

the knowledge in the world. As I step through their endless bookshelves, the stacks of Widener Library illuminate, quietly inviting me to explore. No research question seems too far-fetched or impractical, given Harvard's wealth and resources. My curiosity is compounded by academia's constant demand to publish: a criterion of individual and institu-

tional success. Even in the College's mission to "educate the citizens and citizen-leaders for our society," the power to influence our world too often seems to lie only in our effort to build up vast reservoirs of knowledge and establish our expertise.

In my summer thesis research in Hawai'i, however, I found a bit more of my role in

changing this world—not in the knowledge that I uncovered, but in the knowledge that I chose not to seek. ▽

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## SPORTS

# Reload and Fire

*In the early season, an infusion of new talent and a hot quarterback buoyed the Crimson football team.*

**I**N TIM MURPHY'S 25 years as Harvard's football coach, every four-year player has won or shared at least one Ivy League title. So far, this year's seniors, the class of 2020, have been championshipless. The early part of the 2019 season—which featured a 31-23 loss to the University of San Diego and a 42-7 blowout win over Ivy rival Brown—showed that it would be a challenge to extend the streak, but perhaps not impossible.

During the first half of this decade, Harvard was the bullyboy of Ivy football, winning or sharing four titles in five years. But in the past three seasons the Crimson slipped back into the pack, going 7-3 in 2016, 5-5 in '17, and 6-4 in '18. A major cause: parity has engulfed the Ivies. Every game is a dogfight. The results in the conference's preseason media poll had the Crimson fourth, probably justifiably, behind Yale, Dartmouth, and last season's undefeated champion, Princeton.

As he approached his twenty-sixth season on the Crimson sideline, Murphy needed

**Tag team:** Harvard senior captain and defensive back Wes Ogsbury Jr. (1) and senior linebacker Joey Goodman (59) doubled up on Brown end Dan Gemmell.

to restock his roster. He had lost 30 seniors from his '18 team, including howitzer-armed quarterback Tom Stewart and many stalwarts from the powerhouse offensive and defensive lines. To compound Murphy's task, two star offensive players—running back Aaron Shampklin, the Ivy League's rushing leader in 2018, and speedy wideout Tyler Adams, who scored a sensational long touchdown on an end-around against Yale—did not enroll in school for the fall semester.

Harvard was not without weapons. Senior defensive back and captain Wesley Ogsbury was one of the league's top ballhawks, with six interceptions in 2018. Junior Jordan Hill was one of the Ivies' best linebackers. On offense, with Shampklin

absent, his backfield mate, junior Devin Darrington, was capable of running over or jetting past defenders. Even without Adams, the receiving corps was deep, featuring senior speedsters Jack Cook and Cody Chrest. Senior Jake McIntyre was a trusted placekicker from 40 yards and in. Back for another stint at quarterback was junior Jake Smith, who had many good moments as a freshman and sophomore before ceding the starting job to Stewart early last year. How much Smith had matured would be crucial to the Crimson's progress.

In an intriguing twist, Murphy decided to begin the season by inserting into the defensive-line rotation a quartet of promising but inexperienced sophomores: Truman Jones, Anthony Nelson Jr., Jacob Sykes, and Chris Smith. The coach knew it was a gamble, at least as far as the 2019 season was concerned.

**IN THE OPENER** against San Diego, which was playing its third game of 2019, the Crimson showed its flaws—and its rust. Twice previously a Harvard football team had traveled to southern California, which has become fertile recruiting territory (see Tidbits). In 2013, the Crimson had thrashed the Toreros 42-0 (and also beat them again in

Cambridge, in 2014 and '18). But the more memorable appearance came 100 years ago, on January 1, 1920, when Harvard, the 1919 national champion, played in its only bowl game, defeating Oregon 7-6.

This time, in sunny 70-degree conditions, the Toreros didn't even give the Crimson defenders time to apply their sunscreen. Harvard was playing the first half without Ogsbury, who was serving out a suspension as a result of being called for a target-



TIMOWEARA/THE HARVARD CRIMSON

ing penalty in last year's season-ending win over Yale (see [harvardmag.com/thegame-18](http://harvardmag.com/thegame-18)). So on the first play from scrimmage, San Diego quarterback Reid Sinnett took full advantage. He dropped back and threw downfield to star receiver Michael Bandy, who was running an inside route from right to left. Bandy gathered it in and outran the Harvard defenders into the end zone. Eight seconds into the season—stung!

What ensued was one of the most dreadful first halves in recent Crimson annals. At its conclusion the Toreros led 24-0 and had outgained the Crimson in total offense, 305 yards to 70. Murphy's youthful defensive linemen received a brutal baptism of fire on San Diego's second drive, which consumed 19 plays and more than 10 minutes before the Toreros had to settle for a field goal.

The second half brought a turnaround—and hope. On the first play from scrimmage from the Harvard 25, Smith dropped back and saw Chrest running deep down the left—open. Smith threw and hit him in stride. The lanky senior took it all the way to the house. McIntyre converted. San Diego 24, Harvard 7.

After the Toreros restored their 24-point margin with a 68-yard touchdown drive, Smith went to work again. At the end of the third quarter, he launched a drive from the Harvard 23 highlighted by completions to junior tight end Ryan Reagan and to Cook, and by a darting 15-yard run by Darrington. In the beginning of the fourth quarter, on second and nine from the San Diego 14, Smith found sophomore tight end Kyle Klink in the end zone. San Diego 31, Harvard 13. On its next possession Harvard took over on its 20. On first down, Smith dropped back. Cook streaked on a fly pattern along the right side. Whoosh! Smith's pass sailed through the air and into Cook's outstretched hands. He ran the rest of the distance into the end zone. At 80 yards, it was tied for the fourth-longest touchdown pass in Crimson history. McIntyre kicked the point. San Diego 31, Harvard 20.

Moments later the Crimson defense forced a fumble that was recovered by Hill at the Harvard 36. Helped by two San Diego penalties, Smith moved the ball down to the

**Against San Diego, Harvard senior wideout Jack Cook snared a team-high seven passes from junior quarterback Jake Smith, including an 80-yard pass-and-run connection, tied for fourth-longest scoring toss in Crimson history.**

Torero 13. On fourth-and-five, McIntyre kicked a 20-yard field goal—the thirty-first of his career, snapping his tie for most all-time with Matt Schindel '08. San Diego 31, Harvard 23.

There was one last gasp for the Crimson, but Smith, pressured, had a pass picked off by the Toreros' Daniel Tolbert. Smith finished with 22 completions in 39 attempts for a career-high 325 yards and three touchdowns. "Jake was solid," was Murphy's verdict.

A SCANT six days later Harvard was at the Stadium, under the lights against Brown in both the home and the Ivy opener. The start was again a catastrophe. On the first play, Bears running back Allen Smith ran 53 yards; on the third, going right up the gut, he rumbled the remaining 22 to the end zone. A few minutes later Brown had reached the Crimson five when quarterback EJ Perry, fading back to pass, mysteriously dropped the ball. Harvard junior defensive lineman Nasir Darnell recovered—and the Bears never did.

Six unanswered Harvard touchdowns ensued. The first four came on Smith passes. (The quartet of scoring tosses was another personal best for Smith.) On the first, Smith nimbly evaded the Bears rush, ran to his left, and zipped a difficult throw across his body to Chrest in the left corner of the end zone. The second was an eight-yarder in which Smith lobbed one that six-foot-seven junior tight end Adam West leaped to snare in the end zone. The third, coming with 13 seconds in the first half, was a 34-yarder to Cook, who had beaten his defender on a post pattern. The fourth, on the first possession of the second half, was a flip over the middle to junior wideout B.J. Watson, who ran toward

the left sideline, then looped back across the field and weaved through opponents to the end zone. Later on, Darrington scored on a 19-yard bolt up the middle, then freshman running back Aidan



BROOK SCOTT/COURTESY OF HARVARD ATHLETIC COMMUNICATIONS

Borguet barged in from five yards out. Smith felt he had progressed since last year. "I'm able to see the defense faster and process information and see my reads quicker," he said. "It makes the game slow down for me." All the while, the Crimson defense, led by Hill (five tackles) and Sykes (five tackles and a sack), bottled up Brown's Perry.

Even as the better part of the Ivy steeplechase loomed, there was a palpable sense of relief that the Crimson had surmounted the first jump.

**TIDBITS:** Defensive back Ben Abercrombie '21 ('23), who was paralyzed below the neck in the opening game of 2017 at Rhode Island, has returned to Cambridge this semester and resumed his academic career as a freshman. Abercrombie is living in specially designed quarters in Weld Hall....Defensive lineman Brogan McPartland '20, of Stephens City, Virginia, and Leverett House, has been named one of 185 semifinalists for the William V. Campbell Trophy. The honor, presented by the National Football Foundation, recognizes academic success, on-field performance, and exemplary leadership. An applied mathematics concentrator, McPartland led the Crimson in 2018 with 4.0 sacks....Massachusetts has contributed the most members—13—to the 2019 Harvard football roster. California is next with 11, followed by Georgia (eight), Florida, New Jersey and Pennsylvania (seven each), and Texas (six)....Three players from last year's Harvard roster, all of whom are from the class of '19 and have football eligibility remaining, are continuing their football careers for other college teams as so-called graduate transfers. Wideout and punt returner Justice Shelton-Mosley, healed from leg injuries suffered against Cornell that cut short his brilliant Harvard tenure, is playing for Vanderbilt. Quarterback Tom Stewart and running back Charlie Booker are suiting up for Rice. ~DICK FRIEDMAN

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