tional Hockey League spokesperson, I asked if the "Redhawks" and the "Black Wings" would be playing at Wrigley Field.

At times, I'm able to recount these mix-ups to friends or family as humorous stories. Often even I see them that way. Yet it can be difficult to always narrate to the tune of "Liz's Wacky Misadventures in New York!" I'm too invested—too conscious of and concerned by my fumblings, and others' reactions to them—to laugh them off all the time. I don't want to feel that I'm not doing well, and I don't want other people to think so, either. As Rowling had intimated, fear of failure is a powerful force.

THINGS BEGAN TO LOOK UP when a reporter who sits behind me overheard an unsuccessful phone conversation I was having with a source. I had hung up and was staring at my computer screen when he leaned over and said, "You know, you don't have to tell them you're an intern." I carried these words like a banner into battle.

A few days later I was assigned a story about *The Waterfalls,* a public-art installation that was opening that day. Although the story fell through, and I felt that I had spent the day barking up a succession of wrong trees, the editor felt bad for me and let me go on a press run of a boat that visited each waterfall in the harbor.

I imagined myself sipping champagne with high-profile journalists, and immediately left for South Street Seaport to catch the boat. Instead of champagne, there were bright blue, frozen-rum drinks in plastic cups, and beer. And instead of a famous journalist, I struck up a conversation with the mother of the boat's manager. She was from Minnesota, and after 10 minutes of chatting, she tried to set me up with her son, whose two young children, she told me, "really need a mother."

"Sometimes my daily push to understand my surroundings when I feel so out of my element seems Sisyphean."

I grabbed my neon-blue drink and escaped to the top of the boat. The view of downtown and the cool breeze (and perhaps the frozen drink) immediately made me feel more relaxed. The adrenaline that keeps me going at work seeped away, and I felt exhausted, but happy.

"Ladies and gentlemen," the tour guide began. "Welcome to your tour of the one, the only, New York City Waterfalls!" We pushed off, and the noise of the boat drowned out the conversations of those around me. We soon pulled up to the Statue of Liberty, one of the many tourist attractions I had yet to see. People took out their cameras and snapped shots of it, and we moved in even closer until the sun was completely obscured behind her enormous green head. The boat manager squeezed next to me. "What do you think?" he asked. "Never gets old no matter how many times you see it, right?"

I just smiled, wanting to avoid yet another person's reaction to my admission of being a foreigner—a newly arrived, not-quite-employed New York rookie.

I am at the bottom of a very large learning curve, and sometimes my daily push to understand my surroundings when I feel so entirely out of my element seems Sisyphean. Yet I remember a time when I felt just the same. As a freshman in college, the cloud of confusion around me would lift occasionally, like a morning fog, and something perhaps quite simple would become clear to me. Those small moments of understanding would be strangely sweet, a very specific feeling that deserted me after I became more versed in my environment. There are benefits to finding yourself at the very bottom of what you must climb, and rewards to throwing yourself into something entirely new: like speeding through the New York Harbor and seeing it all for the very first time.

Liz Goodwin '08, who has completed her Berta Greenwald Ledecky Undergraduate Fellowship with this column, will leave New York in September for a four-month newspaper internship in Costa Rica.

SPORTS

Back on the Field

An injury endangers a striker's season.

ON A HOT JULY AFTERNOON in Harvard Stadium, just three months after surgery, Michael Fucito '09 took off running at the base of the stands, barely breaking his stride as he kicked a soccer ball to himself against the wall. About three-quarters of the way around the field, he slowed down, and trainer Stacie Barlow motioned him back. He arrived red-faced and dripping with sweat, to tell her that the toughest part of his rehab would be just getting back into shape—as if a doctor hadn't operated recently on his hip and told him he might miss almost all his senior season.

Barlow asked if Fucito had mentioned that he was way ahead of his rehab schedule. "Months ahead," he added.

On paper, each of Fucito's years in crimson has been better than the last. As a freshman, he won the Ivy League Rookie of the Year award; as a sophomore, the team MVP; and as a junior, second-team all-American honors. He has tallied 23 goals and 19 assists. Along with fellow standout André Akpan (see "Powers of the Pitch," September-October 2007, page 74), Fucito has led Harvard to one Ivy

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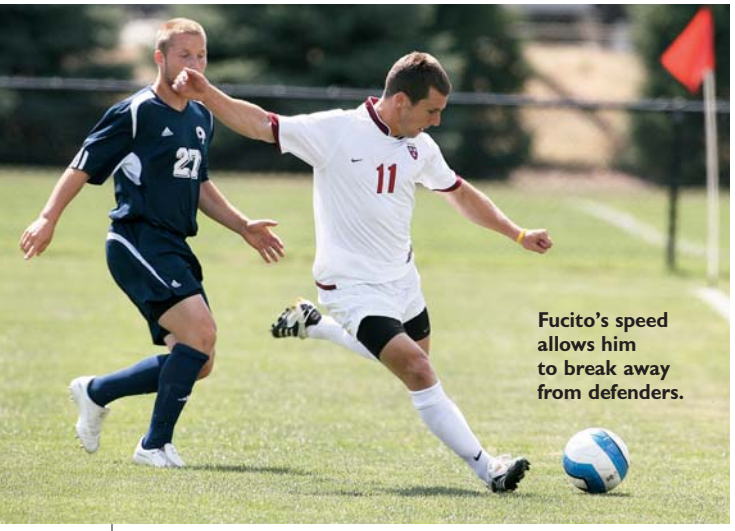

Fucito's speed allows him to break away from defenders.

League title and two consecutive national tournaments. But even as public accolades accumulated, Fucito's injuries grew worse. He has suffered a separated shoulder, a slipped rib, back spasms, and compartment leg syndrome (swelling that results from unhealed bruising). He has also had surgery to remove an extra anklebone. He once spent a night in the cardiac ward after a ball hit his sternum hard enough to make his heart bleed. His hip had bothered him for six months when he finally decided to go in for surgery.

These injuries have not been freak accidents. Fucito admits that they are, at least in part, a consequence of how aggressively he plays. His greatest weapon is his speed, and he likes to run directly at defenders, the ball at his feet, rather than waiting to receive a pass in the penalty area. When defenders "can't keep up with me running," he says, "they tend to kick me or drag me down in some way to try and stop me." He separated his shoulder when he charged a goalie who was coming out to collect a loose ball. Fucito poked the ball into the net, but the goalie, barreling in a step behind, sent him flying. At only five feet, eight inches—small for a forward—"he takes his share of abuse," says Jamie Clark, Welch head coach of men's soccer. "But he probably gives out as good as he gets. You won't find anyone physically stronger."

His hip problems are not the result of a single, dramatic play. In soccer, the torque necessary for rifling a hard shot places an immense amount of pressure on the hips. Years of twisting his body before his bones had developed fully made them grow out of shape. His doctors had to repair torn cartilage, grind down a bump on his femur, and reshape his hipbone. "You never used to see these [kinds] of injuries," says Barlow (who left Harvard over the summer). According to her, young athletes used to play a different sport every season, giving their bodies a break from the particular rigors of each. But Fucito began playing soccer early ("as soon as I could walk") and, after giving up baseball (he broke his wrist twice), devoted himself entirely to the beautiful but often brutal game.

As a young speedster in Westford, Massachusetts, Fucito (pronounced *few-see-toe*) caught the attention of John Kerr, then head coach for both Harvard (he moved to Duke after the 2007 season) and the Boston Bolts club team. Fucito started for the Bolts during high school, then decided to continue playing for Kerr at Harvard. Because all the teams in the Ivy League are more or less evenly matched, says Fucito, each game is a "hard-nosed battle rather than a game of pretty soccer." Without a year-ending tournament, a single loss can dash a team's title hopes. In these conditions, Clark says, winning is often a matter of "finding one or two players who can pull you through tough games."

Michael Fucito

It was Fucito's toughness that impressed Clark when he was still a candidate for the head coaching job. "Mike was one of the guys I interviewed with," he recalls. "He was one of the reasons I knew I wanted to coach here." Clark had seen Fucito's statistics but hadn't known about the young striker's dogged, competitive personality.

"I hate sitting out more than anything," says Fucito. (After his night in the cardiac ward, he showed up the next day expecting to practice.) The hip operation in May left him unable to lie completely flat or sit up, but he went from being unable to pull on his socks to running almost full speed in three months. "He jumps back on the field so quickly," Clark marvels. Fucito dreams not only of returning to top form in time for the season, but also of receiving an invitation to the Major League Soccer Combine, where professional coaches scout draft prospects.

"I think he's pushing harder than anyone I've ever seen," says Clark, not only to come back, but also "to make it a special season." ~PAUL GLEASON

Fall Preview

Football
The footballers hope to repeat last season's winning record (8-2; 7-0 Ivy), which culminated in head coach Tim Murphy's fourth Ivy League championship in 14 years on the job. Though the team lost nine starters to graduation, 22 return to defend the title. A prospectus of the 2008 season appears at gocrimson.com.

Men's Soccer
Head coach Jamie Clark is green, but his team, which was 12-4-2 (5-2-0 Ivy) last year, is not. Clark starts his first season at Harvard, and first as head coach, with nine of 11 starters returning from a team that went to the first round of the NCAA championships in 2007. Follow devastating scorers Michael Fucito '09 (above) and André Akpan '10 (see "Powers of the Pitch," September-October 2007, page 74) at gocrimson.com.

Women's Soccer
The netwomen look to improve on last year's 10-6-1 (3-4-0 Ivy) record with the assistance of sophomore sensations Katherine Sheeleigh and Gina Wideroff. The young team welcomes eight new players even as it retains all 11 starters from the 2007 campaign.

Photographs by David Silverman/DSPics.net

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