

FROM THE FRONT

“We must find the time to stop and thank the people who make a difference in our lives.” JOHN F. KENNEDY FORMER U.S. PRESIDENT

Playoff hopes ride on 141st playing of The Game

THE GAME FROM PAGE 1

Bulldogs, with an NCAA-recognized 18 college football national championships, the most in the nation’s history, would have a chance to play their way towards earning another one for the first time in 98 years.

While the Crimson currently hold a one-game lead in the conference standings, a win this weekend could secure the Bulldogs a share of the Ivy League title. However, in addition to tying Harvard in the standings, a Yale win would decide the head-to-head tiebreaker and secure an automatic qualification to the Football Championship Subdivision playoffs.

As soon as kickoff happens at noon in the Yale Bowl, all of the rankings, metrics and outside noise go out the window. The Bulldogs could lose and bring Team 152’s season to a close. Or, Yale could overcome the odds once more and win their fourth straight game against the Crimson, punching their first-ever ticket to the FCS Playoffs and living to play another day.

Last year, dazzling plays by David Pantelis ’25, Josh Pitsenberger ’26 and Abu Kamara ’27 helped to seal the win. This time, Reno will still be relying on known stars Pitsenberger and Kamara, but some new faces will also be looking to etch their names in school history. Although not unfamiliar with The Game, quarterback Dante Reno ’28 will be playing in the rivalry for the first time, and he will be relying on his breakout star receivers Nico Brown ’25 and Jaxton Santiago ’28 to go make big plays for the Bulldogs on the offensive side of the ball.

On defense, some new faces have been thrust into bigger roles this year, and they have shone. Defensive lineman Zeke Larry ’27 has quickly become a star this season, leading the Ivy League in sacks with 9.5. Linebackers Inumidun Ayo-Duro-



Yale will host the team from the north on Saturday in the de facto Ivy League conference championship. / Rachel Mak, Photography Editor

jaiye ’25 and Phoenix Grant ’27 have also been key in the defense’s success this year, leading the team in tackles and disrupting opposing offenses all season long. Together, the Bulldogs are well-equipped on the defensive end when it comes to handling Harvard’s playmakers.

There is no doubt that the Crimson have dangerous talent on both sides of the ball. One key player for them this year has been quarterback Jaden Craig,

Craig, a senior, has thrown for 2,456 yards and 21 touchdowns through nine games this season while only having been picked off five times. Yet, despite all of his impressive statistics, he has yet to beat Yale in the previous three matchups. With Yale’s top-10 FCS defense, the Harvard quarterback will have his hands full as he looks to pick up his first win against the Elis.

A large part of the Crimson’s success can also be attributed to

their strong defense. Harvard has allowed just 98 yards per game on the ground, and only 184 yards per game through the air this season, both statistics just narrowly edging out Yale’s defense.

However, Harvard’s weakness is its pass rush, which at times has struggled to generate pressure against inferior offensive lines. Ranking third in the conference, but 12 behind a league-leading Yale, Harvard has only 20 sacks on the season. While their rush

defense does well to prevent large chunk plays, the Crimson have only three forced fumbles thus far. In a fairly evenly-matched game where momentum can play a big role, the Bulldogs have the advantage in the turnover and big play department.

The Game icks off at noon at the Yale Bowl on Saturday. It will be televised on ESPNNU.

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Rival alums to host joint tailgate

Summers quits Yale Budget Lab board



Alumni groups Stand Up for Yale and Crimson Courage will host a joint tailgate to gather signatures for a letter they plan to send to their universities’ presidents about protecting academic freedom. / Samad Hakani, Senior Photographer

TAILGATE FROM PAGE 1

in lieu of alcoholic beverages, Miles Rapoport, the co-chair of Crimson Courage and former Connecticut secretary of state, told the News.

While tailgating may be an unconventional way to organize alumni and pressure college administrations, Rapoport said it’s an opportunity to reach alumni who might not otherwise focus on academic freedom or independence.

“The assault on higher education has made many people who are not politically active upset and ready to take action,” Rapoport said. “We think it’s a way of broadening the support that Crimson Courage and Stand Up for Yale have.”

Looking forward, Stand Up for Yale and Crimson Courage plan to send a joint letter to the presidents and fellows of both universities, continuing their calls for the schools to preserve academic freedom and reject Trump’s proposed compact, which would offer preferential treatment for grant funding if schools adhere to his priorities. The groups plan to gather signatures for the letter at the tailgate.

Stand Up for Yale wrote a letter to McInnis and other administrators last spring calling for “a courageous stance in defending higher education against assaults by the federal government.” Over 6,000 alumni signed the letter. Crimson Courage has around 18,000 people on their mailing list and is staffed entirely by volunteers, according to Evelyn Kim, the group’s communications director.

“Crimson Courage kind of came up out of nowhere,” Patty Nolan SOM ’88, a co-chair of Crimson Courage, said. She said there have been a variety of alumni efforts to encourage Harvard administrators to stand up for the university’s independence after Trump clawed back funding. Crimson Courage was founded to organize those efforts into a single group.

Tailgate organizers are hopeful that Connecticut Democratic Sen. Richard Blumenthal LAW ’73 will join the tailgate.

Kathleen McWilliams, Blumenthal’s communications director, said on Tuesday that the senator’s schedule for this weekend had not yet been confirmed.

Nolan said organizers invited Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey and Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont — both Harvard alumni — to the tailgate, but both are unable to attend.

“The only way we’re going to be able to fight for all of higher education is to band together,” Kim said. “This is a really good chance to discuss the issues we think are important and to do it in a fun, not in-your-face kind of way.”

Erica Newland ’08 LAW ’15, who helped organize the tailgate for Stand Up for Yale, said that alumni advocacy should extend beyond just Yale and Harvard. She said the tailgate is important because it will show the value of cooperation between alumni from different schools.

Rapoport said the tailgate marks the start of Crimson Courage’s efforts to work with alumni organizations from other schools to build a national movement.

Yale’s football team has defeated Harvard’s in The Game for three years in a row.

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him “deeply ashamed,” adding that he plans to pull back “from public commitments as one part of my broader effort to rebuild trust and repair relationships.”

Yale’s Office of Public Affairs and Communications did not respond on Tuesday to the News’ inquiries about Summers, including a question about when Yale officials first learned about the extent of Summers’ interactions with Epstein.

In February 2024, Summers announced on X that he was working with Sarin and two legal experts on a Yale-associated initiative “to spearhead a new policy initiative working towards bipartisan, common-sense tax reform.” Summers encouraged people to submit proposals for the “Tax Reform Project,” which is hosted on a Yale website.

Summers is listed as a member of the project’s steering committee, which describes itself as a “non-partisan network that solicits and evaluates proposals from experienced tax prac-

tioners and commentators” to propose legislative reforms.

The project stopped accepting proposals on July 31, 2024.

On April 6, the lab issued a press release linking to a four-minute CNN video titled “Larry Summers on what could be reassuring to people amid plunging market.”

On April 22, the lab issued a press release titled “Summers Says Trump ‘Attack’ on IRS Risks \$1 Trillion Revenue Hit.” Though the content of the release is no longer available on the lab’s site, an article with a similar headline, however, was published that day in Bloomberg News.

In October, the News reported that three former Yale faculty members had ties to Epstein and wrote personal notes in a 50th birthday album gifted to him.

Summers served as the 27th president of Harvard from 2001 to 2006.

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Former Harvard president Larry Summers will withdraw from his position on the Yale Budget Lab’s advisory board following the release of emails showing his personal correspondence with sex offender Jeffrey Epstein until 2019. / Gage Skidmore via Wikimedia Commons