Preparations underway for The Symposium at Yale

As The Game quickly approaches, the university is quietly preparing for another big event that will happen at Yale next weekend: the 140th annual Harvard-Yale Academic Symposium. “The Symposium,” as it is colloquially known, has been held every year since 1889, making it eight years older than the annual football rivalry started occurring regularly. Like “The Game,” however, it was suspended in 1917, 1918, 1943 and 1944, due to WWI and WWII.

“Even though it doesn’t take place on the field, we really try to bring the same competitive spirit as the football team,” says Julio McNulty, Harvard’s coordinator for The Symposium. “For one weekend, we put aside the spirit of academic collaboration and mutual respect. Instead, I try to remind our faculty of one simple fact: Yale sucks.”

Every year, Harvard does everything it can to outgun Yale at The Symposium. This includes making sure that all of Harvard’s Nobel Prize winners attend The Symposium, in order to remind Yale that Harvard has more. It also includes packing up the coolest and most expensive equipment Harvard has – electron microscopes, supercomputers, particle accelerators – and shipping it to New Haven. “We’re going to display all this equipment right next to the equivalent at Yale,” says McNulty. “We know that ours is always a little bigger and a little better. It will be really humiliating for Yale to be forced to see their inferior versions next to ours.”

But preparations for The Symposium affect every level of the college: Chief is preparing to give two presentations at Yale, one about his latest breakthrough in theoretical physics, while the other presentation is an academic study of Leverett’s physics night, which has been shown to be far superior to anything offered by the Yale physics department. Between the two presentations, Chief is sure to shame Yale and do Harvard proud.

In addition, multiple tutors expressed a need to finish up their research before heading to Yale. “I’ve never worked this hard in my life,” a sleep-deprived Katie Derzon tells Hare Today at 3am one night in Leverett dining hall. “My dissertation isn’t due for a while, but I really want to finish it in time for The Symposium in order to help show Yale that our doctoral programs are much more rigorous than theirs.”

As you would expect from such an august academic gathering, the judging guidelines are extremely abstruse and complex. The Judge’s Handbook, which dates back to 1891 (although it underwent major revision in 1922, 1958 and 1990) stretches to 350 pages. However, Harvard has managed to emerge victorious from 19 of the last 20 Symposia.

So next weekend, make sure to root not only for the 10,000 Men of Harvard on the football field, but also the 127 professors, 22 lecturers, 18 graduate students and 10 preceptors who will represent Harvard at The Symposium.
This past week, one Yale student has been getting super-hyped for a relatively inconsequential football game against Princeton this Saturday. “Yale-Princeton, it’s The Game, I am so excited to go this year” says Yale, sixth-year senior Chris McChristian (’17, probably). “It’s the oldest rivalry in sports guys, can anyone tell me of a bigger game for Yale, or for the NCAA this year?”

At first, The Hare Today team thought he must be joking, but when approached about his unique sense of humor, he seemed perplexed. “Why is everyone here laughing? The joke is going to be on you when Yale and Princeton fight it out for third place in the Ivy League on Saturday and everyone in the country is watching.” McChristian went further to suggest that Harvard “was extremely lucky last year” with their win and should expect a Yale team that is ready to play. “I know it will be tough for our football team to come back after this huge game against Princeton, but we will be ready to beat you guys….and this year I mean it.” McChristian has even gone so far to get a tattoo with “Yale beats Harvard 2015” on his arm, acquiring the idea from a Facebook post about a Seattle Seahawks fan who did the same before last year’s Super Bowl. “Everyone here thinks its one big joke…I’m going back to New Haven where people take me seriously. Go Yale.”

Harvard Athletics
Weekend 11/13-11/15
Football: Penn
   Sat 11/14 1:00PM
M Hockey: @Quinnipiac
   Fri 11/13 7:00PM
W Volleyball: @Yale
   Fri 11/13 7:00PM
W Hockey: Union
   Fri 11/13 7:00PM
M Basketball: MIT
   Fri 11/13 7:45PM