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We're Number One
Some Sister

Not since 1909 had Harvard and Yale football teams met undefeated. Never had there been such a furor over ticket allotments: no orders could be taken from Classes after 1949. New benchmarks were set in the annals of scalping: a sale of eight $6 tickets for $1,000 was reported in New Haven, and asking prices for almost any seat in the Stadium began at $40 or $50.

The Boston papers billed it as The Game of the Decade. They ended by recording it as The Game of the Century. Yale's Brian Dowling had been touted as another Frank Merriwell, and for 57 minutes he had 40.280 spectators convinced. Then Frank Champi, Harvard's second-line quarterback, began to pass, run, and scramble in a way that out-Dowlinged Dowling and out-Merriwellied Merriwell.

With Harvard down 29-13 and three minutes left, Yale handkerchiefs were waving, and Yale cheerleaders were taunting the Harvard stands with the chant, "You're number two!" A small boy in Section Ten shouted back, "We try harder!" And Harvard did try harder, scoring sixteen points in the final minute of the game to gain a 29-29 tie.

The stadium exploded. Strangers embraced, full professors danced, and the Yale people put their handkerchiefs to the use they were intended for. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe had said it all 160 years earlier: "The Indescribable, here it is done." As for those who had sold their tickets, there was Henry V, Act IV: "And gentlemen in England now abed, Shall think themselves accurd they were not here."

Football coaches are prone to say that a tie is like kissing your sister. Not this one. The Blue had a lock on the game and the Ivy League title, and Harvard broke it. This wasn't kissing your sister. This was the Rape of the Yale Lock.

A Taste of the Flames

Harvard has long held the position that its courses were substantively objective, and were taught by men and women who scrummed from their remarks any taint of political or ideological bias. Reasonably or not, parents and other well-wishers could assure themselves that within Harvard's walls, no one with official status was poisoning the minds of the young with contentious doctrine. The point, of course, has often been disputed, and there have been many at Harvard who felt that avowedly slanted courses could have honest merit; that because the world is to a remarkable extent an inflammatory place, thoughtful students could scarcely prepare for life in it without a taste of the flame.

The old position is breaking down. The Committee on General Education approved in October a radical course on the American economy, to be given in the spring. The new Social Sciences course, called "The American Economy: Conflict and Power," will cover three major topics: the role of power in determining the structure of the American economy, income distribution, and America's economic relations with underdeveloped countries.

Arthur MacEwen, Instructor in Economics and administrative head of the new course, says its ten section men "all have a radical perspective on economic issues. There are at least one or two section men who would call themselves Marxists, and another few who would call themselves Maxish, but on the whole we're a diverse radical group."

The course will not be primarily about ideas, but rather about specific problems, examined with a radical view. Topics will include the Mississippi Delta region, the international oil industry, United States involvement in the Caribbean, and the role of education in income distribution.

Two other avowedly radical courses appeared in the curriculum at the beginning of the fall term. Social Relations 148, "Social Change in America," addresses itself to such...
A Dream Game Ends a Dream Season

The Harvard-Yale game of 1968 was all in the mind. It was a contest of staggering impossibilities, of incredible joy, of the magnificent power of the imagination—you own imagination as you sat in Section 35 with a minute left, setting the scenario of a miracle, knowing that it actually could happen. You were the one who threw the passes and caught them when there was not a second left. It was you and your own mind who thought it up and pulled it off—you, listening to the closed-circuit TV, to the radio, in the stands, on the field. And certainly it was your own joy, a joy in the victory of the tie, mostly a joy of stopping Yale, wiping those handkerchiefs out of the stands on the other side, turning those triumphant chants into absurdities. More than any other game you have ever known, this one you truly experienced. It was a game that was all in the power of your mind and your own imagination, and that was what made it so wonderful.

It was not so much a game of accomplishment for Harvard, but one of destruction, and that was what made it great. Harvard stopped Yale without accomplishing anything outright—no nine wins in a row, no clear Ivy title, no victory over Yale. What Harvard did was to stop Brian Dowling from winning for the first time since he was in seventh grade (stopped him even though he was utterly magnificent, stopped him while he stood by in agony on the sidelines, watching victory slip away), to stop Yale from winning its seventeenth straight game, to stop Yale from winning its second straight Ivy championship. Destruction like this has some benefits that accomplishment cannot touch. First, it is final and absolute. Once all these Yale streaks have been destroyed, they cannot happen again. Second, and most important, destroying is wonderfully exhilarating—mischievous and healthy. It is something to be sure of in this unctuous world. Accomplishing, on the other hand, only begs more accomplishing. It is empty and unsatisfying. While the Yalies chanted, “We’re number one!” I replied, “So what? Where do you go from there?” So what if Yale had won its second title in a row? It
would only want a third. So what if Yale had won its seventeenth straight game? It would only want an eighteenth. Perhaps Yale really wanted to lose on November 23, only to make its winning more meaningful. But Harvard, brilliantly, denied the Elis even that.

I do not usually provide narratives of the games in this column, leaving that to the New York Times. But the morning after, I watched the whole game played over again on television, and I was nearly as excited then as I was in the stands the day before. Reading accounts in four newspapers brought back all the joy. Now I must tell you about some of it—the words scream with emotion and the melodrama is unbearable. I must put it on paper now, for the same reason that yesterday I had to run down the steps of the Stadium in about ten seconds, hopping over benches, yelling, jumping over people, singing. It was such an incredible moment.

Brian Dowling was better than I could ever have believed, far better than he was in the 1967 game. He is not an exceptional runner or passer. Instead, he has fantastic instincts—he can sense the weaknesses in his opponents’ defenses, and, more important, he can sense where his receivers are, even with his back to the line of scrimmage. He scored the first touchdown near the end of the first period on a rollout, then passed for two more in the second quarter—both those passes came after Dowling was seemingly trapped for large losses in the backfield. One pass was to halfback Calvin Hill, the other to end Del Martin. Yale led, 22-0.

Harvard quarterback George Lalich was unable to move his team for big yardage, lost the ball on a costly fumble inside the Yale 20, and finally was pulled in the second quarter in favor of untested junior Frank Champi. Champi, a record-breaking javelin thrower, looked rather conventional as he moved the team on a late drive to the end of the half. When he threw, though, he was something altogether different. He had a wonderful arm, sharp and accurate. His passes spun straight and deliberate. With forty seconds to go, end Bruce Freeman caught one of them and scored from the 15. At the half: Yale 22, Harvard 6.

Harvard scored again in the third period and held Yale when the Elis fumbled away an easy chance near the goal line. Champi set up the Crimson score with a pass to Pete Varney. Gus Crim carried over from the one. Then, with 10:44 left in the game, Dowling scored once more on a five-yard run and it was 29-13. Harvard gave the ball up to Yale on two series of downs, and with less than four minutes to play, the Elis were moving for another score. A Dowling pass hit Bob Levin, and Levin ran to the Harvard 14, where he was tackled hard and fumbled. Defensive end Steve Ranere, trailing the play, recovered the ball.

With 2:45 to go, the Yale defense began a thunderous chorus of “We’re number one.” That was the cue. After that, the whole Yale world crumbled—the blonde Vassar girls with blue and white scarves, the Porsches with “To H With Harvard” bumper stickers, the pipes and sweaters of the alumni, the bourbon and the weekends at the Taft Hotel, law school and Madison Avenue, Wall Street and the hero Dowling—that whole world crumbled on cue. God did not appreciate the arrogance.

Champi was pounded for a loss on the Yale 15, but a huge holding penalty from the line of scrimmage moved the ball to the 47. Bruce Freeman caught a pass and ran hard to the 30, with 1:13 to play. On the next play, Champi was swarmed over by Yale linemen as he went to pass. The ball bobbled loose, lay naked on the grass for a second. Then Fritz Reed, an offensive tackle and a former end, picked it up and ran with it through the surprised Yale defense up to the Eli 15. One minute to go. A pass to the right and Freeman is in with the touchdown (present tense now with 42 seconds to go). After an interference call, Gus Crim scores the extra two points on a run from the one, 29-21.

Then, an onside kick by Ken Thomas, bouncing off Yale guard Brad Lee. Sophomore Bill Kelly recovers the ball for Harvard on the 49 of Yale and the game goes on. The momentum is enormous now. Nothing can stop this rolling tide, as waves of delirium rush across the stands. We know now that somehow we are going to win. Champi runs to the 36 and is hauled down by the face mask. The penalty moves Harvard to the 21. An incomplete pass to Freeman near the goal line. Another incomplete pass. Twenty seconds left.

Vic Gatto, who pulled a hamstring muscle in the first period and has played only in spots, comes into the game, hardly able to run, and suggests a play to Champi—a fullback draw up the middle with Crim carrying. Yale, looking for the pass, is fooled. Crim goes to the 6 for a first down, 14 seconds left. Time out. Champi goes back to pass now, and the Yale line rushes in once more. He is clobbered for a two-yard loss. Time out. Three seconds left.

Three seconds. This will be the last regular play of the football season. The Stadium is in an uproar. Spectators line the outside of both end zones. Everyone is up, delirious, chanting. Champi holds up his hands for quiet. The ball is hiked. Again, he is trapped by the rush. He spins away from what appeared a certain tackle. Gatto is all alone in the left corner of the end zone. Champi throws desperately as he is hit. “I thought it was a little high,” he will say later. Gatto watches the ball, the season, his life, coming right at him, with a Yale defender moving up on him from the right. Gatto will say later: “When I saw the ball, I knew I just had to love it. Just take it in my arms and love it.” He catches it. 29-27. The clock shows no time remaining, but the extra-point try is not official time.

It was preordained that Harvard would make two points. A 29-27 ball game was simply not an alternative. No one could feel that horrible
With three seconds left, Champi (27) finds Gatto (40, right foreground) with a touchdown pass, beating defenders Martin (45) and Bouscaren (27).

The Final Minutes

Champi passes to Varney for the tying points. Below: Seizing Champi’s fumble, tackle Fritz Reed runs for a first down, setting up Harvard’s third score.

As pressure mounted in the fourth period: (1) Runcere recovers Levin’s fumble, breaking Yale’s drive. Three minutes left. (2) Champi is thrown for a 12-yard loss, but Yale is penalized for holding. (3) Reed recovers Champi’s fumble and runs for a first down. (4) Kelly recovers Thomas’s onside kick. (5) Ciani runs for a first down on third and ten; fourteen seconds to play. (6) Pandemonium.

Left: Official’s call of a face-mask infraction, by Bouscaren on Champi, means 15 yards. Above: From the bench, Dowling watches Yale’s lead vanish.
ambiguity. Harvard had to make the tie. It was the only thing your mind would recognize. This time Champi dropped back and hit Varney on a hook pattern to the left. Varney caught the ball, held it high in the air, jumped up and down and suddenly was engulfed by thousands of people surging onto the field. The band was playing. People were running and hugging and kissing and jumping and yelling. It was a moment of hysterical joy that you were all a part of. You had thought up this ending yourself with your own imagination—and then, for perhaps the first time and the last time in your life, your experience matched it. It was a game of the mind, perfection.

I will never go to another football game.

Harvard 31, Brown 7

The Brown game was cold and relatively emotionless. The Harvard team was like a runner settling back to take third place in a qualifying heat, reaching the necessary level to go on to something bigger. That was what it was on November 16. In the end it was Harvard 31, Brown 7. Eight straight.

For some individuals, though, it was not just a qualifying heat but a chance to do something different. John Emery, the big linebacker, ran back an interception 54 yards for the first Harvard touchdown. To others, it was a chance to perform. John Ballantyne replaced injured Ray Hornblower and had 126 yards and two touchdowns in seven carries. Dan Pearson took over at left tackle, and was excellent. Wonderful Richie Szaro out almost all season with an injured foot, kicked a field goal and four extra points, soccer-style.

But football, when it is played well, is not a game of exceptional individual performances. (We make it look that way in the press because it simplifies things.) Good football is not so different from crew. As a total team performance, the Brown game was a Saturday that could have been skipped. Brown probably would have preferred that too. Anyway, Harvard made the finals, while Yale was beating Princeton 42-17 and people in Harvard Stadium were actually cheering the Yaleies on. They too were more concerned with the finals than the preliminaries.

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Harvard 9, Princeton 7

Prospect Street. Before the game there are station wagons and picnics, big checks and vests and tweeds, alumni with grills for hamburgers, cold fried chicken wrapped in foil, Johnnie Walker and Jim Beam, all in the parking lots of Colonial and Ivy and Cottage and Terrace and Tower and Key and Seal (yes, even there). The alumni come home to Prospect Street for the parties, and the game, and when it is all over and the campus is dark, they take the shuttle train to Princeton Junction and the Penn-Central to New York, and on out to Long Island or up to Westchester. Or they drive the station wagon back to Short Hills, the head lights cold and dark along Route One.

Princeton football games are for the alumni. Even the students seem less like students than embryo alumni. The games are very important, and outside Palmer Stadium, the most wonderfully ivy-covered stadium I have ever seen, they talk about the great tailbacks of 1936. Since Princeton still uses the single wing, it is as though nothing has changed. Now, as then, those fearsome tiger-striped jerseys; the old teams, the old clubs, the old bourbon, Nassau Street, Prospect Street, they are still the same. This is why it hurts so much when the Princeton team loses. Winning is not simply a matter of masculinity, as with Dartmouth, or fledging pride, as with Penn, or joy, as with Harvard. With Princeton, winning is a matter of tradition. Winning is the reassurance that everything is still the same, that there is something to come back to. And for a university that is changing — co-education, the crumbling of the club system — that kind of stability is very important.

But for Harvard, a team that counts winning as a joyful, existential experience, beating Princeton means upsetting all that stability. And in a michievious way, that is