

His time was a new Ivy record, more than three seconds below the standard set by Olympian Donn Cabral of Princeton. Then in February, at the Boston University Valentine's Invitational, Korolev won the 3K run by 0.5 seconds in a time of 7:51.52. That lowered the Harvard record by six seconds, and also set a new Ivy mark. At the indoor NCAA Championships at Albuquerque in March, he placed thirteenth in the nation in the 5K, and fourteenth in the 3K, becoming a Second Team All-American.

Meanwhile, the team as a whole has been coming together and achieving the kind of success Korolev anticipated as a freshman. In March, at this year's Heptagonal meet (which decides the Ivy indoor track championship), Harvard's women finished first and the men's team third, making the Crimson the league's best combined track-and-field squad. In a photo finish there, Korolev came in second in the 5K, only 0.16 seconds behind his training partner James Leakos '14, who won in 13:58.67.

Leakos and Korolev like to run together on Sundays, traversing 18 miles, often around Walden Pond in Concord, where exposed roots and uneven dirt terrain offer useful practice in agility, keeping your balance, and staying aware of the footing. Korolev typically trains about 100 miles weekly; head track coach Jason Saretsky forbids him to run more, so Korolev has added some cycling to his regime. "One of the most important things is being consistent," he says. "You want to train every day and not get injured. Running injuries are usually from repetitive stress, so I run on dirt whenever possible. There's less impact than on pavement." He trains year-round, taking a week off around Thanksgiving after cross-country season, and two weeks off in the summer. Since the thousands of impacts are hard on the body, Korolev tries to sleep eight to 10 hours a night to recover. In this, he is going against the grain: "The mentality at Harvard," he says, "is to get four hours of sleep a night, and try to do too many things throughout the day."

Distance runners aren't known for towering height, and at six feet, five inches, Korolev is one of the taller ones. He might have good running genes. Born in Kazakhstan, he is half Russian and half Tatar. On a trip to the old country he took runs with his biological father (his parents divorced when he was two), and found that the older man, with no training at all, could run

Roundball Royalty

Five seasons ago, Harvard had never won an Ivy basketball championship. Now it has captured four in a row and to all appearances is becoming a national hoops power. Returning to the NCAA tournament after their first win at the "dance" last spring, the twelfth-seeded Crimson upset fifth-seeded Cincinnati, 61-57, in their initial game. Next they faced Michigan State, a heavy favorite ranked first in the country early in the year and picked by many to win the whole tournament. But Harvard astounded the basketball-savvy crowd in Spokane with a stunning 29-11 run in the second half. Facing a daunting 16-point deficit early in the stanza, the Crimson took a 62-60 lead with 7:12 to play, bringing the arena to a frenzy. Ultimately, the Spartans found enough counters in the closing minutes to pull out a 80-73 victory. (More details are available at <http://harvardmag.com/ncaa-14>.)

"I can't say enough about our team and the effort and the guts that they showed in the second half to make a run, to take the lead, to play with so much composure and fight," Harvard coach Tommy Amaker declared in a *New York Times* report. "I was so proud to see that happen." Clark Kellogg, the lead college basketball analyst for CBS, which aired the game, said, "I am really impressed

for an hour alongside him, if not at "Maks" pace. At 160 pounds or less, Korolev himself has minimal bulk to transport; less body weight also softens the physical impact of each footfall.

Korolev came to the United States at age seven with his mother, who sought better opportunities here. They settled in Harrisonville, Missouri, where the boy enjoyed playing soccer. In seventh grade he heard about a sport called cross-country, where "you just run," he recalls. "For some reason that sounded like fun to me."

He spoke only Russian until arriving in



Tommy Amaker

with the Crimson. Harvard played with the kind of tenacity you may not expect from an Ivy League team." And one veteran observer of Crimson athletics, former *Sports Illustrated* editor Dick Friedman '73, declared it "the best loss in Harvard sports history. Sometimes defeat makes you prouder than many victories. Tonight was one of those nights."

Amaker, who has spearheaded the spectacular turnaround in Crimson basketball fortunes, was in the news for another reason as the tournament unfolded. The firing of Boston College's head coach instantly triggered media speculation that Amaker would leave Harvard after his seven seasons at the helm to take over the floundering program across town—no doubt with a drastically enlarged salary and the big-time challenge of Atlantic Coast Conference competition. Instead, Amaker surprised many by electing to stay with the Crimson. "After thoughtful deliberation, I continue to realize my heart is at Harvard," he declared. "To teach, lead, and serve at this amazing institution, and in this special community, is truly meaningful to me."

America, but forgot it all to learn English; Harvard courses have helped him recover much of his first language. Korolev concentrates in human developmental and regenerative biology; he's been interested in the aging process since high school. He took computer science at Harvard, and likes technology and "tech stuff"; next year he will enroll in an M.S. program at Stanford in management science and engineering (a "techie M.B.A.," he calls it). "I respect Apple," he notes, "but I like Android a bit more." Even more than that, he likes making history.

—CRAIG LAMBERT

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