LET US BEGIN WITH A PERIOD PIECE: A story that was startling when it happened, but today would be beyond startling, because it could not occur. In the fall of 1965, at freshman registration, Jack Barnaby '32, then head coach of tennis and squash, sat behind his table in Memorial Hall, hoping to interest these freshest of freshmen in racquet sports. A young man who had come to Harvard from Bombay, India, approached and greeted Barnaby politely in British-accented English: "My name is Anil Nayar and I would like to try out for your squash team."
The coach learned that Nayar had played squash, and invited him to Hemenway Gymnasium to hit a few balls and talk further.

At the gym, Barnaby asked Nayar if he had played competitively. The freshman said yes, so Barnaby inquired, "How did you make out?"

"I won," was the simple reply.

"Oh—were you the junior champion of India?" Barnaby asked.

"I have been the men's champion of India," Nayar explained, "for the past two years."

After Barnaby recovered his composure, he assured Nayar—who went on to play at number 1 for Harvard's squash team and won the national intercollegiate singles championship three times—that there was a red carpet in the squash office and he would be glad to roll it out at any time. Later, Barnaby asked an admissions officer why they had kept the young champion a secret.

"We thought you'd find it a very pleasant surprise," was the answer.

The days of such surprises are over. Today, squash coaches would spot an athlete of Nayar's caliber years before he applied to college and all American schools with varsity squash programs, including Harvard, would vigorously recruit him. College sports in general, including the Ivy League, have changed radically since 1965. Long-established amateur traditions, guided by patrician rules and played out on pastoral fields, have given way to a complex, highly competitive, multibillion-dollar enterprise, shaped by the values of business and professional athletics.

In this rapidly evolving context, the mainstream of American college athletics has moved away from the Ivy League's classic ideals about the proper role of sports in higher education. And within the Ivy League, Harvard represents the staunchest holdout for amateur values that are under increasing attack, from sources both within the league and beyond it. The recruitment of athletes, their development before college and their training and competition once enrolled, their character, and their distribution among sports—are all in flux.

The choices we make about the future of intercollegiate sports ripple out far beyond the academy. College sports priorities affect not only professional athletics but, more importantly, the lives of students in secondary schools and even children in grade schools. A society's heroes reflect its values, and whether we like it or not, many of the world's most influential heroes are now athletes. "The whole society has shifted," says head tennis coach Dave Fish '72. "In the 1950s, when they asked high-school kids what person they most admired, it was Albert Schweitzer. Now, it's Michael Jordan."

The Recruiting Wars

IN TAMPA, FLORIDA, IN REDWOOD FALLS, MINNESOTA, IN LA JOLLA, California—all over the country, on July 1, the phones begin ringing, the mailboxes fill up, the fax machines hum happily. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) prohibits recruiting contact before the first of July, but then the floodgates open. Interestingly, although the NCAA limits
coaches to one phone call per week to a given athlete, it permits an unlimited number of faxes or e-mail messages. The communications blitz zeroes in on college-bound high-school juniors who have shown athletic skill, and it is vigorous. “Look at high-school students—very few are especially scholarly, nor are they particularly athletic,” says head football coach Tim Murphy. “Those with both talents are pursued by American colleges with tremendous intensity and skill.” Teenage athletes whose academic credentials qualify them for Ivy League colleges are doubly desirable, and this elite group gets an ardent courtship.

In the summer of 1995 the blitz hit Emily Stauffer ’98, of New Canaan, Connecticut. Stauffer’s under-17 team from the Connecticut Omni soccer club had won a national championship that year, and on July 2, when she returned home from a trip, there were 24 messages from soccer coaches on her answering machine. By then Stauffer was used to seeing coaches with clipboards sitting in beach chairs, lining the sidelines at games where she and other strong young players were competing.

Harvard women’s soccer coach Tim Wheaton had known Emily Stauffer ’98, one of the most talented and dominant soccer players in the history of the Ivy League.

Stauffer since she was 13; he had coached in a regional program where she played and coincidentally, Wheaton had moved up through the junior-soccer age groups as a coach in parallel with her. Many other coaches were in the hunt for Stauffer, including Anson Dorrance of the University of North Carolina, who had taken a team to victory in the women’s World Cup. “It was known in the soccer world that playing for Anson greatly helped your chances of making the U.S. Olympic team,” Stauffer says. Although generous athletic scholarships were available at North Carolina and elsewhere, Stauffer’s family didn’t need the money. She explains that even if she had attended a “scholarship school” like North Carolina, her family would not have accepted a scholarship, “because my parents feel that the money should go to kids who need it, not because they play soccer.”

That is a succinct statement of the long-established “need-based” financial-aid policy at Harvard and other Ivy schools. But
The Professionalization of Ivy League Sports

among 300-odd colleges playing Division I athletics, only the Ivies offer athletic scholarships (see “The Athlete Auction,” page 47). Jay Saunders, assistant coach of women’s soccer, says, “Most of our players turn down [athletic] scholarships to come here.”

Stauffer was among them: although she initially expected to attend Brown or Duke, she ultimately enrolled at Harvard, where she has concentrated in government. In soccer, she has starred as a midfielder since her freshman year: she has been Ivy League Player of the Year for the past two seasons, sparking a team that last year went undefeated in the conference and was ranked as high as tenth in the nation. This fall Stauffer is co-captain of a squad that may be even stronger.

The success of Stauffer and her teammates proves that Ivy coaches can achieve national success without athletic scholarships. The Harvard men’s soccer team also thrived last year, reaching the second round of the national tournament and ranking number 12 nationally. When the NCAA recently rated the overall caliber of play for all 21 conferences that play men’s soccer, the Ivy League was second only to the southeastern Atlantic Coast Conference.

But that kind of success depends on recruiting, the activity to which most Harvard coaches now devote the largest share of their time: Wheaton, for example, estimates it at 80 percent, in one form or another. Maura Costin Scalis ’80, who coached women’s swimming at Harvard from 1984 until this year, says, “In the sport of swimming, I’m only as good as the athletes I bring in; 95 percent of my success is due to recruiting.”

It was not always thus. Until the mid-1970s, institutional policies and gentlemen’s agreements minimized recruiting within the Ivy League. Harvard had especially stringent guidelines against it: “We didn’t recruit, period,” says Barnaby. The policy forbade coaches to talk with prospective students unless the student had first contacted Harvard. “I always felt that someone should be grateful to attend the College and that it was a privilege to play for Harvard,” Barnaby recalls. “I wasn’t going to get down on my knees and beg anyone to come here, no matter how good he was.” Fish, who was Barnaby’s protégé, explains that, “to Jack, recruiting was a dirty word. When I was in college, to recruit implied that you were lazy: the assumption was that if you recruited, you didn’t coach.”

In those days, “recruiting” often meant persuading undergraduates to take up a new sport. Former Harvard diving coach John Walker got gymnasts interested in diving—and produced some of the best diving squads in the country. Barnaby urged his tennis players to consider squash. “For 20 years, I never had a varsity team without a Harvard beginner on it,” he says. “I always figured that if I could teach the game, the Harvard admissions office would make sure I got a lot of people with brains who could learn well.” One memorable beginner was Victor Niederhoffer ’64, a tennis player who learned squash at Harvard and went on to become one of the greatest squash players in history, winning the national intercollegiate championship in his senior year.

Those were the days: imagine teaching a new sport to a college student! Today’s top squash players are often national champions before they enter Harvard. For example, Jonny Kaye ’92, M.P.P. ’95, Tal Ben-Shachar ’96, and Joel Kirsch ’97 won a combined total of 10 Israeli national titles in squash before matriculating.

In recruiting, Harvard has responded to what other schools were doing—often out of competitive necessity. Costin Scalis explains that “today, everyone recruits so aggressively that if you don’t do it, the students think you aren’t interested in them. In 1996 I lost six recruits to Stanford; I had done home visits with three of them. The Stanford coach did second home visits; he crossed the United States to see them again when he learned they were wavering or leaning toward Harvard.”

For a long time Harvard had a rule that coaches could not go on the road to recruit, although the rest of the Ivy League had no such prohibition. “We never could get anyone else to go along with it,” says associate vice president for University relations John Reardon ’60, who was director of athletics from 1977 to 1990. “We felt our alumni could give a kid a lot better picture of what Harvard was about—the totality of it—than a coach. The coach is primarily interested in somebody for their sports abilities.”

But that Harvard policy disappeared after a 1987 NCAA ruling that prohibited alumni from contacting potential recruits. The NCAA was reacting to abuses by certain booster organizations and overzealous graduates; such interactions do improve the possibility of money changing hands, including outright bribes to attend a given college. At the NCAA meetings, Reardon argued against the change, saying that if someone wanted to give an athlete money, it was hardly necessary to have direct contact to do so. Penn State football coach Joe Paterno, himself a Brown alumnus, countered that Harvard and the Ivy League were living in “a fairy-tale world.” Ultimately the rule went through, hurting Harvard more than most colleges, since Harvard’s alumni network for recruiting undergraduate applicants is especially well-organized. Today, a Harvard graduate who spots a promising high-school athlete can do no more than give the student’s name to the appropriate coach.

Hence, the recruiting burden now falls more squarely on coaches’ shoulders. After identifying potential recruits, they begin the arduous process of screening, tracking, following up, and courting them. Men’s soccer coach Steve Locker sees 1,000 players per year, watching up to six games in a day; one format is the “showcase,” which might mean traveling to Cincinnati, Ohio,
to spend a Saturday watching soccer from 8:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M., with 130 other coaches. Diving coach Keith Miller monitors about 75 recruits with a software program that is designed for people in sales. In fact, the process of identifying and qualifying prospects, retrieving information, and logging the results of contacts closely parallels a sales relationship—in essence, it is one.

The football brochure has enlarged from 6-by-9 to 8½-by-11 inches, which might parallel the growth of recruiting as a coach. Tim Murphy's life since he came to Harvard in 1994 after coaching at the University of Cincinnati and the University of Maine. "A lot of people think this job means less recruiting, but actually it's more. Recruiting here is longer, harder, and more labor-intensive," he explains. "At Cincinnati and Maine you had a good regional base within 250 miles. At Harvard we literally go to the four corners of the United States to find 35 recruits. There's not a football program in America that travels as much as we do."

Football is not like track or swimming, where a coach can screen prospects by examining winning times in a 400-meter race. "Everything in football is very subjective," Murphy explains.

Maura Costin Scalise '80 reigned over Blodgett Pool as head women's swimming coach from 1984 to 1997.

Context matters. One current Harvard player, for example, came from a Nebraska high school that graduated a senior class of 40 and played "eight-man" football against other small high schools.

Because NCAA rules forbid coaches to go on the road recruiting until December 1, when the high-school football season is over, college coaches cannot see their prospects play "live." Instead, the Harvard football staff begins with a database of 4,000 videotapes, dossiers, and transcripts, which they winnow down to the top 1,000 prospects who may have a chance of admission. They apportion these among the five-man staff and narrow the pool to 100 by the Christmas break. Between then and March 1, Murphy tries to meet all these boys in person. For those winter months, his family sees little of him. "I'm on the road five days a week—and even on weekends, I'm here at Harvard, seeing student-athletes who are visiting the campus," he says. The football staff submits its final list of prospects to the admissions office,
identifying the athletes they like who appear to be academically qualified. That last is the rub: what it means, says Murphy, is that "we have the smallest recruiting pool of any college."

Varied admissions standards within the Ivy League do create certain inequities on the playing field, though less so than in years past. In the 1970s, Jack Barnaby spotted a squash player at an Eastern prep school who, in his judgment, was the best junior to appear in the United States in 10 years. He wrote to Harvard's admissions office saying, "This guy is not just great—he is Great with a capital G." But some time afterward, an admissions officer saw Barnaby at lunch and told him, "I'm afraid we've got some bad news for you, Jack. It turns out that your squash genius ranks 65th in a class of 70, and we've already turned down several of his higher-ranking classmates. We can't admit him."

Not long afterwards, Barnaby learned that Princeton had offered early admission to his prospect, who went on to play for their men's squash team.

The story has a coda: while this boy was indeed the best junior in the United States, he was not the best in North America. A young Canadian, Michael Desaulniers '80, matriculated at Harvard that year and beat everyone in intercollegiate squash every time he played. With the exception of one year when Desaulniers was injured, he completely dominated American college squash as a undergraduate; for Harvard, he lost only one game, never mind a match.

But that was before the Ivy League adopted the "academic index," a method of insuring that recruited athletes' academic credentials reasonably approximate those of their college as a whole (see "Team Transcripts," November-December 1996, page 72). The index combines Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores, class rank, and achievement test scores to create benchmarks for each college's incoming classes, and requires recruited athletes to fall within one statistical standard deviation of the class average, and to meet a minimum academic level. The idea behind the index, says dean of admissions and financial aid William Fitzsimmons '67, Ed.D. '71, is that "We did not want a separate athlete population."

Despite this, the recruiting dynamic itself can also segregate athletes and apply a lingering pressure on them after they matriculate. "Coaches seem to develop a sense of proprietary right over the student," says track and field coach Frank Haggerty '68.

"We really have to guard against it. It's a very natural by-product of recruiting: you worked hard to identify these kids, convinced them to apply to Harvard, then they get in. But once they get here, suppose they want to play another sport, or find something more attractive than athletics? For a coach, it's hard not to be frustrated. You don't own them."

The Child Specialists

Several endangered or extinct species haunt college sports today, hovering like ghosts over playing fields, courts, pools, and courses. Clearly, the rise of recruiting has killed off the "walk-on," the varsity athlete who was not recruited but simply "walked on" to the field and made the team. "The days of the walk-on athletes are gone," says Costin Scalise. In his five years as Harvard's men's soccer coach, Steve Locker has had only one walk-on, Jimmy Quagliarello '97, who eventually won the Reardon Award for the outstanding senior male scholar-athlete.

Fencing is an exception, at least at Harvard; coach Branimir Zivkovic's squads of nine men and eight women fencers are about half walk-ons. "Fencing opens the door to all those who can't make it in the sport they love," Zivkovic says. "Maybe you weren't quite good enough to make the tennis team; perhaps you love basketball but are a middlet among the giants. But you are still an athlete, you are competitive, it's in your heart and blood. You try fencing, a combative sport that demands everything."

But in most sports, walk-ons are disappearing because higher levels of performance generally build on greater depth of experience in the particular sport. Hence, another endangered species: the "three-letter man." This phrase dates from the era when the operant term really was man—before 1972, before Title IX and the explosive growth of college women's athletics.

The classic three-letter man was the campus hero who earned varsity letters in football, basketball, and baseball—an all-around athlete. He has disappeared. There are about 1,900 varsity and junior-varsity athletes at Harvard, but for the past two years, none of these 1,900 have played three sports. In the 1994-95 season, seven men and three women did pursue three intercollegiate sports. Those 10 may have been the last vestiges of the triple-threat species at Harvard. Even the two-sport athlete is becoming rare. Over the last three years, only 110 to 180 Harvard students per annum played on two intercollegiate teams. In other words, 85 to 90 percent of Harvard's athletes are single-sport specialists.

This trend does not begin in college; secondary-school and even primary-school students are specializing in one sport only—and doing so at younger ages. "There's this thrust toward specialization at all levels," says men's basketball coach Frank Sullivan. "Parents feel that their children have to specialize, or they won't be as good as the rest of the kids. So they wind up playing soccer all year, or basketball all year. There are loads of clinics and camps, run by entrepreneurs."

Even within a given sport, youngsters are narrowing their focus. Costin Scalise recalls that when she began coaching, "You could train people and have them swim a lot of different events. Now you have to recruit specialists for each event."

Many Harvard coaches lament the specialization trend, even as it brings them more accomplished—if less versatile—recruits.
"It's unfortunate, because the greatest thing is to have kids do everything they can," Murphy says, adding, "We are trying to identify the talented at ages when their talents may not yet have appeared." Director of athletics Bill Cleary '66 recalls, "When I was a student at Belmont Hill [School], they made you play a different sport in every season. I think that's healthy." As Harvard's men's ice hockey coach from 1971 to 1990, when Cleary was recruiting players he "always looked to see if they played another sport—because you win with athletes."

John Dockery '66 lettered in football, baseball, and indoor track at Harvard, then played corner back with the New York Jets, becoming the only Harvard man to win a Super Bowl ring (in the Jets' fabled 16-7 triumph over the Baltimore Colts in 1969). He is now a sports commentator for NBC Television and CBS Radio. "If I were applying to Harvard today, I guess I'd be just a football player," he says, "I think that would have diminished my enjoyment of sports and even my development as an athlete. The quickness I got from running track, for example, definitely helped me on the football field, and also the baseball diamond."

Head coach of men's basketball Frank Sullivan. Last year his squad recorded more wins than any Harvard team in half a century.

The adult takeover of children's sports is a key factor driving specialization. Where there was once sandlot baseball, there is now Little League, with teams that wear uniforms, play schedules, have business sponsors—and where kids play assigned positions. Street kickball has given way to heavily coached youth soccer teams. "There's no pickup football or basketball anymore," says Murphy, "Everything is organized by adults. The whole society has become more competitive, with the emphasis on specialization. But kids would not specialize without the parents' pressure."

According to Patricia Henry, senior associate director of athletics, "Some parents become shortsighted. Everybody's grasping for that brass ring, for their kid to become an Olympic athlete. It's not just in sports; you see it in music, the arts, everywhere. Everybody's got to be a genius, a millionaire. He 'the best that they can be' by age 10. Kids don't have a chance to grow up. With television, computers, piano lessons, school-
The Professionalization of Ivy League Sports

work, and soccer practice, they just don't have any downtime.”

Adults have also built competition, with its accompanying anxieties, into what used to be children's play. “I don't think winning is the important thing at young ages. I'm not sure you should even worry about playing games until you are 15 or so,” says Cleary. “At age 9 my son would play a one-hour hockey game; he'd be on the ice three times a period. Maybe each kid would touch the puck once per shift—for a few seconds. My philosophy is: give everyone a puck and just practice for an hour. How do you build up your skills if you don't touch a puck? I never had a uniform on until I was a sophomore at Belmont Hill.” (Competitively, Cleary's “pond ice” approach to learning hockey did not serve him badly: he still holds Harvard's single-season scoring record—42 goals and 89 points in 1954-55—and was on the U.S. hockey team that won an Olympic gold medal in 1960.)

High-level competition for teenagers now often means playing not for one's high-school team, but on club, regional, or national teams. Top squash player Ivy Pochoda '98 trained at an elite Brooklyn club with dozens of other junior squash players aspiring to national rankings. Playing other high-school teams, she recalls, “was a joke.” Soccer star Will Kohler '97 captained last year's men's varsity and was later drafted by Major League Soccer's New York-New Jersey Metro Stars, though he ultimately did not join the team. While in high school, Kohler played for the Delco club team in the Philadelphia area, along with several of his future Harvard teammates. They often practiced twice a week from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., and played tournaments every weekend in the summer, which could mean three games per day in 80-degree to 90-degree weather: “Lots of water and oranges at halftime,” Kohler recalls. Tryouts for the national junior team took him out of school for two-week periods on numerous occasions.

Another soccer star, Naomi Miller '99 of San Antonio, had basketball practice four afternoons a week until 6:00 p.m., when her mother picked her up and drove nearly two hours—while Miller did her homework—to Austin for practice with an elite girls' soccer club. After the 90-minute practice, they drove back, getting home by 11:00 p.m. Grueling, yes, but what helped Miller develop into the striker who last year led the Ivy League in scoring.

Her teammate Stauffer cites other sacrifices: “Not going out on a weekend night with a friend because you had a game on Sunday, not going to the beach on a weekend because you have a tournament.” However, she adds, “I'm glad I made the trade-off.”

Not everyone makes it. By age 12, Meredith Rainey '90 was already nationally recognized as a fast runner. “I knew I had talent in track. My coach told me I could get a scholarship,” she recalls. “But after a few years, I didn't enjoy the sport; I expected too much of myself. It was a little too intense for me at that age, the pressure of competing at a national level. I enjoyed team sports more.” So in high school Rainey played volleyball and basketball instead; she had fun, but did not star. At Harvard, she returned to track and became one of the most spectacular walk-on successes in school history. In her junior year, she won the NCAA Championships in the 800-meter run and as a senior, became the indoor NCAA 800-meter champion while breaking the collegiate record. Rainey has been ranked among the top three female 800-meter runners in the United States every year since 1991, and was on the 1992 and 1996 U.S. Olympic teams.

Few will reach Rainey's level, but there is no question that specialization generally produces stronger athletic performance at younger ages: witness the world's top-ranked woman tennis player, 16-year-old Martina Hingis. Today's youths are bigger, stronger, faster, and they have better nutrition, better equipment, and more experience. Track and field coach Haggerty notes that many Harvard records have fallen in the last 10 to 15 years.

But some things have also been lost. “Performance might be better now, but the depth of performance is not better,” Haggerty says. “We used to have two or three good discus throwers, not just one. There were bigger track teams in the 1960s, more people competing at a high level.” In men's tennis, coach Dave Fish says that, “With the kind of teams we have now, 20 years ago we'd have been in the top 10 nationally.” (Last year the Harvard squad had an excellent season, and was ranked nineteenth in the nation.) That is the good news. “The bad news,” Fish says, “is that very competitive high-school players come here and cannot get a spot on the varsity or JV teams.”

The Endless Season

It's too bad,” says Jack Barnaby. “The modern athletes are better than we were, but we had more fun. After you play tennis all spring, summer, and fall, you get a little sick of it. You are glad when squash season comes around. I always welcomed the change of seasons. Now, they work at it 12 months a year, and it's sort of like a business. They're professionals.”

If you are a single-sport specialist driven to perform at the highest competitive level, your season gets longer. Not only because of postseason tournaments and preseason games and perhaps a longer regular-season schedule—but because off-season training has become de rigueur. If everyone else is doing it, how can you afford not to?

“All sports are being extended,” says Bill Cleary. “When I played, we didn't start hockey until December 1. Now, practice starts October 15—and we [Harvard] are the last ones.” Five years ago, the Ivy League began allowing out-of-season practices: coaches can now conduct a limited number of spring football and soccer practices, for example. And athletes work on strength and endurance all year long, weight-lifting and running.

The “season” itself now runs all year, in one form or another. Rowers can finish their fall racing with the Head of the Charles Regatta, then train on rowing machines for the World Indoor Rowing Championships in February before the Charles River thaws and the spring and summer crew seasons begin. Indoor facilities, air conditioning, and artificial turf have helped eliminate rain, wind, sun, cold, and mud—in other words, nature—from

Will Kohler '97, the 1996 Ivy League Player of the Year and a Second Team All-American.
Team Global

U.S. players still dominate the staple sports of baseball, basketball, and football. But in sports like soccer, tennis, swimming, and rowing, "all-American" teams now draw on international pools of recruits. Many of these athletes gravitate to the United States to benefit from the world's best higher-education system.

At the 1997 NCAA swimming meet, international students won six of 11 events. "You have all the top-ranked athletes in the world swimming here," says swimmer Joaquim Ribeiro '99, a butterfly specialist. "When you go to the Olympics, it's like the world championships." In addition to Ribeiro, a Brazilian national, last year's Harvard men's team included Melanie Kielb '98 from Germany, Denis Svirintzko '99, of Germany and South Africa, and Alan Wolfrom Singapore, and Russia's Alex Kuzminov '99. Some in the swimming community have even suggested limiting athletic scholarships for international students on the grounds that they are usurping the places of American swimmers.

International students comprised about half of both the men's and women's 1997 NCAA teams. Dave Fitch's third-place teams have included the likes of John Duran '99, who played on the Irish Davis Cup team, and Mehmet Wallooppaltin '99 of St. Lucia, another Davis Cupper. Of historical interest, the Davis Cup itself, which symbolizes one of the truly global competitions in sport, was given by Dwight Davis, A.B. (1890).

In squash, the change to the international game has raised the value of foreign players, who are more advanced in that format. "Six or seven years ago, the all-American squash teams would be almost all U.S. athletes," says coach Bill Doyle. "Now you'll see a minimum of 70 percent foreign players."

Recruiting the far-flung ilk poses a few new challenges. "It's a long trip from Bombay to see the campus for the weekend," says Doyle, who adds, "The Internet has helped immeasurably. I can tap into the Web page for the Australian Institute of Sport, click on squash, and reach Geoff Hunt, a former world champ, who's now the Australian national junior coach. I can ask him, 'Do you have any players who's so academically inclined who can play high-level squash?'"

In the future, the Internet will be even more important, says Ribeiro, who got acquainted with Harvard swimming through the team's Web page. "I knew everything that was happening at judging — meet results, coach and swimmer profiles, alumni addresses, e-mail addresses of the Harvard coaches and swimmers. I would e-mail swimmers and ask about the workouts, and got to be good friends with three or four of them. I know a lot of swimmers in Brazil who would really think about coming up to the States, but a 10-minute phone call to the coach might cost $5. E-mail can make this easier. And the Web page helps avoid the language barrier. Many athletes don't speak English, but can read English, or get someone to translate."

Butterfly swimmer Joaquim Ribeiro '99, who began swimming in his native Brazil.
The Professionalization of Ivy League Sports

Sports. You can play indoor soccer all winter long or ice-skate in August in an air-conditioned hockey rink.

In contrast, Char Joslin '50, M.B.A. '59, had a busy but varied career, earning varsity letters in three sports—field hockey, ice hockey, and lacrosse—in each of her four years at Harvard. She had captained the same sports and earned 13 varsity letters at Groton, where in her first year she rose early and studied in her closet using an Inky Bitty Book Light, so as not to disturb her roommates. At Harvard, one difficult thing was the three consecutive weekends of weekend road trips for games—leaving Friday morning, returning Saturday at midnight, and recovering on Sunday. "You never have a whole weekend off," she says. NCAA rules that restrict time slots for off-season practices helped Joslin. "I wouldn't have been able to keep up with off-season training," she says. "In lacrosse, for example, I had to miss 'fall ball.'"

Both Harvard and Ivy League policies give regular-season practices precedence over off-season training. So, for example, a two-sport athlete like Peter Albers '97, who played varsity soccer and baseball would, in the event of a conflict, go to baseball practice rather than a spring soccer scrimmage. That is the official policy. But subtle or overt pressure from coaches, parents, teammates, and the student's own inner expectations may influence the young athlete to drop the second sport in favor of the "main chance"—competitive excellence in one's specialty.

Five years ago, Harvard's intercollegiate teams had a total of 1,500 athletes; that number has since fallen by more than 10 percent, to 1,300. One reason is that JV rosters shrink as athletes drop their second sport to concentrate on the primary one.

Off-season training taps energy not only from other intercollegiate sports, but from intramural sports as well. In addition to its 41 varsity sports, Harvard has 27 intramural leagues, which have long been a cherished part of undergraduate life. Varsity athletes, during their off-season, often were leaders on the house teams that compete for the Straus Cup. "If you had two varsity baseball players in Dunster House, they might get five or six others guys off the couch to play touch football in the fall," says associate director of athletics John Wentzell, who oversees Harvard intramural, club, and recreational sports. "Now they have to two two-hour baseball practices in the fall—plus skills practices, conditioning, weight-lifting. So instead of playing six games of touch football, they wind up doing something baseball-related. Varsity athletes are becoming a more isolated group, not rubbing shoulders as much with those outside their sport."

Admissions dean Fitzsimmons notes that "the year-round nature of some sports prevents not only a second or third sport, but other extracurricular activities, or the opportunity to get to know a much broader range of students here. At its worst, it can get in the way of academics—passing up that afternoon class that conflicts with practice. Some athletes become prisoners of sport."

He adds, "A narrowness can be engendered by having an activity that dominates a person's life; it becomes a much larger component of someone's identity. It's a much greater loss if they don't make the team, or get hurt and can't play. The whole person can be developed around that one activity."

The final price of the relentless training may be charged against the athlete's body. "The basis of most injuries is overuse," says Haggerty, the track and field coach. Like most serious squash players, Harvard's number 1 man, Daniel Ezra '98, trains 10 months a year. He has dislocated his right shoulder numerous times, while lifting weights during the summer before his sophomore year, left-handed Ezra favored his right side while, he says, "jumping into heavy weights too fast." Unfortunately, he damaged a rotator cuff muscle and could play no matches from November through January. Still, he stayed fit with lots of running and proved he could make the team in the national championship, beating teammate Joel Kirshe in the final.

Ezra's predecessor at number 1, Tal Ben-Shachar, also won national titles, in part by becoming one of the fittest squash players alive. In high school, Ben-Shachar ran 50 miles a week in addition to playing squash. But he also suffered hip, groin, and back injuries that at one point kept him out of squash for a year. Since American college squash has switched to the international game—a bouncer ball, a larger court—points have become longer (30 to 50 hits rather than 10 to 20) and endurance is a bigger factor, especially at the top levels. "Everyone has decent shots," Ezra says. "Squash today has become about fitness. Everyone pushes it a little further. There was a British professional a few years back who trained by running until he wanted—and then running back from that point. Look at the number of sports records that have been broken in the last few years—are there really that many great athletes? It seems that the ability to endure pain is increasing every year."

Cautious Superstars

Several years ago, head squash coach Bill Doyle had a problem: a couple of his top players were acting more like stars than team members. When hitting with a teammate lower down the ladder, the top player would quickly wear the other man to a frazzle, rather than easing up a bit so his teammate could pace himself and get a good workout. At a tournament in New York, a number 4 man from Princeton upset one of the Harvard luminaries, who, perturbed, announced that he was leaving immediately for Cambridge, rather than returning with the rest of the squad on the team van.

"I was going to boot the two top players off the team," Doyle recalls. "I went to the team captains, who were aware of the situation, and asked, 'Are you prepared to lose without them? Once you take away the fear of losing, you can make the right decision.' (Lost matches are no small matter in Harvard squash; the men's and women's teams are 135-1 under Doyle.) The captains replied that if the top men were unwilling to be team players, they were indeed willing to let them go, despite the likelihood of losses.

"Some coaches say that you have to treat your top athletes differently," Doyle continues. "I don't agree. You may have to..."
Seniors Daniel Ezra and Ivy Pochoda currently play at number one for the men's and women's squash teams at Harvard. Both squads have dominated intercollegiate squash in the 1990s.
The Professionalization of Ivy League Sports

each them differently, but they shouldn't receive any special privileges or exemptions as team members." The coach confronted his star players with a "shape up or ship out" ultimatum. The stars decided to shape up, eventually thanked Doyle for the chastisement, and led the Harvard squad to yet another undefeated, national championship season.

What happens to a young athlete who, early on, becomes a one-sport specialist, trains hard year-round, invests years in building a high level of competitive skill, and then arrives at an elite college as one of the top players in the nation? "By the time they get to college, they may feel entitled to X, Y, and Z by virtue of being great athletes, by being able to score points," says Frank Haggerty. "The converse is, that there is less and less sense that a spot on a team should be earned—as opposed to assigned. The 'entitlement' philosophy may also show up as a lack of respect for officials—'What do you mean, kick me out of the game? I'm the reason people are in the stands.'"

Tennis coach Dave Fish speculates that "Athletes may be less self-reliant today; they have had to do fewer things for themselves. Society so appreciates winning that it lays out a program to produce winners: Little League games every third day, camps for elite soccer kids. Parents wake the kid up to make sure he gets to his tennis match on time. Parents enter you in tournaments; otherwise you'll miss the junior nationals and you won't get a scholarship; it's end-oriented now, not process-oriented. Later, the coach is expected to do things for the player. Kids think that with the coach's blessing they'll get into Harvard; they expect that because they have worked so hard, there's an automatic payoff. I've had kids be upset when I didn't say, 'I'll get you in.'"

The ethos of specialization and the emphasis on winning may also breed a peculiar form of conservatism and timidity in young athletes. "There is an invisible pressure on them," says Maura Costin Sealsie. "They are so used to being great swimmers and great academically that they don't want to try something new. They want to excel at something or not try it at all. They don't want to risk a new event. Over the last 13 years, I have had to change my coaching to tell people, 'It's OK to try new things, to make mistakes, to fail.' The expectations that they have for themselves are so high that it stops them from having fun."

"And they are afraid to ask for help. That would show that they are not knowledgeable—in swimming, or socially, or academically," Costin Sealsie continues. "But after four years with your friends, having your niche in the sport, you suddenly have to go into the real world. If you don't take chances, how do you know what you want to do? People are going to be frozen if they can't say, 'Wall Street doesn't work for me.'"

Doyle emphasizes that he wants team players, "not just a bunch of national squash champions who come to practice. I don't want McEnroe to come here for a year and then leave; that takes away the spot of someone who would be here for four years." (John McEnroe attended Stanford as a freshman in 1978, dominated college tennis, then left to turn professional.)

The structure of competition can also spotlight star individual performances while eroding group endeavor. "Track and field has become less of a team sport," says Haggerty, who regrets the decline in the number of dual track meets. In the 1960s the team would have 10 to 12 dual or triangular meets per year; today there are five or six. Other than the Heptagonal championships, Harvard's dual meet with Yale was the only outdoor scored meet this year. "If you don't have a dual meet record of 5-0, then the team's performance starts to become a question of, 'How many people did you take to nationals?'" Haggerty explains. "So the tendency is to go to a meet where there will be a strong field in, say, the 3,000 meter race—but you can only take four or five athletes to a meet like that. You begin to develop a star system. This stunts the development of other athletes who might come on if given the chance."

The God of the Won-Lost Column

Winning is an obsession in this country," says John Dockery. "The Buffalo Bills made it to the Super Bowl four years in a row each time they're the conference champions—but the idea is, 'If you don't win, you're a loser.'" In today's highly competitive environment, where athletic performance and personal identity sometimes converge, losing at college sports is less acceptable than ever, and winning more worshipped. "There's more pressure to win in our out jobs," says Tim Murphy. "We seem to be an immediate gratification society."

Professional sports franchises, where ticket sales and TV ratings mean huge profits or losses, routinely fire coaches whose teams lose. Today, that trend has trickled down to colleges. "College soccer coaches are losing their jobs because they're not getting it done in the 'W' [win] column," says Steve Locker. "When that happens, you know you have arrived as a sport. It also means some coaches will lose perspective on what college athletics is about, and begin to sacrifice their principles in order to win games." Incentive clauses for winning are common in coaching contracts in Division I athletics—like giving a basketball coach, for example, extra stipends for reaching the NCAA tournament, tiered by how many rounds the team wins. Such deals could potentially put a coach's personal interests in conflict with those of the athletes. Jeff Orleans, executive director of the Council of Ivy Group Presidents, says, "I haven't surveyed all 250 head coaches, but I would strongly doubt that such arrangements exist in the Ivy League."

Still, Ivy athletes seem to be extending themselves to greater, and perhaps dangerous, lengths in pursuit of victory. In the fall of 1995, in the first half of the Harvard-Cornell men's soccer game, the Crimson's two best-defensive players, John Vranits '97 and Lee Williams '99, were both seriously injured. Both were in the air, going for head balls, and were hit from behind by Cornell players. Cornell won, 1-0 in overtime, but the two Harvard play-

Three-letter woman Char Joslin '90, wielding a lacrosse stick.
ers lost the rest of their season’s play, Vronis with a broken ankle and Williams with a torn knee ligament. “Of all the games played in the past two years, Cornell has been the most physical—more injuries, more fouls, more cards,” says Vronis. “It always ends up being a bit of a bloodbath.”

That may be simply coincidence, but the intensity attached to winning does raise both the stakes and the risks. “I’ve played soccer for 30 years and have never been injured once,” says Locker. “In an effort to win, some coaches think they are having success when their players get ‘stuck in’ [tackle opponents hard, with spikes high]. Coaches permit it and even promote it to some extent. Referees are not expert enough to see and call everything, and they don’t want to be blowing whistles every minute, they want to let the game flow. Without a doubt, the injury rates are higher than they used to be. There’s an increased disrespect for players’ well-being, and there’s no question that is a consequence of the increased pressure to win.”

The worship of the won-lost record also may lead to developments like large rosters that allow a team to turn over its lineup each year, rather than nurturing the same individuals for four years. “The playing field has changed in the Ivy League,” says Costin Scalise. “Some schools have highlighted a few sports.” Last year Princeton had 43 women swimmers, Yale 38, and Harvard 17. “I can’t compete with that,” Costin Scalise says. “They re-

place their swimmers after they swim for a year or two. But my swimmers swim faster every year.”

No doubt other colleges also perceive Harvard as focusing on certain sports—rowing, ice hockey, and squash, for example, have long histories of success. Nor is there any question that Harvard loves to win, and its athletic director, Cleary, is surely one of the most competitive individuals in the Western Hemisphere. He coached a highly successful hockey program for two decades, capped by a national championship in 1989. Rowing coach Harry Parker’s men’s heavyweight crews have won more national titles than any other college, and just this past year, the men’s and women’s lightweight crews were national champions. Both squash teams have been nearly invincible, the women winning six consecutive national titles, and the men seven. Carole Kleinfeld’s women’s lacrosse team were NCAA champions in 1990, Char Joslin’s senior year.

But at Harvard, winning is not the sine qua non. Take men’s basketball, a sport where the Crimson have never been a power, and have never won an Ivy crown. When Frank Sullivan began as head coach in 1991, he inherited a program whose last winning season was in 1985. Sullivan’s first year was hardly auspicious, as the team went 6-20. But after that year, Cleary declared, “I’m more sure than ever that I made the right decision in hiring Frank”—based on how well Sullivan had handled the tough cam-

---

**The Athlete Auction**

Even when a coach succeeds in interesting an athlete in Harvard, and the student gains admission, the battle is not over: the economics of higher education put Ivy League schools, with their high costs and need-based financial aid, in a squeeze. According to Jeff Orleans, the executive director of the Council of Ivy Group Presidents, “a much larger number of college teams are now playing major athletics—and therefore looking for athletes and competing for them.” In that context, he says, “The fact that Ivy League schools don’t give athletic scholarships means that there is an increasing cost differential between a school that does—and so costs nothing—and our schools, even with need-based aid.

“Thirty years ago, imagine a kid choosing between going to Harvard on need-based aid or attending Boston College with a full athletic scholarship,” Orleans continues. “He might look at earning money at a summer job, plus term-time employment, and say, ‘This is Harvard, I’m doing it.’ Today, even if the student got a $15,000 grant, and could add $5,000 per year through work and loans, there is still a significant out-of-pocket expense compared to a ‘free ride.’ It’s harder for middle-class families, especially if there are siblings. Some people who recruit women athletes say that families who are willing to sacrifice for their sons are often less willing to sacrifice for daughters.

“We may have been more price-competitive in the ’80s than we are in the ’90s—whether it’s against Northwestern or the University of Massachusetts,” Orleans concludes. “The gap between a UMass education and a Harvard education is certainly not as big as it was 30 years ago, but the price gap is bigger.”

In basketball, 305 colleges now compete at the Division I level; in swimming, there are about 250 programs. Competition among them sometimes results in bidding wars for recruits, just the way professional sports teams scramble for free agents. Last year, the Harvard women’s swimming team lost a recruit when Notre Dame upped its scholarship offer by $10,000. “They outbid us,” says then-coach Maura Costin Scalise. “The student may feel, ‘My parents have done so much for me—how can I say no?” A hydroponic like Stanford, the national women’s swimming champions from 1992 through 1996, is an especially formidable opponent. “It’s a case of ‘Come to Harvard and spend the money’ versus, ‘Go to Stanford and get a free ride,’” Costin Scalise explains. Stanford also offers pass-fail academic credit for “activity courses” (such as varsity sports or music)—a maximum of eight to 12 credits of the 180 credits needed to graduate. Nearly all of Stanford’s athletes opt for such “physical education” studies, and some also take scholarship-funded years to graduate, lighten-

ing their academic loads during their four years of eligibility to focus more on their sports.

Scholarship schools may push students to commit early. “They make an offer early on and then pressure the student to decide by September 30,” says soccer coach Jay Saunders. But students are becoming equally savvy. Dana Tenser ’97, a star soccer player from Hershey, Pennsylvania, who learned the game at age 5, received an athletic scholarship offer with a deadline from the College of William and Mary. This allowed Tenser to execute what is called a “squeeze play”: she informed Harvard of William and Mary’s offer and so was able to get a letter from Harvard’s admissions office in the winter of her senior year, saying that she was likely to be admitted.
The Professionalization of Ivy League Sports

paige, and how he had related to his athletes. Last winter, in Sullivan’s sixth season, the basketball team went 17-9, notching the most wins by a Harvard squad in half a century. At many colleges, Sullivan would never have reached that sixth year.

“Here, we want to win, but we don’t have to win,” says soccer’s Tim Wheaton. “Harvard is one of the best places to coach in the country because there are no pressures put on you,” says Costin Scalice. “The individuals you coach—your athletes—are the ones you are reporting to.” This atmosphere grows from Harvard’s long-established philosophy, strongly upheld by Cleary: “You are an educator first, and a coach second.” Last fall, the men’s soccer team had the highest grade point average of any men’s soccer program and, Locker says, “I’m more proud of that than getting to the second round of the NCAA.”

The primacy of education over athletics is a philosophy shared throughout the Ivy League. For example, the Ivies are the only basketball conference that plays its games back-to-back on Friday and Saturday nights—to minimize missed class time. But even within the Ivies, some are eyeing greener pastures. “It’s important for us to think of ‘winning the Ivy League’ as winning,” says Harry R. Lewis ’68, Ph.D. ’74, dean of Harvard College, who chairs the Faculty Standing Committee on Athletic Sports. “There is a sort of mental shift I feel happening, that ‘winning the Ivy League is great, because now you can go into the real competition.’ That’s an attitudinal change with some regrettable consequences: when you focus on postseason play, you start doing things without any real educational significance—like rearranging your schedule to maximize its strength-of-schedule rating.”

Currently, the Ivy League basketball champions get an automatic bid into the NCAA tournament—a fact that enabled Princeton to upset UCLA two years ago. But in recent years there has been a proposal to have a postseason Ivy League basketball tournament—eight teams, three rounds, single elimination. The winner would represent the league in the NCAA. No college would be out of the running until the very end. But in essence, this proposal would make the Ivy basketball season a seeding process for the postseason tournament. So far, the league has not adopted the basketball proposal. It could, however, be a source of some revenue. And, of course, a longer season.

Coaching in the ’90s

The 1960s were such a quaint, academically focused era—imagine the president of a university earning more than the head basketball coach! Today, with endorsement contracts and performance bonuses, big-school basketball coaches can rake in $2 million annually. Ivy League coaches do not earn more than their institutional presidents, although the highest-paid Ivy athletic director may now make more than the lowest-paid Ivy president. So far, at least, athletics have not become profit centers at Ivy League colleges. In this, they are unlike most of America’s larger universities.

The median compensation for a men’s basketball coach at an American university is now $350,000, according to a survey of 87 institutions recently reported in the Chronicle of Higher Education.

Football coaches came in at $268,000, and athletic directors at $138,000. For comparison, a current survey by the College and University Personnel Association (CUPA) cited a median salary of $115,000 for deans of arts and sciences at doctoral-granting institutions; last year CUPA pegged an average full professor at a public institution at $61,000.

Not that coaching has become a road to riches. The medians for coaches in sports like soccer, swimming, volleyball, tennis, and track were much lower—in the $40,000 to $50,000 range—with women’s coaches generally receiving lower salaries than men. In fact, many coaches must supplement their salaries with other income, such as clinics and summer camps for junior athletes. “Coaching the non-revenue sports is like being a teacher—you do it because you love the activity,” says Fish.

Three decades ago, coaching was often the moonlighting job. When Bill Cleary headed Harvard’s ice hockey teams, his day job was running an insurance company with his brother, Bob Cleary ’58. Barnaby sold and installed tennis courts, which in strong
years outdid him more than his check from Harvard. Today, the part-time coach has become another extinct species, and the coach who straddles two sports is fast disappearing. Tim Wheaton arrived at Harvard as assistant coach for women's soccer and men's lacrosse, working under Bob Scanlan, M.B.A. '89 (now associate dean for administration at Harvard Business School), who headed both programs. Today Wheaton oversees women's soccer while Scott Anderson is head coach of men's lacrosse. In 1976 Fish succeeded Barwood as head coach of tennis and squash, but in 1986 the squash program acquired a full-time head coach, and Fish devoted himself to men's tennis. One reason for the job attrition, of course, is that both racquet sports have added women's programs. Then, in addition to the gigantic undertaking of recruiting, today's coaches spend hours filling out forms and writing reports to comply with the increasingly complex and professionalized NCAA regulations.

It adds up. Even in a small sport like diving, coach Keith Miller will begin his day three times a week, with team practices at 6:30 a.m. and often still be in his Bluejacket office at 8:30 a.m. Then he travels to meets on weekends. Miller estimates that his work weeks run 60 to 70 hours. Squash coach Bill Boyle's job takes 10 to 12 hours a day, not including travel. He is on court for six or seven hours a day, but he is also on the phone with players at night. “The role of the coach means you are talking about everything—social and academic issues, as well as athletic ones,” Doyle says. “Who is having trouble with a teaching fellow or roommate? Whose family is going through a divorce? These things affect play on the court. I spend an hour at night and an hour in the morning responding to e-mail from kids. I may write recruiting letters on Sunday morning. On trips, you leave Friday at noon, and get back Sunday night. If someone says coaching is a 40-hour week, I'd like to know how they do it.”

**A Smorgasbord of Sports**

In the first half of this century, baseball was our leading professional sport, but in colleges, football was king: American youths—predominantly white American youths—concentrated on three team sports that the rest of the world had little use for: baseball, basketball, and football. Now, transportation and communications advances have brought a global culture into every American community—including the planet's favorite sports. At the same time, the enhanced role of women in competitive sports has changed the face of college athletics. Today, American boys and girls play a much wider variety of sports, including worldwide favorites like tennis, swimming, volleyball, and soccer.

Football has been deformed as king. When you can choose from 27 football games on cable TV of a Saturday afternoon, going to Harvard Stadium may become less attractive. Average attendance there has decreased from 21,700 in 1966 to 12,300 in 1996, the Ivy League has shown a drop from 15,000 to 9,300 over roughly the same period. “There’s been a real change in our student bodies since the 1970s,” says Jeff Orleans of the Ivy League.

“The colleges started admitting more diverse student populations who seem to be less interested in football—fewer children of Eastern alumni, for example. But if you look at college football attendance around the country, excepting Division I-A (e.g., Notre Dame), our conference has done as well as any.”

“Twenty years ago, there were 100-man freshman [football] teams in the Ivy League,” says Tim Murphy. They were abol ished after the 1992 season, over the opposition of Harvard and Yale, to reduce the number of football recruits per freshman class, in part to open up more space for track athletes with a wider array of talents and passions.

“Women’s soccer has grown exponentially since I started,” says Wheaton. “Fourteen years ago, there were fewer than 40 Division I programs, and few had athletic scholarships. Now there are more than 200 programs, and more have scholarships. It’s the fastest-growing sport in the country. There is a feeling that soccer is more egalitarian and less brutal than football. It’s popular in communities that colleges want to recruit students from—and it’s one of the first choices that ADs [athletic directors] have made when adding a women’s sport.”

The explosion of women’s soccer is just one example of the countless ways college sports have changed since 1972 and the enactment of the federal law called Title IX that requires gender equity in sports programs. The rise of women’s sports has touched every part of the playing field. Sports like soccer that women play enthusiastically well, and in large numbers, have seen their stock rise in both women’s and men’s programs. A spectator who comes to see a daughter or friend play soccer for Harvard might begin to take an interest in the main’s side as well. Women’s athletics have helped diversify the mix of college sports and democratize it for both male and female athletes.

The law measures Title IX compliance in one of three ways: proportionality of women athletes to the student body, consistent growth in women’s programs, or meeting student interest. Most Ivy schools added women’s sports in the 1970s or early 1980s. “We’ve been able to do all the expansion in the women’s programs without making any reductions in the men’s programs or eliminating any JV teams,” says Harry Lewis. “We should be proud of that. Many people come here who are good athletes, but not quite at the varsity level, so JV sports matter. We have a women’s JV ice hockey team, the only one in the league.” (Most major sports universities have no junior varsity teams.)

This choice to add women’s sports without cutting men’s programs reflects Harvard’s fundamental sports philosophy: encourage broad participation. There are more varsity sports and more intercollegiate athletes at Harvard than at any other Division I school—mainly as many as at Michigan and Ohio State, combined, for example. (At those schools, about two percent of the student body participates in intercollegiate sports; at Harvard the figure is close to 20 percent.) Including participants in the 36 varsity and JV teams, the 27 intramural sports leagues, the 32 club sports (which include badminton, cricket, rugby, croquet, in-line skating, and 15 different martial arts) and the 70 recreational sports activities offered, an estimated 35 percent of Harvard undergraduates do some type of athletics. “First and foremost, our athletic program is run for the benefit of the students, not the University,” says Lewis. “Encouraging broad participation does create problems—it strains resources, and it does not get your visibility on the sports pages.” He adds, with a note of irony, “All it does is help people, who get personal benefit from it.”

Some colleges have moved to comply with Title IX by cutting two men’s programs and adding one women’s sport. Harvard has men’s and women’s teams for every varsity sport except three: women’s only field hockey, and men’s only football and (please turn to page 96)