

covered it at least twice. In an article from 2003, the decision is posited as a ruthless either/or, with the negative ruling already decided in the title: a matter of “Leaving” vs. “Leadership.”

Because the undergraduates who go abroad are so few, I wonder whether anyone has tried to advertise the application as a highly competitive process. The Office of International Education estimates that close to 50 students will be abroad this fall term, with perhaps slightly more than 100 leaving in the spring. That number fluctuates slightly, but it is far from the 60 percent cited on the College’s study-abroad page, a percentage that suggests many Harvard students are well-stamped polyglots with friends on every continent. The difference in those two numbers comes from the broad definition of “international experience,” which a study-abroad adviser once told me might include everything from brief research field-trips to international internships to the marginal number of students who take courses abroad during term time itself. And then there is the fact that for the students who come to Harvard from outside the United States (roughly 10 percent to 12 percent in recent classes), Cambridge itself

is the study-abroad experience, and home is just home, albeit far away.

AT THE HOUSING OFFICE next to the university, they listened to my oven talk with a great deal of patience. By that time, I’d made Spanish friends: art students who met at the Plaza del Dos de Mayo to trade jokes in rapid-fire Castellano, punctuating their speech with expressions whose crudeness I would realize only a continent later, when I tried to repeat them in Mexico City. I was confusedly gratified that these Spaniards, with their quick lisps, would invite me to join them at their homes and in the bookshops of the city, where we picked up different titles but read them together.

If my notion of fluency was to speak in a different intonation and put the clauses in the right places, then I had done it before, at Harvard. But maybe fluency was something else. Gulping at comprehension, I tried again.

Impeded by confused syntax, by books we had or had not read, by the food we’d eaten as kids, in Madrid we nevertheless knew some things that were easily said but less easily explained: at 10 P.M. we’d meet somewhere near Malasaña. A bus ride to

Córdoba was only four hours long. In January, the Palacio Real wore a cap of snow like a tiny diploma; yes, the tasty *bocadillos* were only a few euros; and if you went to hear flamenco in the Plaza Real, you didn’t have to worry about company. A million Spanish grandfathers would go along. You might be lonely, but you would never be alone.

In my last month in the city, I moved to an empty apartment near the Quevedo metro stop. There was a balcony that overlooked a sea of open windows; a washing machine; and, most important of all, an oven. And, incredibly, they would come: Lisa from the Netherlands, whom I’d met in the anthropology class I’d taken by accident; Maria, who discovered that we both liked novelist Julio Cortázar; Lucia, who’d stopped me from taking the wrong bus; Marcos, who sent me back to the United States with one of his tiny illustrated magazines, plus five hours’ worth of flamenco music, all on CD.

For them, I would set the timer, open the doors, make piles of chorizo and potatoes and probably, most definitely, a different kind of tortilla. ▽

Berta Greenwald Ledecky Undergraduate Fellow Isa Flores-Jones ’19 is still unpacking her bags.

## SPORTS

# A Hard Road

*The early season holds no easy wins for Harvard football.*

IN HOPING TO REBOUND from an uncharacteristically mediocre 5-5 record in 2017, coach Tim Murphy put forth a multi-pronged plan for the 2018 Harvard football season, the Crimson’s 145th. Its major elements: First, bolster his offensive and defensive lines. “We have a saying here: It’s what’s up front that counts,” declared Murphy as he entered his twenty-fifth season on the Crimson sideline. Second, get the ball as often as possible into the hands of senior All-Ivy wideout and kick returner Justice Shelton-Mosley, whose production had dropped to a paltry 3.6 receptions a game in ’17. Third, bank on the continuing maturity of quarterback Jake Smith, who was coming off a promising freshman year.

But as that eminent pugilist Mike Tyson once observed, “Everybody has a plan—until they are punched in the mouth.” By the fourth week of the 2018 season, Murphy’s squad had taken several hard punches. Harvard had a 2-2 record (1-1 in Ivy League play), but a two-game losing streak. The inconsistent Smith seemingly had regressed and had been supplanted by senior Tom Stewart. Senior Charlie Booker III, an All-



TIM O'NEAR/THE HARVARD CRIMSON

**On tippytoes:** Harvard’s Justice Shelton-Mosley performs a sideline balancing act after one of his game-high 10 catches against Rhode Island. The senior wideout suffered a severe leg injury against Cornell a week later.



GIL TALBOT/HARVARD ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS

**Scrunch time!** A host of Crimson defenders, including senior tackle Richie Ryan (50), senior defensive back Cole Thompson (27), and junior defensive lineman Brogan McPartland (81) corrals Brown running back Andrew Bolton. The Crimson limited the Bears to 32 yards rushing.

touchdowns were one shy of the Crimson single-game record set by Tom Ossman '52 against Brown in 1951. For his outstanding effort, Shampklin was named Ivy League Player of the Week.

Besides Shampklin's breakout day, there were other salubrious takeaways from the victory. Smith (13 of 21 passing) was solid and decisive; the Crimson committed

Ivy running back last season, was hobbled and still hadn't seen the field. The Crimson also had not developed a signature tight end of the caliber Harvard has had in recent years. (Five were on NFL rosters at the season's start.) Most devastatingly, in the fourth game—a dispiriting 28-24 loss at Cornell—Shelton-Mosley suffered a severe leg injury on a punt return. When he would return was uncertain. The Crimson attack faced the prospect of navigating without its most dynamic weapon, the player whom opposing defenses had to worry about most (see "Happy Returns," September-October, page 28).

Besides internal challenges, Murphy had to face an external one: the extreme competitiveness of Ivy football, from top to bottom. There are no longer any easy games, no breathers. The days of marking Columbia as a guaranteed win are over, particularly since former Penn coach Al Bagnoli began upgrading the program in 2015. It's not quite parity—but every team has talent, some of it outstanding.

IN THE FIRST two weeks, though, Murphy's plan appeared to be working just the way he had drawn it up. In the opener against San Diego at Harvard Stadium, a



TIM O'NEARA/THE HARVARD CRIMSON

star was born. In the Crimson's 36-14 win, running back Aaron Shampklin scored three first-quarter touchdowns, on runs of 64, 23, and 22 yards. In the fourth quarter, the 5 foot, 10-inch, 180-pound sophomore from Paramount, California, tacked on another TD, on a 13-yard jaunt. Running behind a pair of 285-pound seniors, center Ben Shoults and guard Larry Allen Jr., Shampklin, who has speed, moves, and a surprising ability to break tackles, finished with 178 yards on 15 carries: an eye-popping 11.9 average. His four

no turnovers. Shelton-Mosley had seven catches for 127 yards, plus a 43-yard kickoff return. The defense bent but rarely broke. Freshman punter Jon Sot averaged a stellar 46.7 yards a boot, placing three kicks inside the Toreros' 20.

The next week Harvard journeyed to

**Crimson streak: Aaron Shampklin sails past Cornell defenders on a 47-yard touchdown jaunt that gave the Crimson a 7-0 lead. The sophomore sensation finished with a career-high 191 yards.**

Brown for a Friday Night Lights contest (the first of three this season) and came away with a hard-fought 31-17 win. Shampklin continued his tear, running for 93 yards on 15 carries. Smith was 23-for-30 passing, albeit with a couple of worrisome interceptions. But the victory belonged to the defense, anchored by senior linemen Richie Ryan and Stone Hart, which limited the Bears to 32 yards on the ground. In the second quarter, senior defensive back Cole Thompson picked off a pass by Brown

In the opener against San Diego at Harvard Stadium, a star was born: running back Aaron Shampklin.

quarterback Michael McGovern and took it 27 yards to the house. That score gave the Crimson a 21-3 lead, but the Bears didn't quit. The game wasn't clinched until the fourth quarter, when Smith led the Crimson on an 87-yard drive that culminated with a 22-yard scoring flip to senior wide-out Adam Scott.

THE CRIMSON was not able to complete the Ocean State exacta. Rhode Island came into the Stadium for a Friday-night game and departed with a 23-16 win. Once the doormat of the Colonial Athletic Association, the Rams have evolved into a fast, athletic team. In the first half they built a 16-3 lead while stifling Harvard, holding the Crimson offense to one yard rushing on 12 carries. Early in the second half, Harvard mustered two field goals by Jake McIntyre. (The junior from Orlando, Florida, was six-for-seven on field-goal tries in the first four games, especially important because the Crimson's red-zone touchdown performance was a miserable 2-for-11.) But after a 34-yard McIntyre boot made the score 16-6, Rhode Island's Ahmere Dorsey took the ensuing kickoff 97 yards for a touchdown—essentially, the game-winner, although in the fourth quarter another promising Crimson sophomore back, Devin Darrington, ran for a 36-yard touchdown. (Murphy refers to Darrington and Shampklin as “Thunderbolt and Lightfoot.”)

On the road again, the Crimson went back

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to Ivy competition and for the second year in a row suffered a disheartening defeat at Cornell. The toughest hit came in the first period when Shelton-Mosley returned a punt 13 yards and was brought down by the Big Red's Nathaniel Weber and Malik Leary. On the tackle Shelton-Mosley's left leg was twisted; he needed to be helped off the field. His day done, he appeared on the sideline in sweats and with an air cast on his leg.

Toward the end of the first half, with Smith struggling to move the team, Murphy yanked him and inserted senior Tom Stewart (who also had briefly replaced Smith in the Rhode Island game). Stewart did a creditable job, throwing two touch-

down passes, one to Scott, another to senior Henry Taylor. The latter gave the Crimson a 24-14 lead with a little more than 10 minutes remaining—seemingly, breathing room. Instead, Cornell pushed over two quick touchdowns and held off a late drive engineered by Stewart. The coughed-up lead wasted an 11-tackle day by defensive back Thompson, as well as another magnificent outing by Shampklin, who slipped, stutter-stepped, and streaked to a game- and career-high 191 yards, including a 47-yard touchdown.

One more non-conference game—against Holy Cross—loomed before the brutal por-

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tion of the Ivy schedule, featuring back-to-back games against the early season's two dominant teams, Princeton and Dartmouth. The Crimson would have to go some to justify the Ivy Media preseason poll, which placed Harvard third, behind Yale and Princeton. It would be a rugged road to The Game on November 17 at Fenway Park.

~DICK FRIEDMAN

## Striking Distance

*Ranked first in the world, fencer*

*Eli Dershwitz looks to the 2020 Olympics.*

LAST MAY, when Eli Dershwitz '18 ('19) turned in his finals and headed out of Cambridge for the summer, he was the top-ranked men's saber fencer in the United States. When he returned to campus three months later, he was number one in the world. The time between was a whirlwind

for the 22-year-old former Olympian: international competitions in Moscow, Madrid, Havana (where he took first place in the Pan American Fencing Championship), and, finally, the World Championship in Wuxi, China. Blazing through a half-dozen opponents before a hard-fought final bout, Dershwitz walked away with silver. That triumph, in late July, capped a 2017-18 season in which he had already earned three international medals: two golds in Algeria and Italy, and a bronze in South Korea—and the cumulative points from each tournament

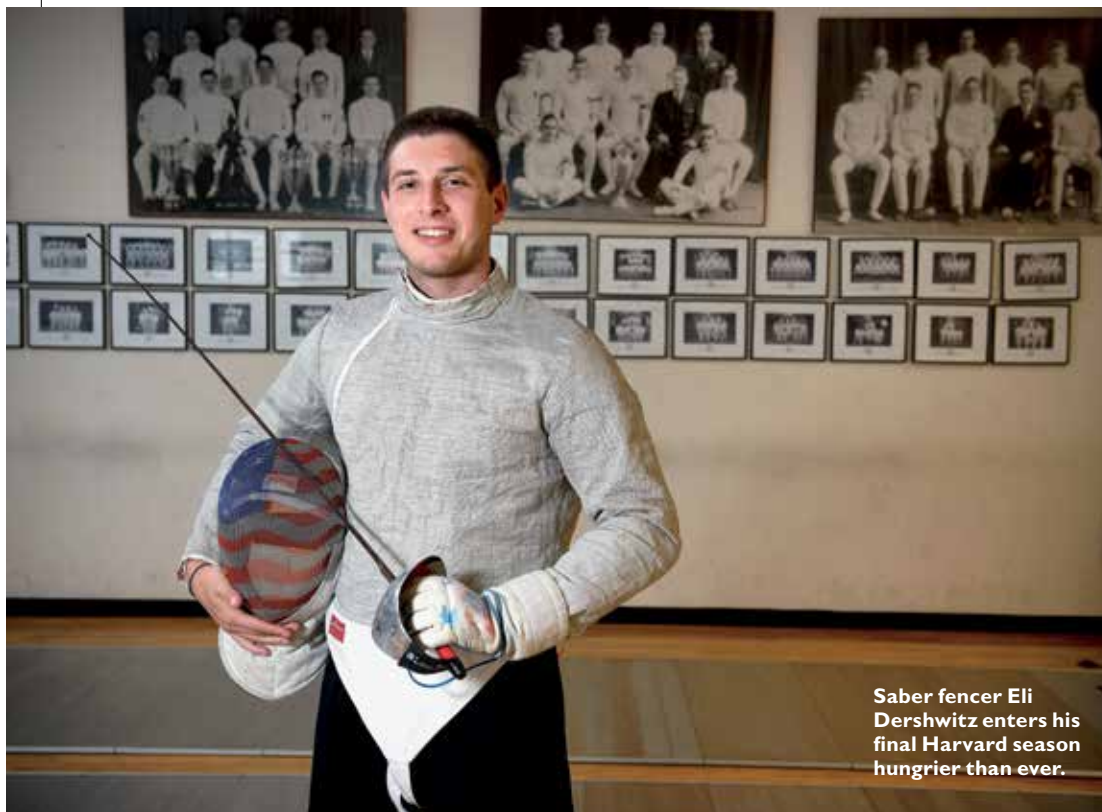
pushed him to the top of the world rankings.

"It was a big summer," he allows with a slight smile. He's trying not to make too big a thing of it—a number-one ranking, he knows, means a target on his back. Plus, he has more work yet to do: one last season with his Harvard teammates—for the second year, Dershwitz is co-captain of the men's squad, and he'd like to see the team win a NCAA championship. Beyond that lie the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo, which he'll begin training for full time once he graduates. "I don't remember the last time a day went

by when I didn't think about the Olympics and getting a gold medal there," he says. "It's pretty much what I think about all the time."

Yet what he's already accomplished really is a big thing. Dershwitz is only the second American to top the world rankings for men's saber, and the only one to do it while enrolled full-time in college (he is a history concentrator). He won a U.S. senior men's championship when he was 18, becoming the youngest ever. "He's one of those cases where you see an athlete like this, if you're lucky, once every generation," says Harvard fencing coach Peter Brand. "I've been doing this for 40 years, and I've never seen anybody like him."

Saber is the most fast-paced of fencing's three weapons, a sprint compared to the marathon of épée and foil. It is a



Saber fencer Eli Dershwitz enters his final Harvard season hungrier than ever.