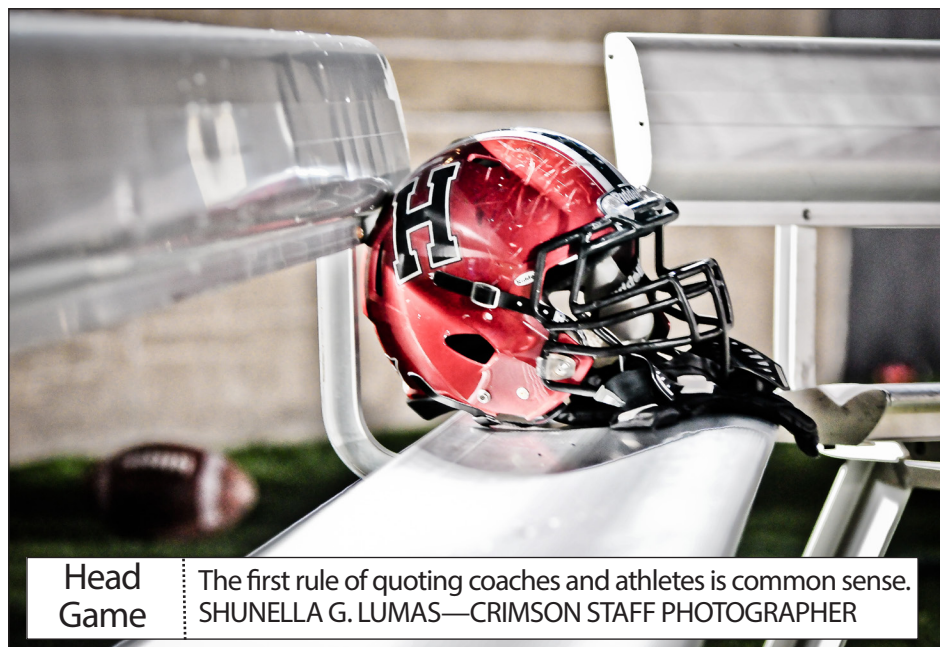
So you've finished that great interview with Coach Amaker or Jeremy Lin or Zachary Hodges or some other Harvard athlete. You've transcribed all or parts of the interview—now what?

"When we played Springfield at Springfield, we were just like... 'podunk.'"

JORDAN WEITZEN '08
Harvard Men's Volleyball outside hitter, on playing small-town teams

"I feel pretty confident from about 50 [yards] in."

MATT SCHINDEL '08
Harvard Football kicker, who was 6-for-13 on field goals with a long of just 38



Head
Game

The first rule of quoting coaches and athletes is common sense.
SHUNELLA G. LUMAS—CRIMSON STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

What quotes do you use?

Anybody can transcribe quotes onto a piece of paper—what makes writing good is the stuff that goes around the quotes. But which quotes should you use? Here's a few quick pointers:

- Don't include multiple quotes in a row. You never want quote after quote, with conjunctions like "So and so agreed," or "So and so said as much," etc. Sometimes you'll have two in a row, but they should be on the shorter side.
- Use only what you can't write yourself. Generally, you don't need quotes to describe what happened, you can do that yourself. For example, you can easily write, "Harvard built its momentum with two crash-the-net goals in the first five minutes." It's obvious enough, right? So a quote from a player, in which he says, "In the second period, we got some momentum with those two goals" is pretty boring, and you can do better.

"I'm not worrying too much about people coming after me. I hope they do that, because if they focus too much on me, [junior middle linebacker] Matt Thomas is seriously going to kick the shit out of them. Seriously."

BOBBY EVERETT '06
Harvard Football linebacker, on the possibility of being double-teamed

"Well, here we have Coach Donato with about five hairs—which is four more than he has right now—hugging some crazy lady on The Price Is Right."

TOM WALSH '06
Harvard Men's Hockey defenseman, on watching an old tape of his coach on TV

Pro Tip: The "Said" Rule

When texting coaches and players, be careful what you say and when you say it. 10pm on a Friday or Saturday night might not be the best time for many teams, and be careful of autocorrecting—texting a coach, "Can we talk about today's shame" after their team's 30 point loss is probably not something you want to do (true story).

- Quote about the impact key moments had on the game or the team. This is something you can't write yourself. So, for the most part, your questions should be along the lines of, "What was the mentality after going down two runs in the top of the first?" or, "How did the four down stand cause a momentum shift?"

Choose between quoting and paraphrasing judiciously. As an exception, sometimes you'll need a player to describe a play you didn't see very well. But still, you might want to paraphrase what they say as part of your story rather than quote them. However, if they have something interesting to say about what happened, you can definitely quote them on it.

In general, you want your quotes to be punchy, to add color, to stand out, to show some personality, rather than just quote the box score.

How can I edit quotes?

Quotes are often best when they're short and punchy. If you feel that a quote is getting too long (more than 2-3 lines), you can use ellipses (3 for within a sentence, 4 and a space between sentences):

"I think both of them are capable of playing well...and what we'll do is probably give them both an opportunity... But at the end of the day we're going to go with the guy that gives us the best chance to win."

Brackets are also helpful when the source rambles or is clear within the context of the interview but not alone:

"Man," the coach said, "that [missed inbound pass with 1:07 remaining] still gives me nightmares. That was a back-breaker."

...or you can write a graf yourself to put the quote in context:

Coach Bobby S. Samuels could only shake his head at the thought of the missed inbound

pass with 1:07 left on the clock that was stolen by Cornell. It took the Big Red 20 seconds to take the lead for good.

"Still gives me nightmares," Samuels said. "That was a back-breaker."

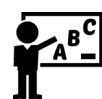
Brackets can also be used to fix grammar. The grey area between fixing a grammatical error and changing tone can be sensitive, so inserting a linking word or making something plural is best done in brackets—that way, you are fixing their grammar, but you're being honest.

Example: Say the coach says, "I'd be lying if I didn't say I thought there was a lot of mistakes."

Edited: "I'd be lying if I didn't say I thought there [were] a lot of mistakes," the coach said.

Is it a disaster if you just change it to "were"? Probably not, and players will likely be appreciative if you keep them from sounding stupid. Different people will tell you different things about "tidying up" quotes, but in the end, it's probably safer to use brackets in all cases.

One last note about quotes. Each a new graf is needed for each new source. Sometimes, quotes are split between graf for emphasis.



AP & Crimson Style

In general, The Crimson goes by AP Style, and the AP Style Guide is online if you have more detailed questions. But here are the main points:

- Abbreviate months of six letters or longer when you're using them for dates. For example, you would write, "the tournament will be held Sept. 14-18." But when you're just referring to the month as an entity, you would write, "the tournament will be held in September." If it's a month like May, it doesn't matter: "the tournament will be held May 14-18," and "the tournament will be held in May." Same thing.
- Abbreviate states according to AP rules (there's a poster in the newsroom).
- The Crimson and Harvard are ALWAYS singular. So never use "they," and never say, "The Crimson were," etc...., no matter how counter-intuitive it might sound. However, some teams are different. For example, Yale is singular—a school is always singular—but its mascot, the Bulldogs, is plural. So you'd write "Yale is in first," or "The Bulldogs are in first." So really, it just depends on the school.
- When quoting someone, use the form "___ said" when there are up to four words preceding "said," but if it's five or more, it's "said ___." So, for example: "Seamus is good at what he does. He just bangs balls," said junior outside hitter Jordan Weitzen. "Seamus is good at what he does. He just bangs balls," an ecstatic Jordan Weitzen said.
- Alternate uses of Harvard and Crimson, or Yale and Bulldogs, or whatever. If it's in a quote, there's nothing you can do about it, and if it's in the heading of a double-gamer (like HARVARD 4, CORNELL 3), it has to be Harvard. But usually, you can find a way to work around that.
- Every story must include in the first couple of paragraphs: who played, what the score was, when the game happened, where it was played, and what the records of the two teams now are—for example, Harvard (6-4, 3-3 Ivy) beat Yale (5-5, 2-4).
- Mention the year and position with the first mention of each player, and use only the last name or epithet thereafter (e.g. "junior forward Kyle Casey" and subsequently "Casey," "the junior," or "the Medway native").
- Spell out the numbers one through nine, and write numerically 10 and up.

How to Write Gamers

Welcome to the crux of Crimson sports coverage.

If you just came back from a thrilling game and wanted to tell your roommate what you'd seen, would you go chronologically?

Probably not—you'd probably start with the last play, if that was the game-winner, or with a pivotal turnover, or with something really exciting.

Sometimes, the story of the game is something broader—that a team was bounced from the playoffs, or clinched a bye, or whatever—and that's fine too, because you'd probably say to your roommate, "Hey, the basketball team just got bounced from the playoffs—let me tell you what happened."

But as an objective reporter, you're not a Harvard cheerleader—though it's tempting sometimes.

You're telling a story, not writing an English essay. You don't need to have a thesis or make a convincing argument—all you want to do is report what happened.

You want to explain to the reader why he should have been there and why it was an interesting game, keeping that a large chunk of your audience is the Harvard community. So you start with a hook.

THE LEDE

The "hook" that you start your story with is known as a lede. Finding the right balance for a lede can be tough—you want to entice readers, but you don't want to be melodramatic. So on one extreme, you could write a standard, straightforward lede for a baseball game:

"Junior Shawn Haviland surrendered just one run to lead the Crimson past Cornell."

Definitely not bad, but it'd be nice if you could find something a little more interesting to say to make people really want to read on. What you don't want to do, though, is go to the other end of the spectrum, and write something like this:

"Throughout human history, great men have risen to meet the challenges that faced them. Gandhi. Churchill. Mandela. And now: Shawn Haviland." No, no, and no.

Keep some perspective—it's just sports. Most games are interesting, but not life-changing. Your lede should be the same way—it should be catchy and draw people in, but shouldn't overstate what happened.

THE BODY

Since your goal is to relate what happened, the best thing to do is let your sources tell the reader themselves. Like we mentioned earlier, having two sources is essential, and it will make your content credible.

The Crimson, as a non-university affiliated paper, does not root for Harvard sports. Accordingly, in our coverage we want to be as un-biased as possible. Try

to avoid phrases such as "The Crimson may have lost, but the team tried hard," or, "Fortunately, Harvard was able to come out of the match with a win." These are common temptations, but not valid for an objective reporter.

If the players and coaches are happy, let them tell the reader in a quote. That way, you get the idea across while maintaining your status as an unbiased journalist. Otherwise, trust your writing and enjoy yourself! Sports are a lot of fun—writing about them should be too.

Final reminder: do not let your article be a chronological summary of the game. This bears repeating: do not have your article be purely chronological. We try hard to avoid starting the article with "After the tip, the Crimson went on a 4-2 run" unless the first two minutes really were the most fascinating part of the match.

THE CLOSEOUT

The closeout is similar to the lede in that it is meant to make an impression. Avoid previewing any upcoming games in this space—a common temptation—because those events do not pertain directly to the focus of the story. Some writers try to be clever and write a closeout that ties back in with the lede.. The safest bet is always to end the gamer with a quote from a player or coach that you feel best encapsulates the game.

THE DOUBLE GAMER: SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT

When you are writing a double gamer for a sport—it plays two games in one weekend, for example—you write up the most recent game first. So you would have Saturday's recap, followed by Friday's recap. So it would look something like this, if Harvard played Brown Friday and Yale Saturday:

Harvard men's hockey split this weekend's contests with Brown and Yale, blah blah blah.

"QUOTE QUOTE QUOTE."

Blah blah blah.

YALE 4, HARVARD 3

The Bulldogs outskated the Crimson all night long Saturday, scoring three goals in the first period and never looking back...

HARVARD 5, BROWN 1

The Crimson rode three power-play goals to an easy victory in Providence, R.I. Friday night....

Feel free to begin the entire article with something that stood out, rather than a generic "Harvard split," but it's tougher to do because it's got to apply to both games. Often, it becomes something like "Harvard redeemed Friday's loss with a blowout Saturday," or "Harvard penalty kill struggled all weekend in a pair of losses," or "Harvard swept its league foes with two last-minute goals..." Something like that.

SPORTS



Visit thecrimson.com for up-to-date match schedules

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Men's Basketball Falls to UMass, 67-64

MEN'S BASKETBALL

By MARTIN KESSLER
CRIMSON STAFF WRITER

AMHERST, Mass.—Sampson Carter knocked down a game-winning three-pointer with 1.2 seconds remaining to give the University of Massachusetts a 67-64 victory over the Harvard men's basketball team on Tuesday morning.

The Crimson led by five with 81 seconds remaining but two turnovers down the stretch proved costly, as UMass closed the contest on an 8-0 run to take the win at the Mullins Center.

"I thought the difference certainly was the turnovers," said Harvard coach Tommy Amaker, whose squad coughed it up 19 times—leading to 29 Minuteman points—against relentless UMass pressure.

But the Crimson's final two turnovers were the most devastating. After scoring with 1:12 remaining to pull within two, the Minutemen forced a five-second violation on Harvard sophomore Wesley Saunders with 45 ticks left on the clock.

UMass guard Jesse Morgan proceeded to knock down a deep three with 39 seconds remaining to even the score, 64-64.

After successfully inbounding against the Minuteman press, the Crimson put the ball in the hands of co-captain Christian Webster, who attempted to dribble up the sideline. But UMass point guard Chaz Williams met Webster near midcourt and came up with a steal, knocking the ball off Webster and out of bounds.

"The last timeout, we told ourselves...we needed to get something going defensively," Williams said. "I hit it off [Webster's] foot. It went the right way."

With the shot clock off, UMass put the ball in the hands of Williams, the team's leading scorer and top playmaker. The 5'9" Williams drove to the hoop, drawing in the Crimson's defenders. Williams kicked it out to Sampson in the corner, and the forward drained the triple—his first basket of the contest.

"That's basketball," Amaker said. "I was kind of excited to be honest with you that [Williams] threw it out because he's a great finisher at the rim, and he's also crafty enough to get fouled. I just thought it played into our hands, but as it turned out obviously the kid made a big shot."

Harvard freshman Siyani Chambers' last-second heave from half court fell short, and UMass emerged victorious in its season opener.

"Sometimes the ball bounces your way," Minutemen coach Derek Kellogg said.

Notice how MK focuses on the key action, so if you only read the first graf, you still would know what happened in the game. He also includes the where, who, and the when in one sentence.

Another Coach Amaker quote nicely sums up the game from a coach's eye—even when he was on the losing side. Also note that if you cut off the article here, the piece could still stand on its own.

From here, MK pivots to describe some of the lesser game details that he found to be interesting to provide a deeper good snapshot of the game. This is also non-chronological, which generally makes for a better article.

The quote is short and sweet, but more importantly, the description before and after Coach Amaker's words puts it into context. This is also a textbook example of using the quote to create the angle you want.

Description, description, description. The few grafs preceding and following show actions beyond the box score and offer a glimpse of game through the writer's eyes.

The previous few paragraphs focus on Harvard wing Wesley Saunders' individual performance in the game, with description, statistics, and a coach's quote. This is a fine example of how to highlight certain players.

Description, description, description. The few grafs preceding and following show actions beyond the box score and offer a glimpse of game through the writer's eyes.

Sometimes description can only take you so far—the coach can often say it better than you can write, and with far more color. This doesn't always happen in interviews, but when it happens, be sure to take full advantage to include the best commentary.

The previous few paragraphs focus on Harvard wing Wesley Saunders' individual performance in the game, with description, statistics, and a coach's quote. This is a fine example of how to highlight certain players.

While the ball ended up bouncing the wrong way for the Crimson, Amaker was pleased with his team's performance on the road against a squad that returns four starters from last year's team that reached the NIT final four.

"I thought our kids were magnificent in so many ways," Amaker said. "We see what we're capable of. We see that we're capable of going into an opponents' arena [against] a very good basketball team...and being very competitive with an opportunity to win."

After trailing by as many as 10 late in the first half, the Crimson battled back, closing the frame on a 9-1 run to pull within one, 38-37, at the break. Webster played a critical role during the stretch, scoring seven points in the final 94 seconds of the period, including a three-pointer at the buzzer.

Harvard took its first lead of the game 41 seconds into the second half off a Smith bucket, and the teams went back-and-forth the rest of the way, with neither squad pulling ahead by more than six.

Saunders carried the Crimson offensively for much of the period, scoring 11 of his team-high 18 points in the final frame. The wing was most effective getting to the free-throw line, where he knocked down 10-of-11 attempts.

"I thought Wesley did a terrific job overall," Amaker said. "I thought his body of work this morning was outstanding."

With 6:38 to go, Saunders gave Harvard its first lead in more than 10 minutes, finishing a transition layup in traffic to put the Crimson up, 56-54.

The Minutemen responded, taking back the lead with 5:19 remaining off a Raphael Putney triple. But Webster answered on the other end with his lone basket of the period, a three-pointer from the corner to put Harvard up one, 60-59.

Saunders and sophomore Steve Moundou-Missi each knocked down a pair of free throws to extend Harvard's lead to five with 1:21 to go, but the Crimson couldn't hang on.

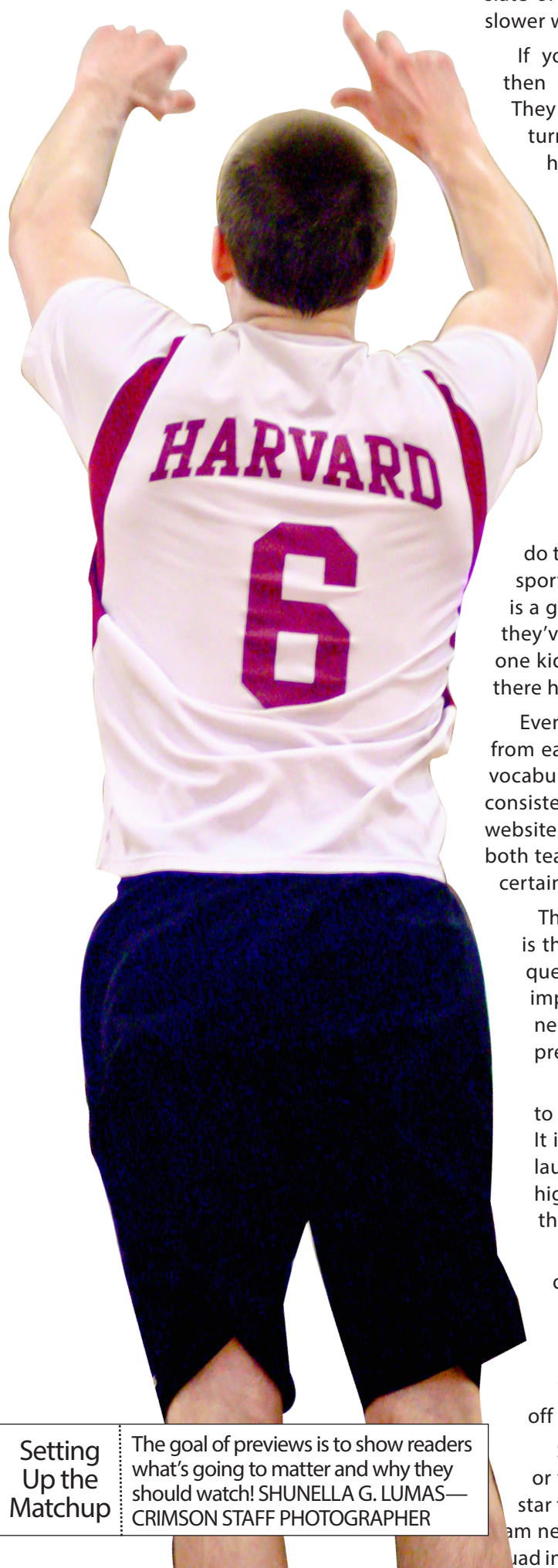
Making his first collegiate appearance against a Division I opponent, Chambers finished with 14 points, seven assists, and one turnover in 40 minutes.

Chambers was also tasked with defending Williams, a preseason pick for the Atlantic 10 first team. Williams was limited to 12 points on 6-of-15 shooting, but the junior dished out a game-high 10 assists.

Morgan paced the Minutemen with a game-high 19 points, while Putney added 13.

Staff writer Martin Kessler can be reached at martin.kessler@thecrimson.com. Follow him on Twitter @MartinKessler91.

How to Write Previews



The Ivy League generally has a weekend-heavy slate of games, leaving previews to often fill the slower weekday content.

If you can write gamers, then previews are a cinch. They have a longer turnaround (usually you have a few days to write

them) and offer many potential angles. The angle of a preview is the most important choice that you make. But we'll get to that in a moment.

The flipside of previews, though, is that they can be more difficult when you haven't been watching a team consistently, especially when the season has already played itself out, more or less. So if you're writing one for a sport with which you aren't familiar, the first thing you want to do is research.

The beat writer can tell you where to go to do that—there are different websites for every sport. At the very least, though, gocrimson.com is a great starting place. This way you can see if they've won five in a row, for example, or if there's one kid who seems to be carrying the team, or if there has been a goalie rotation, or whatever.

Even more key is to look at Crimson articles from earlier in the season, both for sport-specific vocabulary and to ensure that our coverage is consistent. Also be sure to check out the opponents' website. Remember that a preview should feature both teams evenly, without explicitly rooting for a certain side.

The benefit of using all of these sources is that, when you go to interviews, your questions can have purpose. This is important because your preview will need an angle: a focus or slant in your presentation of a story.

It is not good for the angle of your preview to be: these two teams are meeting tonight. It is not good just for you to go through and laundry-list both teams' players and season highlights. You need a point, a reason why this game matters to viewers.

Reading any ESPN preview for a game will demonstrate this—the story isn't just the Cavs facing the Heat. It's about LeBron's return to Miami, his reunion with D-Wade. It's not just the Colts versus the Broncos—it's the new guard (Andrew Luck) squaring off against the old guard (Peyton Manning).

Some other examples include: the playoffs or the conference schedule begins tonight; a star forward got injured last game and now the team needs to adjust; the team is playing the best in the nation (why would the coach schedule

this, and how is the team approaching the game?); the team has been mired in a mid-season slump; the opponent has the best player in the country (how will the team, will try to stifle him?); the opponent's head coach used to be an assistant for Harvard, etc.

There are limitless possibilities in terms of potential angles, so you need to research the game using all of your resources—team websites, players, coaches, even the opposing team. You always want your preview to go both ways—it should never just focus on your school entirely, and certainly not regress into cheerleading for them. You want to ALWAYS avoid phrases like "the Crimson hopes to emerge victorious," and the like. Both teams want to emerge victorious. Never write things that are assumed.

It can be hard to keep previews from being too school-oriented, but if the team is playing an opponent that's way better, or ranked way higher, there's no reason to avoid an angle like "this is going to be very, very hard for Harvard." That's totally fine. Remember, you're not writing as a fan.

One thing that can really make your preview stronger is to call the opposing team's coach, or if you can, some opposing players in addition to the Harvard people you interview. The coach's number can usually be obtained off of his/her respective "gocrimson" websites (googling "Cornell athletics" and then there's always a link for "staff" or "directory" or the team's home page). And keep in mind that if that team is coming here, you should call early in the week, since they'll often travel Thursday. The opponents can give you a good sense of what they're anticipating in Harvard, and

again, your story should never just focus on the Crimson entirely.

Another important aspect of the previews are statistics. While everyone

can project who they think will play well in a particular game, that projection will only seem credible if it can be backed up by a number or stat. So look on [gocrimson](http://gocrimson.com) or other relevant sites, find the record between these two teams when they've faced off in the last five years, find the last time the squads matched-up when low-post offense was a prevalent part of both offenses. It'll in there in the statistics, go get it and your article will not only be more interesting and pop more, but it will be credible as well. And for journalism, that last bit is essential.

Overall, previews are not as time-intensive as they sound. If you know what you want to ask, a phone interview can take five minutes. Do a couple at the beginning of the week—after 15 minutes of research—and you've got all you need to write your story.

The angle of a preview is the most important choice that you make.

You need a point, a reason why this game matters to viewers.

Setting Up the Matchup

The goal of previews is to show readers what's going to matter and why they should watch! SHUNELLA G. LUMAS—CRIMSON STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

SAMPLE PREVIEW

SPORTS



Visit thecrimson.com for up-to-date match schedules

PAGE 8 | NOVEMBER 20, 2014 | THE HARVARD CRIMSON

No Longer Just The Game, But a Championship Battle

FOOTBALL

By DAVID STEINBACH
CRIMSON STAFF WRITER

The Game is always special. Screaming fans pack the stadium. Alumni flock into town donning either crimson or blue. An electric atmosphere injects extra adrenaline into the players themselves. By the end of the day, everyone's exhausted.

But the 2014 rendition of the annual battle between the Harvard and Yale football teams will have a heightened significance.

While the Crimson enters the contest with an undefeated record, the Bulldogs lurk just one game behind in the Ivy League standings.

Saturday's showdown at Harvard Stadium thus represents an Ancient Eight championship game. If the Crimson (9-0, 6-0 Ivy) wins, coach Tim Murphy will earn his third undefeated season and the team will claim a sole conference title. If Yale (8-1, 5-1) emerges with the victory, the two teams will share the Ivy crown.

In other words, the stakes could not be higher.

"We know that we're clearly playing the best team on our schedule, as you watch the film," Murphy said. "But I told the kids, we're going to play loose and fast, fast and loose. We're playing with house money."

Recent history is firmly on the side of the Crimson, which has defeated the Bulldogs in seven consecutive matchups. Last season's contest at the Yale Bowl was effectively over at halftime, as Harvard cruised to a 34-7 win. But this year's blue-and-white is an entirely different squad.

Led by coach Tony Reno—a former Harvard assistant who took over in New Haven in 2012—Yale has marched to its best record through nine games in seven years. The team's one loss came in a 38-31 decision against Dartmouth after surrendering a late lead.

The Bulldogs' successes this year have largely been due to a high-powered offense, which ranks first in the Ivy League with 43 points per game. The Yale attack was on full display last Saturday against Princeton, as the Bulldogs paced their way to a 44-30 victory at home.

No one is more important to Yale's game plan than senior running back Tyler Varga, who transferred after his freshman season at the University of Western Ontario. The back is far and away the Ivy's top rusher with an average of 144 yards per contest, and he has scored at least two touchdowns in seven games.

When Yale finds itself leading late in the second half, Varga has repeatedly demonstrated the ability to pick up first downs and run out the clock.

Harvard cannot afford to focus exclusively on Varga, though, as junior Morgan Roberts is a threat of his own at quarterback. The Clemson transfer ranks first in the Ancient Eight with 325 passing yards per game. His two main targets are seniors Grant Wallace and Deon Randall, the conference's top two wideouts in terms of receiving yards.

"The two transfers [Varga and Roberts] are probably by far the best two players in our league," Murphy said. "It's amazing. They're both NFL prospects."

Indeed, the Bulldogs dominate nearly all of the conference's offensive stat categories. But if anyone has the credentials to stop the Yale attack, it's Harvard. The Crimson's identity revolves around its stalwart defense, which ranks first in the FCS, surrendering just 11 points per game.

Under the leadership of captain Norman Hayes in the secondary, the Harvard defense has been a model of consistency, only giving up more than 20 points once. Senior defensive end Zack Hodges leads the Ivy League with 6.5 sacks,

and junior linebackers Matt Koran and Jacob Lindsey top the squad with 55 tackles each.

● The result of Saturday's Game may very well depend on which unit has a better showing—the electric Yale offense or the staunch Harvard defense.

"Our strength has been a typical Harvard football strength," Murphy said. "We've been very mentally tough, very resilient. This senior class, these upperclassmen have won 10 straight road games over the past couple years."

After leading Harvard to a share of the Ivy League championship last season, senior quarterback Conner Hempel has been plagued with injuries throughout the 2014 campaign. Junior Scott Hosch has proved himself to be a capable replacement, guiding the Crimson to six victories as the starter.

● But the team put on its best offensive showcase—a 49-7 drubbing at Princeton—in the only game Hempel started without leaving due to injury.

According to Murphy, Hempel—who threw for three touchdowns and rushed for two more in that win over the Tigers—will be a game-time decision on Saturday.

When Harvard has struggled through the air, it has successfully turned to its ground game. After a breakout 2013 season—including a four-touchdown performance against Yale—junior running back Paul Stanton has cemented his status as one of the top backs in the conference. And he only seems to be getting stronger as the season goes on.

Assisted by a strong offensive line, Stanton set a new career high with 180 rushing yards in a win over Dartmouth on Nov. 1. The junior surpassed that mark last Saturday against Penn, rushing for 235 yards and three of the Crimson's four touchdowns.

● Stanton's performance was critical in the tense 34-24 victory over the Quakers. Despite trailing by a touchdown in the fourth quarter, Harvard ultimately had enough in it to escape Philadelphia with its unblemished record and at least a share of the Ivy League title.

The last time the Crimson and Bulldogs met in a contest of such magnitude was 2007. Both entered the day unbeaten in conference play, but Harvard dominated from start to finish to secure a 37-6 victory along with the championship.

Nothing would be sweeter for the Crimson faithful than a similar result.

"When you come [to Harvard], this week seemed so far away," Hodges said. "And now we're finally here. All our hard work, everything we put in... it all comes to this."

● ESPN has bought into the hype, as its College GameDay crew will travel to Cambridge to broadcast live in front of Dillon Fieldhouse on Saturday morning. The program has not featured an Ivy League game since the Crimson squared off with Penn in 2002.

History is indeed on the line Saturday at Harvard Stadium. A Crimson win would notch the team's third undefeated, untied season this century. Yale will be gunning for its first Ivy League co-championship since 2006.

"We don't really think about our accumulated record at any point," Hosch said. "But just to know that it's a program as historic as Harvard and we're able to make history this year, it's something special."

Yet not a single player on either team needs any extra motivation. It is Harvard-Yale, after all.

"The seniors, they know what's at stake," Murphy said. "You don't have to ask them to raise the intensity. They're ready to play."

● So buckle up. The 131st edition of The Game could be the most exciting one in a while.

This graf intentionally creates tension in the article, asking you to read on. The first two grafs hint that this game in particular isn't a normal one.

Normally, this might go in the first few grafs, but given how many storylines there are, this is fine. It's a great summary of what to look for in the game.

Here, DS offers information that only a beat writer would know—as a writer, try to differentiate yourself from your average Harvard viewers.

Coach Murphy offers some colorful commentary of what he saw on tape—and DS does a great job making the readers feel like they're getting the inside scoop.

The few grafs prior focus on a specific player to watch for the game, a tried and true method for previews.

Show the strengths (and/or weaknesses) of the opposing team to establish why the matchup will be tough, interesting, telling, or otherwise.

Including the human interest side of the story to add another layer to the story is another great technique for keeping readers engaged.

Hold up the two teams up against each other to see how one team will respond to the other's strengths and weaknesses.

DS finishes up the longer preview with a textbook close-out—it's short and catchy, summing up why the game is worth taking a look at.

How to Write Features



Like Father, Like Daughter

Freshman runner Ashley Collinsworth has learned about the challenges of being a college athlete from her father, Cris.

By SCOTT A. SHERMAN
CRIMSON STAFF WRITER

During his eight year career in the National Football League, former Cincinnati Bengals' wide receiver Cris Collinsworth endured a number of painful leg injuries.

A damaged ankle suffered during the 1984 season voided a five-year contract he signed with the USFL's Tampa Bay Bandits the following offseason because it made him uninsurable. A knee injury later forced the Pro Bowler to miss a combined 11 games during the 1987 and 1988 campaigns, which ultimately became the final two of his career because the ensuing structural damage left him unable to find a contract on the free agent market.

But this particular leg injury felt much worse, and it wasn't even his.

This time, it had been suffered by his youngest daughter Ashley, who was lying on the ground in tears, holding her broken leg.

On a warm afternoon, she had tried, like her older brother Austin, to perform a trick on the tire swing in their backyard. But Austin, who now plays football at Notre Dame, had the physical ability to switch his body from one side to another without much trouble. Despite her best efforts to duplicate her brother's talent, Ashley's timing was off, and within seconds she was flying off the swing as her father watched in horror.

"That one I'll never live down as long as I live," Cris says. "She was just a little tiny peanut of a thing.... It was the worst parenting moment that I think I've ever had in my life."

But despite Cris' remorse as his daughter recovered over the following month, Ashley made sure her father didn't feel any blame.

"All she did for the next five weeks was try to cheer me up," Cris recalls. "She was still her bright, bubbly self as she sat there in her little pink cast and tried to make me feel better the whole

time."

Ashley's leg fully healed, something that would later certainly become clear during an impressive high school track and field career that has continued at Harvard. But before taking up the sport, in her early years, Ashley instead put her legs—and her cheerful personality—to good use through her passion for dance, a hobby of hers since she was three years old.

"She would put on costumes and dance around the house," Cris explains. "Whatever music was on, she was just one of those happy lights of a person. She entertained us all and just had a very vivacious, energetic personality that always seemed to brighten the room when she walked into it."

As she grew up, Ashley used that effervescence to continue putting a smile on her father's face—and even a tear in his eye.

"The big pouffy costumes, the hats that flowed in every way that make a

dad cry, and then when the dance recital day comes around and they play the sweet little ballet numbers, and those three, four, five year olds are up there looking like beautiful ballerinas—that's what I'll remember most from those early days," Cris says.

Meanwhile, though her father became increasingly well-known as a NFL commentator—a career path he took up soon after his playing days came to an end—Ashley says that fact didn't make her childhood any different than that of her friends.

"He was always just a father to me," she says. "He was always there, he was always the coach of all our teams, he was just like a normal dad."

As she moved into her teenage years, Ashley continued to follow her passion for dance, later becoming captain of the Highlands High School team as a senior. But upon arriving at the school, she decided to put her talented legs to a new test by joining the track and field squad.

"All my friends were doing it," says

Features: Outside the Lines



Features are your chance to have some fun and showcase your writing skills on off the court, field, or pool topics. While there are several ways to add flavor to a game story, there are no limits as to the form of features. You are left to your own devices.

The one thing you want is to avoid the boring angle: John Smith is a player on this team, and his numbers are very good. Who cares? You want to write the feature about the baseball player who's partially blind, the triplets on the women's hockey team, or the golfer who moonlights as an author. Keep an ear out for what's different or what stands out. Teams can play 30-something games a year, so the gamers can't help but blend together after some time. But features really give you a chance to stand apart from the crowd.

Investigation is the key in these stories—your feature will live and die by the quality of the quotes you get from your sources. So if you're writing a human-interest style piece, that means talking to more than just the player, his teammates and his coach—it means trying to get in touch with his parents, his high school girlfriend, the guy who coached him in tee-ball, etc. Calling these people out of the blue isn't always easy though. A great question to ask is the subject of the piece, "Who would be able to talk about your early experience playing your sport?" That way, the player can direct you (and probably give you numbers) to the appropriate parent, tee-ball coach, etc.

Features can go on for hundreds upon hundreds of words, and you get a chance to really be creative and let your own style shine through. Remember though, to keep yourself out of the piece. You are still an impartial reporter, so while you can offer more subjective observations (e.g. you can use "he laughed" or "she muttered" as opposed to the more boring, more conventional "he/she said"), keep "I" out of the story.

Because features come in all shapes and sizes, it's impossible to offer a template for writing one. The best thing you can do as a journalist is to regularly read long pieces of journalism. Read Sports Illustrated, The New Yorker, ESPN, Grantland, and other newspapers and their weekly magazines to gain a sense of the scope and style of feature writing. Now let's take a look at one of the best:

Ashley, who played on Highland's soccer team as well. "It was just another fun sport to do."

Ashley certainly had the genes to be successful in her new endeavor, as Cris had been considered one of the fastest receivers in the NFL during his playing days. He was so quick that on March 5, 1983, the Bengal attempted to race a horse, Mr. Hurry, in front of a large crowd at Latonia Race Course in Ohio.

The match ended up not being much of a contest—the horse won by a wide margin—but a quarter-century later Collinsworth decided to relive his passion for running by serving as the coach of Ashley's high school track and field team in their hometown of Fort Thomas, Ky.

"I did it really just to be around her," Cris explains. "Obviously I was traveling and [announcing] games during the season; all I wanted to do was just hang around the kids."

The former athlete says he didn't take his job too seriously, often goofing around in an attempt to make practices more fun.

"I would always run behind [the team] and sing that song, 'Apple Bottom Jeans,'" Collinsworth—referring to T-Pain's "Get Low"—recalls with a laugh. "I could do a couple verses of that.... They hated it because I can't sing at all, and I certainly can't sing one of their songs from their era. The more I would sing, the faster they would run. I think it directly led to four straight championships because they certainly did not want to hear me singing 'Apple Bottom Jeans.'"

But the other Collinsworth also played a major role in sparking those consecutive state titles.

A Cincinnati Enquirer first team all-state standout as a junior and senior,

Continued on the next page =>

SAMPLE FEATURE

=> Feature from previous page

Ashley won her team's MVP and Most Valuable Sprinter awards and received the National Guard Best and Brightest Track Athlete honor as well. Like her father, Ashley ran with seemingly equine speed, winning two straight individual championships and setting the school record in the hundred-meter dash.

"She had shown some signs of being a great athlete, of being very competitive," Crimson coach Jason Saretsky says. "Meeting her on her recruiting trip, it was fairly clear what kind of mentality she would be bringing to our program, and we were very excited to add her to our team."

Upon arriving at Harvard, Ashley immediately impressed, qualify-



SOAR HIGH Notice how the photo—though completely unrelated—nicely breaks up the story, making it easier to read. This is a common daily sports design technique. SHUNELLA G. LUMAS—CRIMSON PHOTOGRAPHER

ing first in the 60-meter dash with the sixth-fastest time in school history before finishing third in that event and fifth in the 200-meter dash at December's Harvard Open.

"She's had some real flashes of brilliance," Saretsky says. "We've seen that competitive drive and tenacity that we saw in prefrish at various points during her freshman year."

Thus far, the rookie has enjoyed being a part of a college squad.

"It's been a great experience," Ashley explains. "My best friends have come from the team. You have to learn to balance the schedule and everything, but once you do, it's worth it."

And Cris has been greatly impressed by her ability to succeed at that very task.

"I don't think anybody could understand what its like to be an athlete at

Harvard University," says Cris, who was a first team Academic All-American himself at the University of Florida in 1980. "These brilliant young people are accomplishing so much in the library and in the classroom and in the chemistry labs, and to take a four-hour chunk out of every day to run around the track and then to compete at the high academic level that is Harvard University is a remarkable accomplishment."

Indeed, it is often Ashley's academic achievements, more so than her athletic ones, that stand out to the former football star.

"I've told her repeatedly that she's taken my gene pool to a whole new level—there's nothing in her genetic makeup on my side that would point to Harvard University," he says

"There is nothing that anybody could do to make me any prouder of my daughter than what she's accomplishing at Harvard."

Cris is certainly not shy about that pride, never hesitating to drop the H-Bomb when he has the chance.

"I've actually made a science out of how to brag about my daughter," he explains. "I've forced people—they'll say, 'tell me about your kids.' I'll reply, 'I've got a son in South Bend, a daughter in Gainesville, and another daughter in Boston.' South Bend they know is Notre Dame, Gainesville they know is Florida. Boston forces them to ask the next question: 'Where in Boston?' 'Harvard' always forces them to fall on the ground and say, 'What?'"

"As a parent you just relish the moment," he adds with a laugh. "The only thing that could make it better is if she would stay at Harvard for thirty years so I could do that for the rest of my life."

Indeed, as Ashley has progressed through her freshman year, the former football star continues to be amazed by his daughter's achievements.

"I think [the team] got back at two or three in the morning from the Hep Championships this past weekend," he says. "Half the girls and guys had finals at eight or nine in the morning the next day. I'm certainly not demeaning the accomplishments of the other kids there, but to be able to do that—to study on a bus for seven hours driving to Philadelphia, to study on a bus for seven hours coming back, to get four to five hours of sleep and then take a final at Harvard University—to me is a remarkable accomplishment."

"I'm sure every parent of Harvard students feels the same way," he adds. "It's playing in the Super Bowl, it's being part of the Olympics, it's achieving at the highest level in the world at the academic stage."

And Cris, who played in two Su-



SPORTS SMORGASBORD When laying out the sports page, one of the biggest concerns a designer has is how much spacing there is—is there too many words on the page? Does the page feel proportioned correctly? ROBERT F. WORLEY—CRIMSON PHOTOGRAPHER

per Bowls himself, certainly knows a thing or two about that very level. After serving as the Gators team captain and earning first-team All-American honors in 1980, Cris was a second-round pick of the Bengals in the following year's NFL Draft. A 6'5" wideout, Collinsworth appeared on the cover of "Sports Illustrated" as a rookie, was named to three Pro Bowls, and surpassed 1,000 receiving yards four times during his eight year career.

Once his playing days had come to an end, Collinsworth became one of the NFL's best-known commentators. Since 1989, he has served as an analyst for HBO's (now Showtime's) successful "Inside the NFL" and is also presently the color commentator on NBC's "Sunday Night Football" and in the popular "Madden" video games. For his performances on those programs and others, Collinsworth won one of the two "Outstanding Sports Personality" Emmy Awards in 1997, 1998, and every year from 2002 to 2012 (for a record total of 13).

Though she's not a huge football fan, Ashley admits she will sometimes

tune in on Sunday nights just to hear her father's voice.

"I'm proud of my dad and what he does," Ashley says. "He works hard."

Cris likewise feels the same way about his daughter.

"In every situation, she always takes the high ground, she always does the right thing, she always cares for her friends," Cris says. "I tell my kids all the time, 'I want you to be a great athlete, I want you to be great academically, I want you to achieve a lot of things, but mostly I want you to be a great person. If none of the other stuff happens and you're a great person, then I'm okay with anything else that happens in your life—that's the highest standard.'"=

For her ability to meet that standard, Cris Collinsworth—despite earnings honors ranging from Pro Bowl appearances to Emmy Awards—thus believes his daughter Ashley is his greatest accomplishment.

"To me there's no level of pride anybody could have in their child that would exceed mine," he says. "She set that bar as high as it could be set."

How it works

Sportinies are some of the best work the Crimson Sports Board produces during the year, representing weeks and even months of research, interviewing, writing, and editing on a single subject. They're often written in pairs and can even span multiple Crimson boards.

On the surface, they're just features—but a closer look reveals the complexity and/or depth of the subject matter. Sportiny topics are wide-ranging, from concussions at Harvard to a national championship winning team to racial diversity on sports teams—there's no single formula for a successful one. However, what sets the best stories from the rest of the pack is the leg work that is done far before the story is due.

As opposed to having a few hours for a gamer or a few days to a week for a feature, sportinies tend to be assigned 1-2 months before they're due. The expectation is that you (and your partner) will dig deeply into your topic, asking the tough questions and talking to anyone you can that is qualified to speak on the subject.

Anyone on the sports board can suggest and write a sportiny, and pitches are usually solicited early each semester.

Read it all online

For full versions of these sportinies, visit "thecrimson.com/sports". Using the search bar, type the title of the article to access the archived article. Other good articles to read include the following:

"Rah, Rah, Rah, Rah, Who Cares?" (Sports Story of the Year winner)

"Harvard Hockey 1989: A Championship in Perspective"

"Taking Their Talents to the Ivies"

"Behind the Scenes: Game Day at Harvard Stadium"

"Beyond the Silver Screen"

Sportinies: The Long Feature



DISORDERLY CONDUCT

This emphasis on the "correct" body type for an athlete has created a culture in which athletic feats and disordered eating go hand in hand, experts and Harvard athletes say—a phenomenon only intensified at schools like Harvard by the pressure to adhere to team expectations.

THE RISE OF HARVARD BASKETBALL

Penn's 62-52 loss to Princeton Tuesday evening let the Crimson clinch the school's first-ever outright Ivy title and send it to its first NCAA tournament since 1946.

The story of how it reached that milestone—one that overcame 112 years of on-court mediocrity—involves far more than just a 19-man roster that went 26-4 during its regular season.

It encompasses a coach in search of redemption, an athletic director determined to oversee the rebirth of one of the most maligned programs in college basketball, and an impassioned group of Harvard graduates with the resources to do something about it.



LEAVING IT ALL OUT ON THE FIELD

In recent years, the Ivy League and Harvard have made preventing and treating these injuries a priority. Many say that the league's policies, which seek to limit dangerous contact in sports, are ahead of the curve. Players and coaches also praise what they describe as a greater awareness of the risks of concussions in the Harvard athletic community.

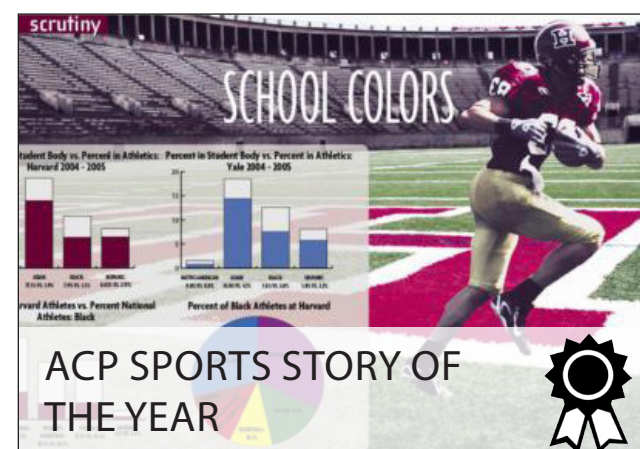
But despite these changes, student-athletes still risk an injury that could jeopardize their futures every time they take the field for the Crimson. Because once athletes take the field of play, Harvard can't stop people from getting hurt. And every year, the concussions keep coming.

HOW FAIR IS FAIR AT HARVARD?

Before the hiring of men's basketball coach Tommy Amaker in April, the Boston Globe reported that Harvard did not have one African-American among its 32 head coaches—a glaring statistic for any university committed to diversity. But is anyone concerned about the students who actually play the games?

Look closely at the faces in these pictures, in fact—from the era of the leather helmet up to the age of Under Armour—and you might find an old stereotype rearing its head in monochrome.

Namely, that the playing fields at fair Harvard tend to be the territory of white elites.



ACP SPORTS STORY OF THE YEAR

From Writing to Print



You've put in some great work in nailing that interview with the coach and writing your piece with color and clarity. But how does your article end up nicely formatted and printed in the paper after you send it off to your comp directors and the sports exec? Here's the short(ish) answer.

1

A lot goes on between the time you pick up a story till when the story itself ends up in the paper. Let's walk through a simplified version of the steps (if you ever become a sports executive, you'll get the longer spiel then).

- The day or two before your article is due, the dayslot is emailed by a sports exec. Included in it is your wordcount and any photo/design concerns.
- You then write and turn in the article to your comp directors and the exec on "duty," or in charge of editing, posting, and flowing in the articles.

2

The next steps involves a few different people in different capacities.

- You sit down with your live editor, usually the beat writer, who edits your article in front of you and solicits your input.
- Once you both feel the article is ready, the article is sent to the exec on duty for that night.
- The exec on duty edits your article again, checking for basic grammar along the way. More importantly, that person will also check for factual mistakes—statistics, name misspellings, etc.
- A rough non-empirically tested estimate is that execs find about 2-3 factual mistakes per article! Double-checking is key to minimize these often egregious errors.

3

Next, the exec is charged with taking your article and fitting it to the newspaper.

- On Adobe InDesign, the exec will "flow in"—the term for placing text and objects—onto a pre-designed page that has placeholder texts and boxes.
- After putting in your article, the exec will tinker with spacing to fit the words perfectly by altering the space between words (kerning), resizing photos, and/or adding pull quotes.

4

Now that the page is done, the final stage is to publish the article online—in a few way.

- Articles go on the Crimson website through a tool called "Admin," in which execs will input the article's information and text
- Articles are pubbed online through the Crimson Twitter (@THCSports) and sometimes on Facebook (Harvard Crimson Sports).

ALUMNI

From the Alumni

Though your time at the Crimson may be over when you graduate, the skills you learn on the board stay with you long after you're gone. From sports journalism to the front office, former sports board members go on to pursue a wide variety of careers.

"The Crimson was my first introduction to the actual doing of journalism, and I learned the fundamentals of pretty much everything I know -- writing, interviewing, editing -- from listening to, bothering, and attempting to emulate the people on Crimson Sports. I made lasting friends, varyingly good decisions, and more trips to the Kong than humanly imaginable."

Pablo S. Torre '07

Current: Senior Writer, ESPN (2012-present)
Past: Staff Writer, Sports Illustrated (2007-2012)

"Ain't nobody thought I could write too good in high school, and given the emphasis on communication skills in the corporate world, I knew it was something I needed to address. While Expos and other similar writing classes can provide a valuable learning experience, it's hard to improve your skills while exploring a topic in which you have no interest. The Crimson taught me not only how to write, but also how to fit my style for the subject matter and audience. That's why I joined, but not why I stayed. Nearly 10 years after saying goodbye to Harvard Square, I am still quite close with many of the friends I made while at 14 Plympton. I can't imagine my college experience without the countless hours I spent with my friends churning out the nation's best collegiate daily. I always joke that given how I allocated my time, I really concentrated in journalism while minoring in economics."

Michael R. James '06

Current: NBA Team Marketing and Business Operations department, as a director within our Strategy & Analytics group which is focused on providing data-driven solutions to issues facing all aspects of our teams' businesses.
Past: NFL Labor Finance group, managing league-level economic models for NFL's Collective Bargaining Negotiations
Past: worked in private equity, and "there is nothing notable about that"

Many classes at Harvard are built around the concept that you can learn as much from your fellow students as you can from your actual professors. The Crimson takes this a step further in that it is entirely peer-led, operating without the aid of faculty advisors. Important, practical skills—how to conduct a good interview, how to write a good lede—are self-taught within the group of students that work at the paper. This makes the high quality of what The Crimson consistently produces quite remarkable—but it also means that you need to take individual responsibility for constantly seeking to improve and evolve as a writer and reporter. You will get some formal teaching through the comp process and in the editing you undergo on individual stories, but it will really be up to you to absorb what makes for good copy and internalize it. In my time at The Crimson, I felt that I learned the most by simply picking up the paper every day and reading the stories that weren't mine. On any given day, the most clever lede or kicker may actually be inside the women's volleyball story—and if you are only admiring how your byline looks in print, you are missing out on an opportunity to learn something and improve your writing. Similarly, after you file your story on the Harvard-Princeton baseball doubleheader, go to the Princetonian's website and see how your counterpart covered the same game for that paper. And then as you notice things you admire in your colleagues' work, mention it to them. There are very few, formalized opportunities for receiving constructive feedback on your stories, so help fill that void by telling your classmates what interested you about something they wrote. Giving reinforcement to each other in this way helps everybody improve together, and is critical to making a peer-run operation like The Crimson work. At the end of the day, this experience—of motivating yourself to get better at something without a coach or thesis advisor at your side to urge you on, and seeking to chart your progress without the benefit of clear yardsticks—is one that will serve you well after college, when you won't have a report card at the end of every semester to help you measure your success.

Brian E. Fallon '03

Current: Director, Public Affairs, U.S. Department of Justice
Past: Communications Director, U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer; Press Secretary, U.S. Senator Bob Menendez

"I covered the men's hockey team for three seasons...and absolutely loved the experience. College hockey at Harvard is the perfect training ground for work as a beat reporter, because the sport is big enough to matter on a local/regional level in New England, yet small enough that you learn how to cultivate sources. I totally immersed myself in the college hockey world when I was at Harvard—I'd call/email coaches and players on other teams for information—and I've maintained a lot of those same habits and practices while covering Major League Baseball. In a sense, every beat is similar; the keys are developing relationships and expertise."

Jon P. Morosi '04

Current: MLB reporter for FOX Sports; MLB Network contributor
Past: Tigers beat writer for the Detroit Free Press

"[I] was drawn by the excitement of writing about 'entertainment that's in doubt' and by the smell of hot type in the evening. Learned how to make deadlines under all circumstances, how to write to measure (since the hot type had to fit) and how to get as close to the truth as possible in a short time."

John L. Powers '70

Boston Globe, Staff Writer since 1973
Primary Olympic sportswriter (covered 19 winter and summer Games)
Shared 1983 Pulitzer Prize for national reporting as lead writer for special magazine on the nuclear arms race.

"I originally joined Crimson Sports because sports had always been a huge part of my life, and I was looking for a way to stay involved. I played sports year-round basically from elementary school up through high school, but at Harvard I knew I didn't have the skill to compete at the Division 1 level. Joining the Crimson gave me an incredibly community of similarly-minded individuals, many of whom remain dear friends to this day. Writing for the Crimson helped me keep sports in my life, and is a direct reason why I eventually shifted my career back towards the sports industry."

Jonathan P. Hay '06

Current: Manager of Ticketing Analytics - Boston Red Sox
Past: Head of U.S. Inflation Trading - Morgan Stanley

"I grew up in Boston watching the Red Sox, Celtics, the Bruins and the Lobsters (!) so I had good understanding of many sports. It was a chance to be more creative in the reporting. A longer explanation and description of my time writing sports for The Boston Globe: <http://grantland.com/features/the-best-sports-section-history/>"

Nell Scovell '82

TV writer/producer/director
Creator of Sabrina, the Teenage Witch; worked on NCIS, Monk, The Simpsons, Murphy Brown, Late Night with David Letterman, others.
Books: Co-wrote "Lean In" with Sheryl Sandberg
Print Journalism: Vanity Fair, Marie Claire
Web journalism: Grantland, Jezebel

"I joined Crimson Sports because sports was my consuming passion and writing was my academic strength. The experience taught me a great deal—how to structure a story and write a lede, how to stay on deadline, editorial savvy, the dedication, professionalism and attention to detail required to manage a beat and produce a section. The development of those latter qualities has proved essential in my current position in baseball operations. Beyond those details, however, Crimson Sports also provided me with my undergraduate milieu and closest college friends, and when I think back to the best times I had at Harvard, The Crimson inevitably forms the backdrop for my memories."

Caleb W. Peiffer '07

Current: Seattle Mariners, Manager of Baseball Operations

"I joined Crimson Sports for a very simple reason: I wanted to cover coach Tommy Amaker and the Harvard men's basketball program. Luckily, in my four years on the board, I got to do plenty of that. But most of what I've taken from my time at The Crimson came far from Lavietes Pavilion: it's the regular writing practice and feedback from experienced editors, it's an appreciation for storytelling, it's thinking critically about sports, and, most of all, it's my awesome, interesting friends who, to this day, keep pushing me. You can give as much as you like to The Crimson, or as little—just know that what you do give will be paid back double after the final buzzer."

Martin Kessler '13

Current: Producer for NPR's Only A Game