

OUT OF THE BLOCKS

The Official Newsletter for the Friends of Harvard Track | November 2016

A NOTE FROM COACH SARETSKY

Dear Alumni, Parents, and Friends,

Autumn is here, and with it comes the 2016 cross country season. Our men's and women's cross-country teams opened their seasons against Princeton and Yale at the annual HYP meet on Princeton's course on Saturday, September 17, with the women finishing second and the men third ([Recap](#)). The meet gave us a course preview for the Heptagonal Championships on October 29. The weekend of October 1 saw the men travel to Bethlehem, PA, for the Paul Short Run where they finished 13th place overall in the men's gold 8K race, while the women's team took third place at the Washington Invitational, hosted by the University of Washington at Jefferson Park Golf Course ([Recap](#)). The following week saw the women compete in the New England Championships, where they finished second ([Recap](#)). In the last competitions before the Heps, the women traveled to the Nuttycombe Wisconsin Invitational, where they finished 15th in a very strong field ([Recap](#)); the men sent squads to the Pre-National Invitational and the Princeton Invitational, finishing 35th and 18th, respectively ([Recap](#)).

Both teams welcomed strong recruiting classes, with Judy Pendergast of Naperville, Ill., and Lisa Tertsch of Darmstadt, Germany, having an immediate impact on the women's team, and Will Battershill of Devon, UK, Kaeo Kruse of Kalaheo, Hawaii, and Murimi Nyamu of Forest Grove, Ore., contributing to the men's team. The men are developing a talented young roster, while the women are currently ranked 18th in the USTFCCCA poll and 16th by FloTrack.

The rest of the track and field squad has a few more weeks before competing, but all event groups arrived back on campus in August with a summer of great training behind them. From May to August of 2016, the Crimson trained hard while pursuing opportunities around the globe. Whether it was youth coaching in Vietnam, studying abroad in Italy,

teaching in China, altitude training in Colorado, or working for the DCR right here in Boston, our student-athletes spent their summers gaining new experiences and skills.

Some had the opportunity to see other countries through competition: Ngozi Musa '19 appeared at the Confederation of African Athletics Senior African Championships in South Africa; Nicky Maxwell '19 ran his 100m personal best at the CAU England Athletic Senior Championships; Autumnne Franklin '16 and Paige Kouba '16 earned silver medals at the NACAC U23 meet in El Salvador; and rising senior Nikki Okwelogu represented Nigeria in the shot put at the Games of the XXXI Olympiad in Rio de Janeiro. Okwelogu placed 29th in Rio, and the newly minted Olympian will return to Ivy League competition this year with the perspective and experience of a seasoned international competitor.

Okwelogu's appearance in Rio marked the end to a fantastic year of competition for the Crimson. In total, the team set 21 Harvard and 12 Ivy League records during the 2016 season. At Outdoor Heps, the men brought in second-place finishes in the 800m (Myles Marshall '19) and the triple jump (Efe Uwaifo '17), and won the 4x800m relay (Montague '18, Epps '16, Negron '18, Marshall '19). The women took home their sixth-straight Heps Track title, besting second-place Princeton by 21 points and placing first in nine events. Okwelogu and Franklin were named Most Outstanding Performers in field and track events, respectively. The records continued to fall at NAAs in June, where a program-record seven women qualifiers (Franklin, Kouba, Okwelogu, Musa, Christi Scott '16, Jade Miller '17, Gabrielle Thomas '16) won four First-Team and two Second-Team All-American honors. A few weeks later, at the US Olympic Trials, Franklin, Kouba, Miller, and Thomas were joined by sophomore Courtney Smith to compete for berths in Rio, and Franklin (400mH) and Thomas (200m) earned a pair of sixth-place finishes.

Rising seniors Uwaifo, Andrew Roney, Julian Nunally, Raegan Nizdil, and Madeleine Ankhelyi will serve as captains of the track and field teams this





year; Ankhelyi and Brandon Price '17 are captains of the cross-country teams. With young stars like Marshall, Thomas, and Musa returning, and with seasoned leadership from our captains, the team as a whole is prepared for even greater improvements this year.

While the spotlight is on our student-athletes, their amazing accomplishments would not be possible without the guidance and support of our incredible coaching staff and the Friends board. This fall we welcome Coach Darcy L. Wilson to direct our throws program. Coach Wilson served at Brown for four years before coming to Harvard, and her career so far has included fourteen All-Americans and a national champion in the hammer. We also want to thank Leslie Golemme for her tireless efforts over the years with the Friends of Harvard Track. This marked her last season as the Friends Co-Chair, a position she had carried out with admirable dedication. Thank you, Leslie, for helping the Harvard Track family continue its tradition of success, on the track and off, at Harvard and beyond.

Here's to another year of hard work and growth for the students, parents, alumni and friends of Harvard Track!

Sincerely,

Jason Saretsky

The William W. "Bill" McCurdy

Director of Track and Field/Cross Country

A NOTE FROM OUR FRIENDS CHAIRS

On behalf of the Friends of Harvard Track (FoHT) Executive Committee, we welcome back all of our alumni and parents of student-athletes for a new year of Harvard track and field and cross country and a full schedule of activities and fundraising!

In the FoHT social gathering department, on Sunday, October 16, the FoHT hosted its Fall Mini-Reunion at the Gordon Indoor Track for the Classes of 1971, 1976, and 1986. In May of 2017, the FoHT will host its Spring Mini-Reunion for a large number of reunion classes. Over the past several years, the mini-reunions have grown in popularity and have provided opportunities for former student-athletes to reconnect with their teammates and to gather with those from other eras of the men's and women's programs, as well. The main event of the fall—and perhaps the entire year!—was the celebration of the 40th Anniversary of Varsity Women's Track and Field and Cross Country on the weekend of October 14th and 15th. FoHT Executive Committee members Jen Leonardo '97 and Evan Favermann '09 led the way planning the weekend program of events, and it proved to be a historic and fun-filled occasion. The final fall event will be the Harvard-Yale Tailgate on O'Donnell Baseball Field on November 19 starting at 10:30 AM.

In January, the annual FoHT Alumni and Family Meet will once again be held at the Gordon Indoor Track. For any alumni who are willing to test out (or perhaps show off?) their speed and endurance, start your training now! And of course, we look forward to seeing a large group of high-spirited youth competitors—both new faces and those returning from previous years.

In April, the Harvard-Yale outdoor track dual meet will return to Cambridge and with that will return the FoHT barbeque tailgate that has been well-attended in recent years. This year's Heptagonal Championships will take the men's and women's teams to Princeton for cross country (October 29), the Armory in New York City for indoor track (February 25 and 26) and Yale for outdoor track (May 6 and 7). As the FoHT has done for the past several years, we will organize a dinner gathering for any available alumni or parents of student-athletes after the first day of competition of the Heptagonal Championships track events. Further details on these



social events will be forthcoming in the later months.

We continue to invite all interested FoHT alumni to organize events in other locales around the country. Many past events have been held in conjunction with a team event, but we encourage alumni gatherings to take place regardless of whether the current teams are visiting a particular location. If you are looking to mobilize and gather track and cross-country alumni in your area, the FoHT Executive Committee will provide logistical support to help make it happen. Please contact us if you would like to discuss a potential event!

As always, you can follow important news about FoHT events and initiatives throughout the year on the Friends of Harvard Track and Field Facebook page and through periodic FoHT e-mails. For those alumni and parents who have already donated to the FoHT during this fiscal year, please accept our utmost thanks and appreciation! For those who have not yet donated, please consider contributing to the success of Harvard track and cross country! The ongoing financial support from hundreds of alumni and parents has continually improved the quality of the experience for Harvard's track and cross country student-athletes, and we strive to maintain a strong level of support every year. Finally, the FoHT Executive Committee is always looking for alumni and parent volunteers to get involved with event planning. Please let us know of your interest and availability, and we'll find a spot for you!

We thank you for your continued generosity and support of the Friends!

Joe Ciollo '99 and Evan Favermann Eisert '09

Co-Chairs, Friends of Harvard Track

STAY CONNECTED, FOLLOW THE TEAM!



2016-17 Schedule | News & Links

Upcoming Friends Events

November 19: FoHT H/Y Tailgate on O'Donnell Field

December 7: Harvard Cross Country Team Banquet, Lee Family Hall of History

January 7: FoHT Alumni and Family Meet at Gordon Indoor Track

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Photography on pages 1-5 courtesy of Brian Panoff '98
Photography from HEPS Cross Country Championship provided by Sideline Photos
Photography from HVC Hall of Fame Dinner courtesy David Silverman

STUDENT-ATHLETE PROFILE

RAEGAN NIZDIL '17

Hometown: Camarillo, California

High School: Rio Mesa

Event: High Jump

What effect has your time at Harvard had on you?

In my time at Harvard, I have changed tremendously; all in such ways I could not even fathom, or begin to describe. Harvard has been both the greatest, most enlightening part of my life and equally, the most dark and enduring time. When I describe Harvard to my friends or family, I like to describe it as a place that produces the best of you—whether you like it or not. Harvard and all of its consuming culture have a tremendous power to push you to your limits and past them to reach a greater potential you didn't previously dream possible. Surpassing such limits and reaching new potentials isn't easy, and the progress isn't always translated into tangible products, unfortunately. I wouldn't necessarily say my GPA or my track PR's reflect my sweeping Harvard transformation, but rather the person I am today. From the way I carry myself to the way I think, I am forever changed because of Harvard. I'm three years older, 24 classes wiser, and vastly different from the young girl who entered Harvard's gates in 2013. Looking back, Harvard has affected my life—my person and my experiences—in both breadth and depth. It has challenged me, broken me, and showed me both my very best and worst qualities. Because of Harvard, I have met individuals from parts of the globe I had never even previously acknowledged; I have travelled to states and countries I had never before seen; I have read and spoken of some of the most difficult complexities of human life and behavior. Better yet, Harvard has shown me the true definitions of ambition, perseverance, adversity, grace, and strength—not just as they are read off paper, but as they are witnessed and experienced as human traits and qualities. It's a packed question to



ask what effect Harvard has had on me, because at the age of 21, I'm sure I can't capture even a small percentage of the effect it has had or will continue to have. All I can say at this point now is that Harvard has made me an adult—tasked with a balancing act of curiosity, ambition, responsibility, and grit—but an adult ready for the challenges to come.

Of all your teammates over the years, whom have you admired the most and why?

I doubt it would surprise anyone to hear that the teammate I most admire from my time with Harvard Track and Field was my training partner of two years, Annie Giebelhaus. Annie holds a very special place in my heart, and many know that Annie wasn't just my training partner, but a dear friend. If her kind spirit and eloquent, truthful words weren't enough to win you over, Annie was a hell of a competitor, teammate, and exercised the greatest, most admirable amount of sportsmanship I have come to see in my 16 years of track and field. Annie was beside me as I entered the intimidating world of collegiate athletics and the pseudo-adulthood that is college. This timing, I'm sure, was crucial in the development of my opinion of her, her character, and her endless strength and grace. I also believe that this timing was equally as crucial to my development as an athlete and an individual. Having Annie by my side—to support me, encourage me, console me, and challenge me—not only shaped the person I am today, but revealed and set values for me that I will continue to follow for the rest of my life. The admiration I hold for Annie as a person has no bounds, and I could spend days drawing out anecdotes and examples of her excellence and golden heart, but truly I think a quote from her own mouth encapsulates the spirit she brought to the track and to her teammates. The words she used to encourage me equally reflect her, as she once said to me, "You are a champion. I know your fiery hunger firsthand. Don't hide it. Embrace it. You're the competitor I hate because your talent and confidence intimidates like no other—but you're the teammate I love, because you make me better by just being you." Because of Annie, I hold my teammates closest to my heart. She showed me that despite competition, teammates are the greatest part of collegiate athletics—they understand you, push you, and celebrate you. There's no greater lesson I've learned from track and field than that one: it's about the people, not the points.





STUDENT-ATHLETE PROFILE

EFE UWAIFO '17

Hometown: London, England

High School: Haberdasher's Aske's Boys' School

Events: Jumps

What effect has your time at Harvard had on you?

My time at Harvard has had a tremendous effect on me in various ways. The most profound impact has probably been in the way I deal with challenges and setbacks and how I order priorities in my life. Each semester I am promptly awoken to how many expectations I must meet daily. As a student-athlete these expectations come from your academics, athletics and social circles and the competing demands for my time has not only tested and sharpened my decision making over the course of four years but also my passion for my sport. It was not uncommon for me to feel as though I was constantly in the firing line and up for evaluation because I was, but this is what challenged me. The various setbacks I faced over the course of my college career not only shaped who I am today but also forced me to learn to convert setbacks into positive motivation. If you receive a poor grade in a midterm, your workout for that day should remain unaffected, and over the course of four years, I learned how to channel my focus. As I have worked on improving my mindset over the years, I have felt more competent and confident. I continue to work on developing my mindset.

What has been your most memorable moment on the team?

My most memorable moment on the team dates back to the Ivy League HEPS Championships in my freshman year. Despite having competed in prestigious competitions prior to college, there was something about HEPS that was different from any meet I had ever competed in before. I could sense something historic and traditional about the meet and the atmosphere had a unique energy. In that particular championship the



women's team won, having defended the title for the first time and the men's team finished third, its best finish for many years. Although it was bitter sweet for the men's team (we would rather have won), there was an excitement surrounding us as we sensed progress in the future and that we were on the brink of something special. There is no better feeling.

Of all your teammates over the years, who have you admired the most and why?

I am fortunate to have been surrounded by several role models over my time with Harvard track & field and I struggle to select one. However, if I must, I will pick one person I looked up to considerably. He is Benjamin Glauser and was my captain in 2014-2015. Ben was very highly ranked nationally coming into college and had to manage his expectations amidst various hurdles throughout his Harvard career. He dealt with injuries and multiple coaches, whilst competing towards national level marks in a very technical event. He struck a healthy balance with life across the river, which is hard to do. At the same time, he approached every meet and practice with the same relentless passion for the sport. Such passion inspired his teammates to achieve and this exemplified great leadership.



SMITH'S INDIVIDUAL TITLE PACES WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY TO FIRST IVY HEPS WIN SINCE '85

It was a historic day for the Harvard women's cross country team at the Ivy League Heptagonal Championships at West Windsor Fields. Junior Courtney Smith won the individual title in 20:19.6 to lead the Crimson to its first Heps title since 1985 and seventh overall in program history. Smith's victory, the first individual title for Harvard since Suzanne Jones '91 won in 1989, was part of an outstanding team performance for the Crimson.

Harvard's top five finishers placed in the top 12 of the race, as the Crimson totaled 33 points, ahead of Yale (69 points), and Penn (77 points) on the podium. Smith was followed by sophomore Erin Dietz, who placed fifth in 20:37.8 and freshman Judy Pendergast, who finished sixth in 20:39.4. Another member of Harvard's standout freshman class, Lisa Tertsch, finished ninth in 20:47.6. Junior Elianna Shwayder placed 12th in 20:51.7 to round out the scoring for Harvard.



CLEVER '01, GYORFFY '01, & TAYLOR '01 INDUCTED INTO HVC HALL OF FAME

Harvard track & field standouts Chris Clever '01, Dora Gyorffy '01, and Brenda Taylor '01 were inducted into the Harvard Varsity Club Hall of Fame on Friday, November 4, during a dinner held at the Harvard Club of Boston.

Clever was a two-time All-American during his time at Harvard and a three-time HEPS champion in the javelin thrown. Gyorffy, who competed in the 2000 Olympics for Hungary, was twice honored as an Academic All-American, won the 2001 NCAA high jump championship, earned seven All-America honors, and won 13 HEPS championships. Taylor was also an Olympian competing for the USA in 2004 after a Harvard career that saw her be named the 2001 Honda Award recipient as the Nation's Most Outstanding Female Track Athlete. Taylor also captured the 2001 NCAA 400m hurdles championship, was a three-time All-American, and won 17 HEPS championships.

