

can't help missing four-time all-Ivy tailback Clifton Dawson '07, who set new league rushing records a year ago (see "Dawson by the Numbers," January-February, page 75). At last report, Dawson was on the roster of the National Football League's Indianapolis Colts. He'd signed with the Colts as a free agent in May, but was later released and claimed by the Cincinnati Bengals. Released once again, he

was re-signed by the Colts....Former teammate Ryan Fitzpatrick '05, after two seasons of reserve duty with the St. Louis Rams, is now the backup quarterback of the Bengals.

Let there be light(s): To preserve the Stadium's classic contours, the new banks of lights were integrated with existing fencing on top of the colonnade. Athletics Department officials say the lights were

installed primarily to illuminate late-afternoon practices and allow off-peak use of the field by club, intramural, and intercollegiate teams, and that the football team will play no more than one early-fall night game in future seasons....Four other Ivy schools—Columbia, Cornell, Penn, and Princeton—have stadium lighting, but only the last two play night games on a regular basis. ~"CLEAT"

Polo Renaissance

YES, THERE WAS ONE gleaming black Bentley (but *only* one) parked on the greensward at Myopia Hunt Club in South Hamilton, Massachusetts. True, some elegant tailgating went on nearby, with white wines, goat cheese, and even beautiful flower arrangements set up on card tables. But the spectators who came for the exhibition polo match, pitting the Harvard Polo Club's men's and women's teams against Myopia on a spectacular September Sunday afternoon, made up a relaxed and decidedly casual bunch. "Polo has the image of being a 'Great Gatsby' sport, and it markets that image," says Crocker Snow Jr. '61, a lifelong polo enthusiast who played that afternoon and coaches the Harvard men's team. "But it isn't that—it's a dungaree sport. It involves the care, feeding, and training of horses, and practicing on them. You do it all in dungarees."

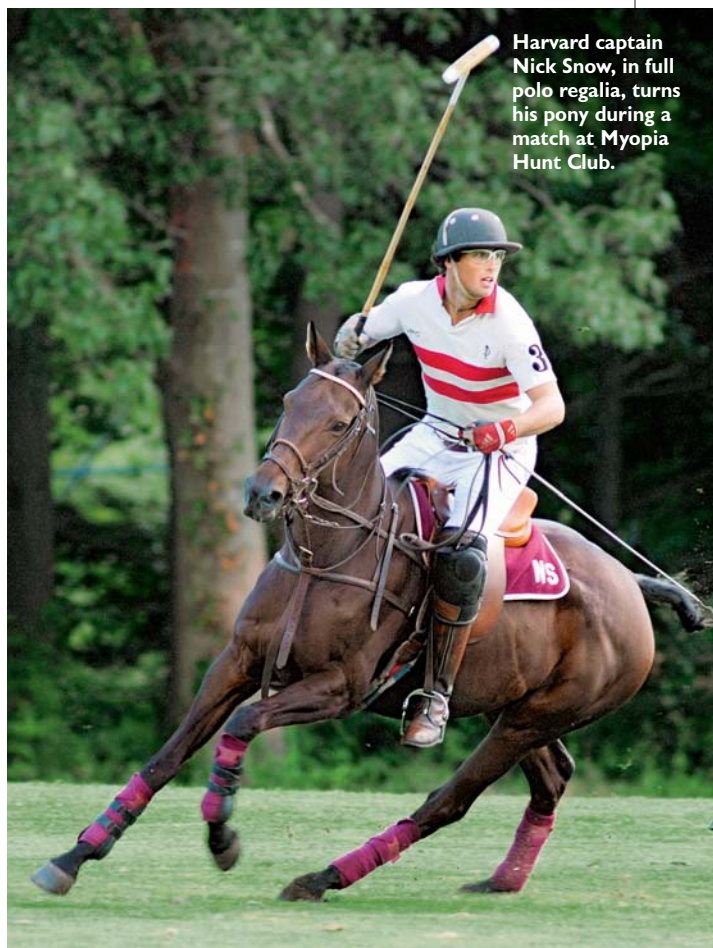
Indeed, Snow's wife, Cissie Jones Snow, who mentors the Crimson women's team, adds that a bona fide "white breeches" game (polo players wear white riding breeches in competition) is a serious event indeed: "It's like putting on your uniform to go to war." Harvard's mounted warriors fared well at Myopia—so named because its five founders were all shortsighted—winning, 7-5, after six seven-and-a-half-minute "chukkers" (periods of play). The match benefited the recently revived Harvard Polo Club, and certain rules were relaxed, like those about mixing genders: the men played four chukkers and the women two. One of Snow's polo-playing sons, Harvard captain and star player Nick Snow '09, dominated the field, scoring five of his team's seven goals.

The week before, seven Harvard players

of varied skill spent five days training at the 6,000-acre ranch in San Saba, Texas, owned by Tommy Lee Jones '69. Film star Jones is an avid polo player who sponsors the high-level San Saba pro polo team. He told the undergraduates he had invited them because he knew that Harvard students could learn quickly, so even a five-day session would pay off. It was polo boot camp: breakfast at 6:30 A.M. for both horses and riders, who were tacked and ready to play from 8:00 A.M. until noon; a midday strategy and rule session, followed by more polo from 3:30 P.M. until darkness. "It was pretty intense," says Meera Atreya '09, a dressage rider before taking up polo. "Those polo ponies were the best horses I've been on—they had very soft mouths [were highly responsive]."

Toward the end, Harvard scrimmaged with and upset the 2006 national champions, Texas Tech, 10-8, in an arena match, vindicating Jones's confidence; he invited the Harvard riders to return for two or three weeks next year.

POLO IS AN ANCIENT SPORT, played in Persia as a form of cavalry training perhaps as early as the sixth century B.C. At Harvard, polo clubs have come and gone during the last century. Crimson riders won national championships in 1929 and

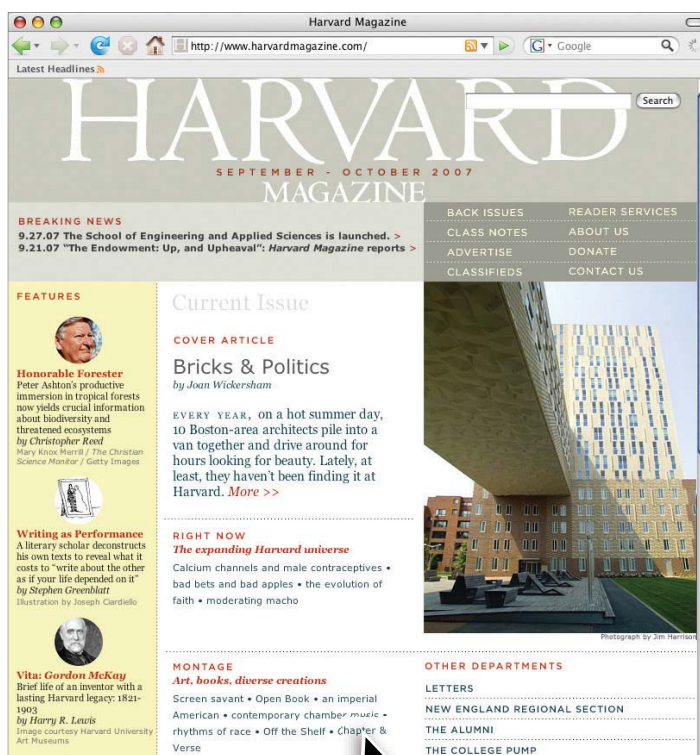


Harvard captain Nick Snow, in full polo regalia, turns his pony during a match at Myopia Hunt Club.

1933; the most recent active period ran from 1991 to 1993. The current revival, spearheaded by the Snow family (Nick Snow led the charge last year, in response to interest from Extension School student Michael Svetska), involves about 15 undergraduates, nearly half of them women recruited from the Harvard Equestrian Club. Last fall Harvard took on the Universities of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Virginia, competed in a regional tournament at Cornell, and beat Yale.

Intercollegiate polo—30 American col-

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leges field teams, according to the United States Polo Association (USPA)—takes place in indoor arenas less than one-tenth the size of outdoor polo fields, which are 300 yards long by 180 or 200 yards wide, about 10 times the size of a football grid-iron. In the far smaller indoor space, teams have only three players per side (versus four outdoors) and use an inflated, mini-volleyball-sized ball—larger than the hard, roughly baseball-sized plastic ball (once made of willow root) used outdoors. Arena games are higher-scoring affairs, with winning sides sometimes tallying 20 goals or more, about twice what outdoor matches typically

Soccer Summary

Men's Soccer

The Crimson (7-1-1), ranked sixth nationally in one September poll, started strongly and tied the defending national champions, the University of California at Santa Barbara, 1-1, in double overtime. Forward Andre Akpan '10 was named Ivy League Player of the Week after striking game-winning goals against Vermont and Boston University. He and Michael Fucito '09 each contributed two goals in a 5-0 thrashing of Fairfield, in which senior goalkeeper Adam Hahn teamed with Joseph Alexander '10 in goal for the shutout, Harvard's third of the season.

Women's Soccer

The women booters (5-2, 0-1 Ivy) reeled off a four-game winning streak in September and notched five shutouts in their first six games. Goalie Lauren Mann '10 was named Ivy League Player of the week after blanking Boston University and Wisconsin-Milwaukee, both by 1-0 scores, the former in double overtime. Freshman forward Gina Wideroff scored the gamewinners in both matches. Katherine Sheeleigh '11 led the early scoring with 10 points and five goals, including a hat trick in Harvard's 4-0 win over Central Connecticut State.

see. An indoor match lasts only four chukkers; it also tends, with less space to maneuver, to see horses and mallets colliding more often. Nick Snow compares polo to “ice hockey on horses”—but, played at a gallop, it’s even faster.

The University of Virginia, amid horse country, boasts the country’s largest polo program, but Cornell (where it is a varsity sport with a roster of 30 to 40) and Yale also maintain stables and arenas. At college matches, the home team provides the horses for both sides. “Splitting strings” ensures that there is no mount advantage in the college game—unlike outdoor polo, where players bring their own thoroughbreds. “In an arena, a good player can get along even with a bad horse,” Crocker Snow explains, “but outdoors, at the top levels, horses matter.”

Though it doesn’t apply to college polo, the sport’s handicap system provides another measure of parity. Based on their performances, the sport rates players in “goals” from -2 to +10. It’s a rough estimate of how many goals that player might contribute to a team’s score. A “20-goal” match means that the sum of the players’ ratings on each team cannot exceed 20 goals. Few players rank above +3; even Nick Snow, a lifelong player and one of the strongest riders in college polo, has only a three-goal rating. Four-goal players are mostly pros. USPA numbers show that 87 percent of players are rated at one goal or less, and there are only about a dozen 10-goal players in the world: currently, they all hail from Argentina, the country that breeds the best ponies and produces the most top players. (As many as 30,000 or 40,000 spectators turn out at Palermo Polo Grounds in downtown Buenos Aires for the finals of the Argentine Open, the world’s top tournament, which normally sees several 40-goal teams entered.)

For Harvard’s polo club, the more mundane challenge is housing ponies. “It would be quite possible to get a bunch of veteran horses donated, along with a truck and trailer,” says Crocker Snow. “But there’s no natural place to keep them, along with a facility to practice and play.” As a result, the team plays only “away” matches, riding mounts provided by their opponents.

And although there are foot mallets, for



Several riders pursue a flying polo ball (upper left).

practicing the strokes while dismounted, and even occasional instances of bicycle polo, there’s no getting around the equine factor. A strong male player can whack a polo ball 150 yards because he borrows so much momentum from his mount. The ponies are also what make the game so dangerous—if a galloping horse falls on a

rider, the consequences can be severe. Though riders need to be in top condition, “Players think that the ponies are the best athletes out there,” Snow says. “And riding them weeds out the Ralph Lauren glamour factor pretty quickly. You’ve got to love horses to do this.”

—CRAIG LAMBERT

ALUMNI

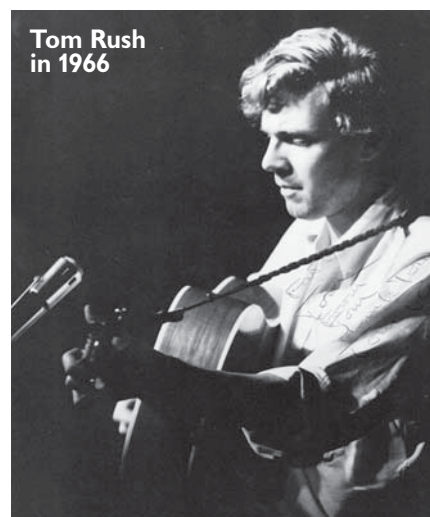
The Socially Acceptable Bohemian

Tom Rush’s charmed life in folk music

by DANIEL GEWERTZ

TICKETS ARE a stiff \$40 apiece, but the Sit ‘n’ Bull Pub in Maynard, Massachusetts, is full. Folksinger Tom Rush ‘63 stands center stage, halfway between a barroom dartboard and a string of iridescent red plastic peppers. The Sit ‘n’ Bull looks like a classic roadhouse, certainly a long aesthetic distance from his celebrated, sold-out Boston Symphony Hall concerts of the 1980s.

But Rush is equally comfortable in any setting he chooses. He begins his solo show with a song he first recorded 45 years ago, in 1962, while still an undergraduate: “San Francisco Bay Blues.” Rush then delights the audience with a tale about interviewing the writer of the song, Jesse “The Lone Cat” Fuller, a world-class eccentric folk-bluesman, back in the days of Rush’s WHRB folk-music radio show at Harvard. The story comes replete with a fond imita-



Tom Rush in 1966

tion and a full description of Fuller’s “fotdella,” a self-invented foot-percussion instrument shaped like a stove.

Storytelling has always been essential to the art and charm of Tom Rush. When