

Harvard University Captain Brian Ramer

By Dr. Greg
Shepard

All of our other individual feature stories in this issue on college athletes are from Division I schools, with probable NFL careers. But what about athletes who play for Ivy League schools, like Harvard? Let's take a look at Brian Ramer who is the captain of this year's Harvard Crimson Football Team. A first glimpse at the difference is that Harvard elects only one captain and Brian's selection came last November 23rd. This most prestigious honor lasts a full year. It is loaded with responsibilities and could be worth more than an NFL contract.

"I was too short to be a Division I Linebacker," explained Brian, "and too slow to play a Defensive Back." Brian is 6-1 220 and runs a 4.9 forty. "I looked at Holy Cross and Penn, but Harvard was what I wanted. The students were great and I wanted to be serious about football. Harvard was serious.

"We are under the same NCAA guidelines as Division I schools. We have the same size coaching staff and we practice the same hours. The big difference is that we don't have any athletic scholarships. You can get financial aid but you're like any other stu-



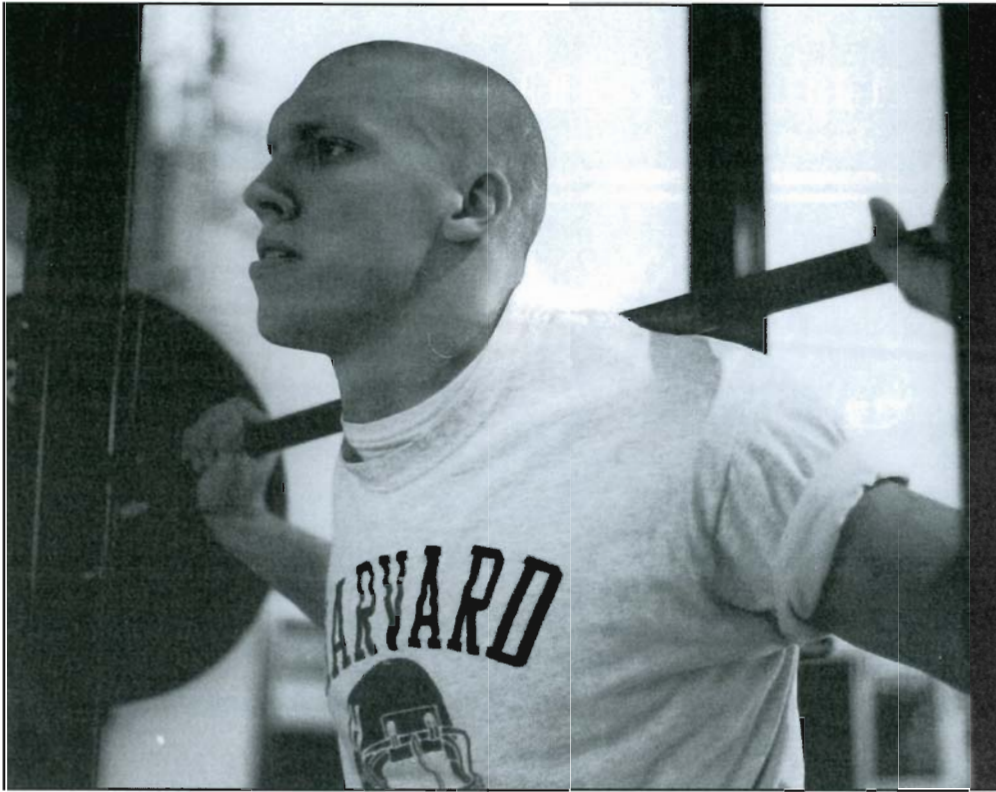
All Photos By Bart Kasowski

dent. You are out there because you want to be. If you don't want to play, nothing changes as far as your financial aid." About two-thirds of Harvard's students receive financial aid. All Ivy League schools operate under this system. These schools are: Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Pennsylvania, Princeton and Yale. Brian continued, "You can have an entry level

red shirt year, but that's it and it can only be because of an injury. Everyone at Harvard is on a 4-year graduation plan." Usually at Division I schools, football players are on a 5-year plan with less than half graduating. At Harvard 96% of those who enroll obtain their degrees.

Harvard's academic standards are legendary. Only 15% of all applicants can be admitted and 98% of the entering freshmen come from the top 20% of secondary school classes. About 70% choose to pursue graduate study - many in law and medicine. Harvard is unique with its ratio of 6,677 undergraduates to over 11,000 graduate students.

In 1636, only 16 years after the Pilgrims at Plymouth, early leaders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony began preparations for a college. In 1638, the first dozen freshmen began classes making Harvard the oldest college in the United States. It is the leading producer of U.S. Presidents (John and John Quincy Adams, Hayes, Theodore and Franklin D. Roosevelt and Kennedy). Harvard has an endow-

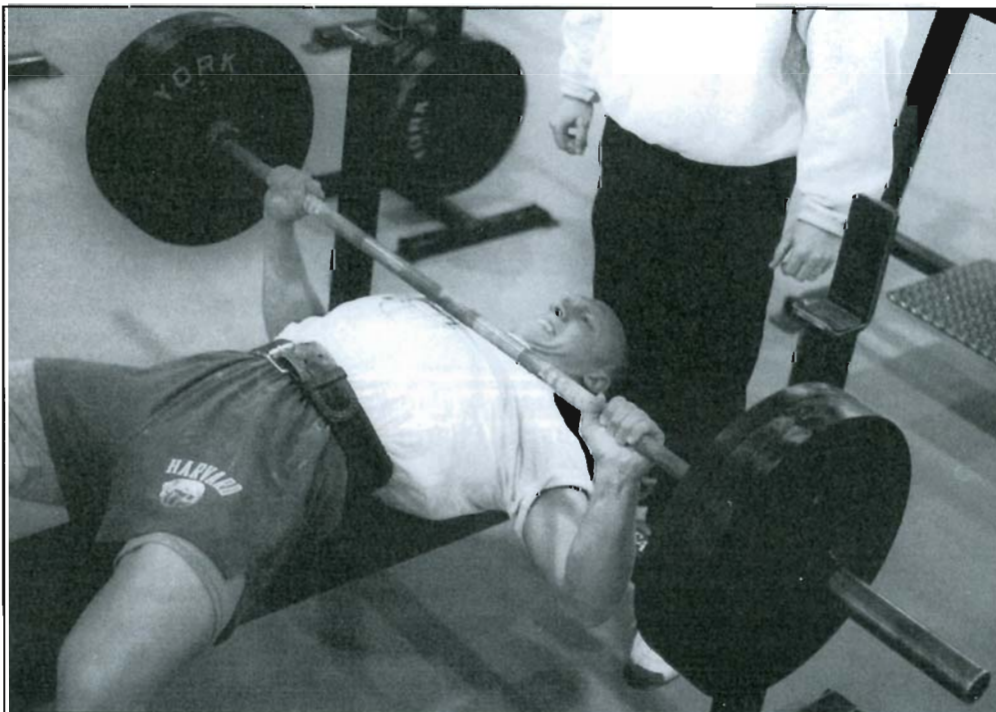


Brian Ramer has A 450 Pound Squat

ment of \$5 billion which is the largest of any private university in the world. Its library is also the world's largest university library with over nine million volumes.

Brian was an A-B student at St. Xavier High School in Cincinnati and achieved a 1260 SAT score. Not only was he an out-

standing athlete, but Brian also excelled in art. Fine grades, with a high SAT score, and being well rounded makes for Harvard material. Brian was also captain of his high school football team which finished with a 7-3 record. He was a First Team Greater Cincinnati League All-Star and lettered in



Brian Also Can Bench 330 Pounds.

track, running the 400 meter and long jumping.

Brian began lifting in the 9th grade at a bodyweight of 145 pounds. By his sophomore year, Brian gained 20 pounds and as a senior he was 6-1 and 188 pounds. Brian Bench 230 and Squatted 400 pounds. He feels strongly about lifting. "If you are not in the weight room, you are at a definite disadvantage. It's stupid to think otherwise. If I were a high school coach, I'd have my athletes Clean because it gives you a big advantages."

Brian plays for Joe Restic who is in his 23rd and final season as the head coach of Harvard football. Harvard has posted a 9.500 or better record in 16 of his 22 seasons. Coach Restic states, "Brian has gained the respect of his teammates by the way he goes after it every game, and the way he handles all his responsibilities on the field."

Brian's linebacker coach, George Clemens, added, "Brian did a magnificent job in 1992 when everything is considered. We asked him to do a whole lot of things and, in the short amount of time he had to adjust to a completely new position, the peaks definitely outnumbered the valleys. He would have been even more effective if he hadn't been injured. He was on the perimeter for every play, and was involved in open-field tackling on both run and pass plays. He wore a cast on his left arm from the Lafayette game until the end of the season, and that was an added disadvantage."

It was this spirit of determination and hard play that earned Brian the votes to be captain. "The greatest honor you can get," said Brian softly, "is to be captain. I tried to take charge from day one. It was one of the happiest days of my life."

The new 5,300 square foot Harvard Carey Strength and Conditioning Center was unveiled during the summer of 1992. Brian helped Strength Coach Dominique Sardo get the weight program more intense. Coach Sardo has been at Harvard for about a year and has



been instrumental in upgrading the Crimson's total program. Brian stated proudly, "Our new weight room is phenomenal. It's the best in the Ivy League. We've got ten squat racks and a definite plan to working out. Coach Sardo introduced Power Cleans to us about a year ago. It's the explosion aspect that I like. I had problems with technique at first, but now I can Clean 250 pounds." Brian's Bench is up to 330 and he Squats 450 pounds.

Brain lifts twice per week in-season with a goal to maintain and avoid injury. "I believe you've got to lift in-season," said Brian forcefully. "It is important physically and psychologically." Other psychological things are also important to Brian. He shaves his head

every Friday night. "Twenty of my teammates do it now also," beamed Brian. "It's a bonding thing."

care of their own. Brian already found this out when a Harvard alumnus got him a job during sum-

ONE SET OF 8 - 12
"I'd do it if they made me, but I don't think it would get me that much. I'm skeptical. I tried Hammer when I was in Cincinnati. They do one set of 8-12. I went back to free weights."
-Brian Ramer

Harvard is also steeped in football tradition. In fact, football was born in Cambridge on May 14, 1874 as Harvard accepted a proposal from McGill University for a two game series. Harvard won the first and tied the second. In 1890,

Harvard won its first national championship and by 1920 the Crimson had won six more including the Rose Bowl by beating Oregon 7-6. Harvard Stadium now holds 37,967 but in 1927 it held 57,166. It was built in 1903 and has elements of Greek and Roman stadium architecture. It was the world's first massive reinforced concrete structure and was considered an engineering marvel.

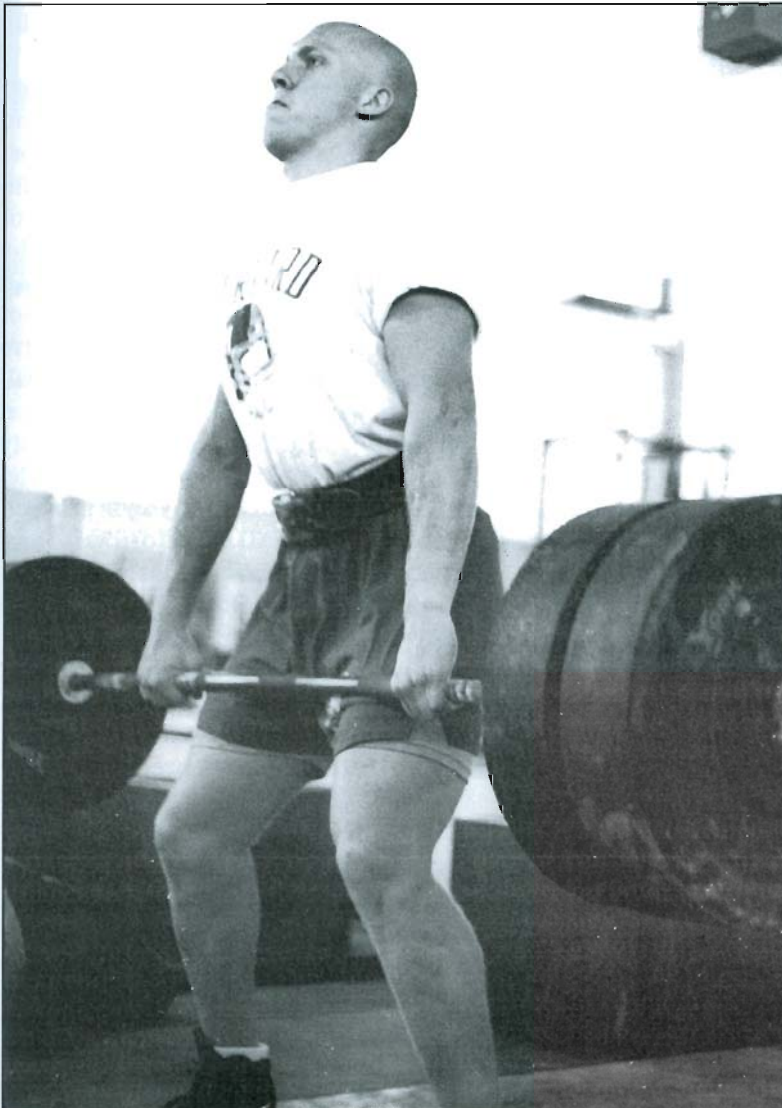
Tradition is meaningful and Harvard Alumni take

mers at an architectural firm back home in Cincinnati. That fits in perfectly as Brian plans to attend grad school for 3 1/2 years to earn a Masters Degree in Architecture.

Brian feels confident that insights learned in football will pay off in the future but right now it's all football. "Play to the best of your ability. If you are going to be serious, you lift hard, practice hard and pay attention to detail when watching film. I've learned to give my all, even in practice. To me, injuries occur a lot when you let up. I believe you can never dog it."

Brian has stayed focused on the positive and has not let drugs or alcohol interfere with his personal progression. "I had no problem in high school," said Brian. "We were noted for academics and I always had good kids around me. My parents really stressed to me about staying away from alcohol. Drugs were never part of what I was doing at high school or here at Harvard. Athletics and academics come first. It's important to remain under control. Part of school is learning how to deal with peer pressure. I work as a bouncer in the Cambridge area and I see a lot of strange stuff. I can tell you it's better to stay away from alcohol.

We thank Brian and Harvard for sharing a refreshing Upper Limit perspective on how football can fit into a college education. We know Brian wouldn't play or prepare any harder if he was playing for Ohio State. Brian Ramer plays because he loves the game.....□



Brian Stated, "If you're not in the weight room you are at a definite disadvantage."