

defense, Ahern, Hayes, Hodges, Obukwelu, and Sheehan. Hayes, Hodges, and Stanton were unanimous selections....For the second year in a row, Hodges was a recipient of the Bushnell Cup as Ivy League Defensive Player of the Year (sharing 2014's award with Princeton linebacker Mike Zeuli). He also led the league in quarterback sacks for a second season, with 8.5, pushing his career total to 27.0, the most in school history.... Nine other Crimson players received either second team or honorable mention nods. The 18 All-Ivy tabs were the third most in Crimson history (20 in 2007 and 19 in 2009).

Oh, captain, our captain: Matt Koran, of Joliet, Illinois, and Mather House, will captain the 2015 Crimson team. In the season just past, besides his previously noted 60 tackles, he was credited with one forced fumble, and had a 34-yard interception return for a touchdown against Columbia.

~DICK FRIEDMAN

Dick Friedman '73 spent two decades as an editor and writer at Sports Illustrated.

Escape Artist

*Wrestler Todd Preston wins—
from the bottom up.*

THE THREE PERIODS of a collegiate wrestling match—three minutes, followed by two more of two minutes each—can tick by quickly. “But [comparing it to] a seven-minute sprint doesn’t do it justice. You’re not just using your legs; you’re using your arms, you’re using your head,” says Todd Preston ’16, who wrestles for Harvard at 141 pounds. Meanwhile, an opponent is putting pressure on your head and shoulders, and trying to bring you down to the mat. “You’re battling a lot of adversity in a wrestling match,” Preston explains, “and you have to be mentally strong.”

In the final match of the Eastern Intercollegiate Wrestling Association (EIWA) championships last spring, it took that kind of mental strength for Preston to push past those seven minutes of regulation combat. First, he forced the match

into overtime in the final seconds of the third period with a takedown of Luke Vaith, a nationally ranked senior from Hofstra. Then, with barely five seconds left in the second round of sudden-death overtime (first to score points wins), Preston made a buzzer-beating move. As Vaith reached under for his leg, Preston spun out behind and around him, scoring the points that instantly ended the match. That two-point victory earned him the EIWA title and an award as the tourney’s Most Outstanding Wrestler. “It’s just what our coaches always told us when we were little kids,” he reflects. “You can’t stop wrestling until the whistle’s blown.”

Coaches have always called him a “scrappy” wrestler. “I’m always moving everywhere,” Preston explains. “Someone described it like this to me: I’m like a little kid trying to play with an older brother, and I’m slapping him across the face, running in circles.” A more technical way to describe Preston’s wrestling style might be what he calls “flow.” “I get a shot, he

Hoop Hopes

During the past four years, the Harvard men’s basketball team has been a model of consistency: four straight Ivy League championships, three consecutive trips to the National Collegiate Athletic Association tournament, and opening-round victories in the last two of those appearances.

But this year’s squad has been harder to figure out. After entering the season ranked twenty-fifth in the Associated Press national poll (the first time an Ivy League team has received such pre-season recognition since 1974), Harvard began its campaign by besting MIT (a Division III opponent) 73-52, but then tumbled to Holy Cross, 58-57. The margin of defeat was narrow, but the squad’s 24 turnovers and stagnation on offense were disturbing.

Four days later, when the Crimson retook the hardwood against Florida Atlantic, the squad again looked unfamiliar—but for a different reason. Head coach Tommy Amaker had benched all five starters to send a message that he expected every player to live up to the team’s internal “standards.” The move paid dividends. After

Amaker reinserted his regular line-up several minutes into the game, Harvard unleashed a 34-9 run, en route to a 71-49 victory. The blowout began a three-game winning streak that culminated with a two-point win over the University of Massachusetts, Harvard’s toughest opponent to date.

Will the team live up to its pre-season billing? The reaction to the squad’s early



STEVE BANINEAU

Senior Wesley Saunders, easing in for a layup in the early-season loss to Holy Cross, led Harvard in scoring through the first six games, averaging 20.2 points per game.

hiccup underscores the difficulty of what Amaker is trying to accomplish. He believes that his team can compete with the best in the country—but as the Crimson grows more successful, the

margin for error narrows, and the target on its back grows bigger. If this year’s team is to sustain or exceed the consistency of past squads, it will need to be different: it will need to be better. A year-end road trip to Virginia and Arizona, and the beginning of league play in mid January, should quickly bring those prospects into focus.

~DAVID L. TANNENWALD

Harvard Hardwood

Follow the men’s and women’s teams all season long: sign up for *Harvard Magazine’s* basketball e-mail to receive game dispatches and analyses by David L. Tannenwald ’08. harvardmagazine.com/email

blocks, and I'm immediately going to the other side" and attacking again, even before regaining full balance, he explains. "It's just constantly moving, and constantly threatening and attacking."

Relentless offense enables a wrestler to score points in each of wrestling's three positions. Wrestlers begin the first period of a match standing apart in the "neutral position," from which each tries to take the other down to the mat. In the next two periods, wrestlers take turns choosing among the three positions—neutral again, or top or bottom. (The wrestler who crouches below the other is in the "bottom" position.)

Preston always chooses bottom, knowing he has the strength, and the technique, to escape. He wins one point for the escape—returning to the neutral position—and a second if he can manage to place his opponent below him, scoring a "reversal." To escape, Preston focuses on preventing his opponent from putting too much pres-

sure on his head and shoulders, and on getting his weight back over his hips. This makes him less vulnerable to flipping and better able to use his leg muscles to pivot and stand. Preston calls bottom a "mental game," because it often takes several attempts, and getting knocked back down to his knees several times, before escaping. "It's almost a metaphor for life," he says, but adds, "I'm very confident that I can get out. It's like a guaranteed point."

Preston began developing his aggressive style at the age of five, as his father, Robert, who had wrestled through high school, introduced both of his sons—Todd and Robbie, eight years older—to the sport. Growing up in Hampton, New Jersey, Todd wrestled with youth clubs and then at Blair Academy, where he earned three national prep-school titles. As captain, he led Blair to a first-place national ranking his senior year. After a call from Harvard coach Jay Weiss, he followed his brother to Cambridge (where Robbie '07 reached

the NCAA tournament three times, at 125 and 133 pounds).

Despite these early successes, it took a tough freshman year for Preston to bring together his mental and physical game. In tournaments, teams can enter only one competitor in each weight class, and Harvard already had a superstar at 141 pounds—then-senior Steven Keith '13. As Preston faced the choice between losing crucial mat time and facing much bigger competition at 149 pounds, a bout of appendicitis in late October interrupted his season. He returned to the mat in January and wrestled "up" at 149, getting the feel of collegiate wrestling but taking real drubbings. "Even though I might get my butt kicked wrestling big guys," Preston says, "I was getting better conditioning, I was getting stronger, I was getting better technique."

Those challenges taught him to push away anxieties and focus on the task at hand, setting him up for success sophomore year. "He's one of the most talented

Read All About It

The earliest history of Crimson athletics appeared in *The Harvard Book*, a compendium published in 1875. Rowing and baseball were then the only established intercollegiate sports; football and track were still in their infancy.

Almost 50 years later, in 1923, the Harvard Varsity Club brought out *The H Book of Harvard Athletics: 1852-1922*. Its 624 pages were devoted to just five intercollegiate sports: rowing, baseball, football, track, and ice hockey. A *Second H Book* followed in 1964. It covered 15 major and six minor sports, and ran to 960 pages.

Now comes *The Third H Book of Harvard Athletics: 1963-2012*, published by the Varsity Club in November. Its two volumes chronicle an eventful era that saw the rise of women's teams and the addition of fencing, golf, sailing, skiing, volleyball, and water polo as major sports. Those developments upped the number of varsity squads to 41—the most of any college in the country—and spurred a multimillion-dollar expansion of the University's physical plant.

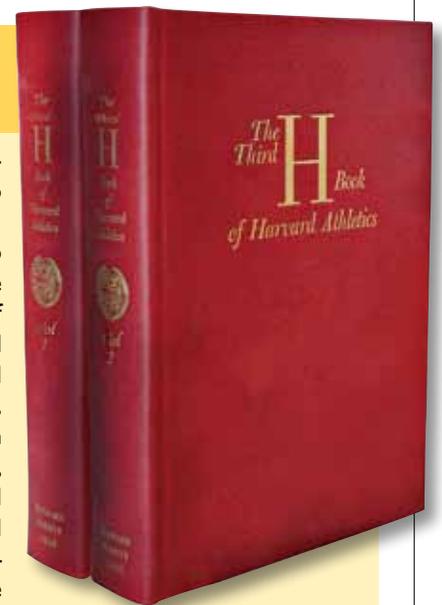
HB3's 1,368 pages hold some 410,500 words of text, double the wordage of the 1964 book, and nearly 1,000 illustrations. An introduction by John Powers '70, a veteran *Boston Globe* reporter, surveys the transformative changes in the athletics landscape since the 1960s, and tracks Harvard's ascent to the top of the Ivy League heap in many of the two dozen sports in which varsity teams now compete. The book also features the first inclusive history of the 104-year-old Varsity Club, prepared by Craig Lambert '69, Ph.D. '78, a former editor at this magazine. A final section lists the 11,400 athletes who won major Hs (for extended

participation in a major varsity sport) from 1963 to 2013.

From initial prospectus to final press run, *HB3* was nine years in the making. Most of the chapters were produced by the book's two principal writers: John Veneziano, Harvard's sports information director from 1989 to 2002, and Powers. The general editor was John T. Bethell '54, who edited *Harvard Magazine* for 28 years and wrote its football columns for four decades. Daniel J. McCarron, former associate University publisher and University printer, served as art director and production manager.

The project was overseen by Robert A. Glatz '88, the Varsity Club's executive director, and a five-person committee chaired by William E. Markus '60. Planning ahead, Glatz estimates that the runup to a *fourth* edition might begin by 2034. But he adds, "I hope I'm retired by then."

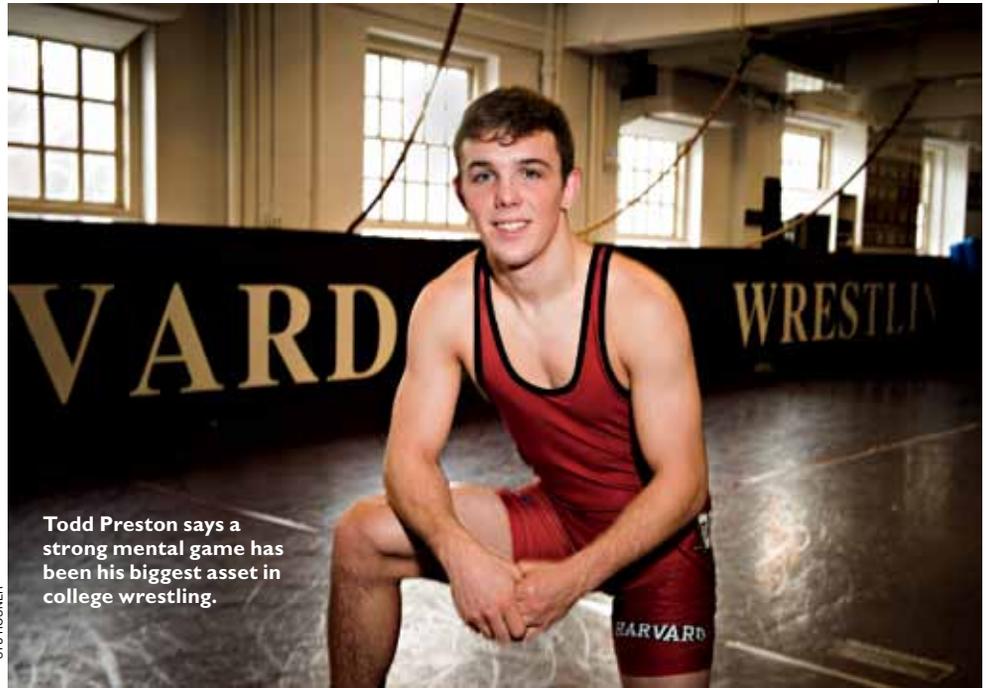
Priced at \$75 (\$65 for active members of the Varsity Club), *The Third H Book* may be ordered online from the Club website (www.harvardvarsityclub.org). Its two volumes are also available in boxed sets that include the first and second H Books.



wrestlers I've ever coached," Weiss says. "[But] that's only part of our game. There are too many guys I've seen work so hard and just not have the mental game. Last year, he put it together."

One big area Preston worked on last year, and continues to attack this year in practice, is learning to score more points when wrestling "from the top." (The opponent, after all, may choose that bottom position Preston prefers.) In the NCAA quarterfinals last spring, he learned how it feels to wrestle an opponent who excels in the top position. After losing to Logan Stieber, the Ohio State wrestler who went on to win the national title, "I thought I needed surgery on my shoulder," Preston says. "But everything was legal. This sounds so messed up, but I would love to put my opponent in that much pain and be able to score."

This season, he returns as one of two team captains on a relatively young Crimson squad, ready to make good on the promise he saw in his performance last year. Because he lost by a single point in the NCAA tournament's Round of 12, he



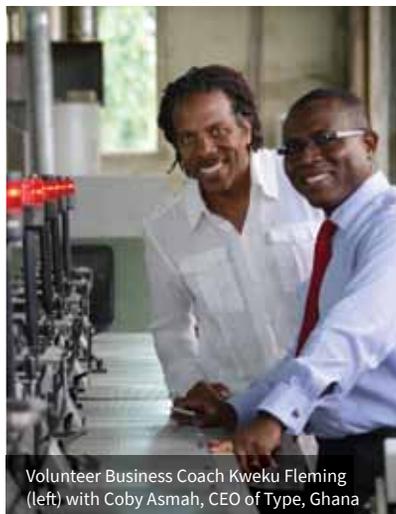
Todd Preston says a strong mental game has been his biggest asset in college wrestling.

fell just short of earning All-American status, awarded only to the top eight finishers. This year, Preston is balancing his signature mental style—focusing on the

moment, not the season—with his longer-term goals. "I was one point away," he says, "but that just fuels the fire for this year."

—STEPHANIE GARLOCK

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Volunteer Business Coach Kweku Fleming (left) with Coby Asmah, CEO of Type, Ghana

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