The 1983 Season

Their fears were not unjustified. The 1983 season of Co-Rec began like any other season. Some of the more interesting and colorful team names to date appeared during this season. They included: Harvey’s Ballwangers, Produce on the Loose, Slip It In, Wendy’s Hot and Juicy, Pump ‘em and Dump ‘em, Premarital Sacks, Co-Rectiion, Playing the Field, Vicki’s Quickies, Leave It to Beaver, The Hardest Yard, I Tappa Keg, Sticky Situations, Virgin Turf, Ménage A Quad, and We’ll Lick Anyone. At first all seemed to be going well that season. Wendy’s Hot and Juicy, Produce on the Loose, Premarital Sacks, Feeling No Pain, The Misfits, Sticky Situations, and I Tappa Keg pulled ahead of the other teams early on and took dominance over the field. However, problems quickly began to emerge on many fronts. So many problems that Hinman Co-Rec Committee Chairmen Stephen Beinhacker and Barbara Keen felt compelled to write an article in the Hinman Halitosis newsletter. The article basically stated that Co-Rec was a limited contact sport and that tags were not to be made by slamming hands down on another person and that if a player was running towards the sidelines, people should refrain from pushing him or her into the trees. It also stated that unnecessary roughness would not be condoned. It went on to say to the referees that they were getting paid to do a job and that should take their jobs seriously and to take responsibility. It also once again asked them to be impartial and refrain from bias in their calls.

This article was more than a gentle reminder. It was a call for sportsmanlike conduct on and off the field, something which Co-Rec teams seemingly had trouble doing. Traditionally, many Co-Rec teams either before or after a game would go to the dining hall for lunch or dinner, depending on when their game was held. Although a certain level of rowdiness was not to be unexpected from pumped up athletes and college students in general, friendly food fights
between teams were beginning to break out. So many food fights that the manager of the Hinman Dining Hall stated that the next Co-Rec team to start a food fight would be charged $800 to cover the cost of the cleanup. The roughhousing and unsportsmanlike conduct both on and off the field were beginning to get the better of them. Granted, these were the actions of a relative minority in the Hinman Co-Rec community, but the few bad apples were beginning to spoil the bunch.

Mid-way through October the competition was heating up with Slip It In, Premarital Sacks, Misfits, and I Tappa Keg rising to the tops of their divisions. The team, I Tappa Keg, was looking especially good this season. Their undefeated season so far had raised speculation that this was the team to beat during the Super Bowl. On the flip side of that, Vicki’s Quickies and We’re Cookin’ were the favorites to battle it out for the inglorious spots in the Soup Bowl.

As usual, playoff action was brisk. In Search Of defeated Leave It to Beaver 20-6 when an In Search Of player intercepted a pass which set them up for a long bomb that resulted in a touchdown scored by Lisa Milla. In a very close and competitive game, I Tappa Keg beat Sticky Situations 19-13. With fifteen seconds left on the clock Todd Weintraub caught a tipped pass and ran it back for a touchdown and a victory for his team. Premarital Sacks beat U Gotta 26-19 and in their second game In Search Of outwitted The Misfits 13-7. In a tough defensive game, Make Me’s Barbara Keen threw to Drew Mandler who was able to score two touchdowns. Helene Thomas also had an excellent game and scored for Make Me. Make Me’s defense held Premarital Sacks offense to their goal line five times during the game and limited their scoring to a single touchdown. In their second game In Search Of was eliminated in another tough defense driven game against I Tappa Keg. An early touchdown followed by another in the second half along with two interceptions caused I Tappa Keg to shut out In Search Of. That year’s Super
Bowl would see the favored Make Me with its star quarterback, Barbara Keen (this would be her third Super Bowl), compete against the defensive powerhouse I Tappe Keg for the Robert F. Giomi Plaque. It would be a close game and many fans were eager to witness its outcome.

With Co-Rec Weekend just around the corner issues surrounding the conduct of Co-Rec players and teams surfaced again. In a letter to the editors published in *Hinman Halitosis*, Hinmanite Stu Robinson made his feelings clear on the issue. He wrote:

I have watched a lot of co-rec football games both in this semester and in past years. It seems to me, that with each year gone, the people have tended to get more violent and play the game much more seriously than it was ever meant to be taken. Co-rec football is and always has been touch football. Touch, as it seems necessary to define, means that the person carrying the ball is stopped when an opposing player has two hands put in contact with the ball carrier at the same time. A hard shove into a tree and a light touch will both stop the ball carrier. Also, there are certain places people do no appreciate being touched that can easily be avoided. In addition, blockers and defenders cannot be tackled! I know this will come as a surprise to many of you who have not been playing this way. I have seen just too many people get hurt because of overanxious players, mainly, I am sorry to say, guys, but also a surprising amount of girls as well. Something must be done since the referees obviously rarely call a penalty for excessive roughness. This is what I purpose. Set up a board of inquiry to which complaints against either individuals or teams can be taken. Then, have an independent observer or observers, answering only to this board, be present at each game. They should be paid just like refs are. These observers could back claims of unsportsmanlike conduct and would file their own report on every game. The committee could then investigate and decide whether or not action is necessary and what punitive steps should be taken (ex: suspension). Only in this drastic, but unavoidable way can co-rec football be restored to its original intent—safe, fun recreation.

Robinson’s idea of an independent board to investigate claims of unsportsmanlike conduct may have been impractical, but his concerns were not. Over the previous few years, Co-Rec, which had started off as way to get people involved and have fun doing so, had devolved into a sport filled with overly competitive players, unnecessary roughness, and unsportsmanlike behavior. The saddest part was that all too often the best teams were the ones that played the roughest and the dirtiest. This ruined it for the masses of Hinmanites who were drawn at first to
the inclusiveness of the sport and who now turned away disgusted at what it had become. This was hardly the Co-Rec that Bob Giomi had envisioned over a decade ago.

Co-Rec Weekend and the Super Bowl was one of the biggest to date with well over two hundred spectators lined up around the Hinman Quad to watch the close of a controversial Co-Rec season. Make Me opened up by scoring early in the first half. Barbara Keen connected with Eddie Brandmark who put Make Me on the map. For a while it appeared that the projections were going to be true, that Make Me was going to wipe the floors with I Tappa Keg. The underdog team came back with a vengeance, though, with Mark Rosenbloom when he snatched up a pass from quarterback Nora Arnesen and scored a touchdown. Picking up the extra point, I Tappa Keg took the lead with 7 points to Make Me’s 6. Todd Wintraub then picked off one of Barbara Keen’s passes, lateralled it to Craig Joseph, who then ran it in for a touchdown. Picking up the extra point, I Tapp Keg was firmly in the lead by the end of the first half. Trailing 14-6, Make Me’s Nick Pasyanos picked up his second interception, which set up Drew Mandler for a clear drive for a touchdown pass from Keen. With eight seconds left in the game, Drew Mandler tried to force one last touchdown, but I Tappa Keg held him resulting in an astounding 14-12 victory for I Tappa Keg.

This upset was a true Cinderella moment for I Tapp Keg. Their rival, Make Me had been 7-1 for the regular season. Make Me was the clear favorite to win with veteran players like Nick Pasyanos and Drew Mandler and Barbara Keen, who was seeing her third consecutive Super Bowl that season. The only real experienced player on I Tappa Keg was their captain, Todd Weintaub. Weintaub, elated at this team’s victory, proclaimed that while no one on his team expected his team to win, they made it clear that they were not counting themselves out. I Tappa Keg’s quarterback Nora Arnesen announced after the game, “We really played well. We didn’t
expect to win, but it feels good.’’

Weintraub and defensive captain Craig Joseph spoke candidly after the game. They said their victory was related to the girls on their team, especially their defense which rushed Barbara Keen to make some poorer than usual throws. They also brushed off rumors that they were a dirty team, stating that they were cleaner than most of the other teams they had played against. They also publicly stated their discontentment with Hinman Co-Rec Committee and their selection process for referees. For the most part, Weintraub and Joseph believed that the referees this season were not good. They did not make good calls and they did not enforce banning players who were violent. Joseph ended on a positive note by adding, “I’d just like to say: There’s nothing like Co-Rec!’’

Parallel to the Super Bowl, the Soup Bowl saw Vicki’s Quickies defeat the ACE team 13-6. The most interesting part of the game saw Vicki’s Quickies players put on shirts from last year’s team Fields So Good, and try to hide the ball in the middle of a huddle and advance it downfield that way. Although it lacked some of the spark and flamboyant all-in-good-fun flair that previous Soup Bowls had, it still was an entertaining spectacle to watch.

That years MVP award went to Nora Arnesen of I Tappa Keg and the Least Valuable Player award went to ACE player Patrick Morales. Todd Weintraub was voted the Least Popular Player in Co-Rec. The best banner for Co-Rec Weekend went to Coming Attractions and the best t-shirt of the season went to the team Virgin Turf. Besides the usual good natured ribbing that occurred at the end of every Co-Rec Weekend, it seemed as though the season that was beset by pitfalls and controversy had ended amicably. As would be seen shortly, that was far from the truth. The controversy and hullabaloo over Co-Rec Season 1983 was only getting started.

In retrospect, the Hinman College Co-Rec community should have seen it coming. It began when an article which was written by Make Me player Nina Axelrod entitled “Why
Hinman College Dislikes I Tappa Keg” was printed in the *Hinman Halitosis*. The short but vicious article stated:

It is a well known fact that I TAPPA KEG is extremely disliked among Hinman College. One may wonder what this team has done to deserve this animosity. The basic response is that they have turned a supposedly fun, floor involved activity into a serious contest. Instead of allowing everyone to be involved, they have consistently played the same people in the large majority of their games. Scoping out the competition and formulating statistics on their performance is totally inappropriate. The consensus is that they should have just relaxed and enjoyed the games, so in the winning the championship, they would have also won the respect of their adversaries.xiii

This inflammatory article prompted a rebuke from I Tappa Keg in the next edition of *Hinman Halitosis*. They responded by writing:

Does Hinman College really dislike ITK [abbreviation for I Tappa Keg] or is it a very vocal few who distort facts and pass these on as truth? Recall the noise level of most Co-Rec games; recall the heated disputes between captains and refs or even whole teams and refs; recall the number of injuries on the Co-Rec field; think about the still existing animosities between teams and individuals due to Co-Rec; think about missing banners¹; think about the fact that certain people dislike ITK as well as other teams solely because of Co-Rec. Who’s really taking Co-Rec too seriously?

We anxiously awaited the arrival of the Co-Rec Halitosis. When it arrived, we were shocked. Although not a professional organization, we would expect the members of the Halitosis staff to act in a professional manner, using discretion and common sense. This was not done. The opinion of a few was printed as the opinion of many, false assumptions were printed as truth, and people were quoted for things never said. The Halitosis [sic] showed poor taste in publishing parts of the last issue which were not journalism at all, but lies, mistruths, and false rumours [sic] that all wreak of personal vendettas, bad sportsmanship, and sour grapes.

We the members of ITK feel sorry. We feel sorry for the people who could not let us savor an unexpected honor. We feel sorry that a few ignorant people felt it necessary to detract from the moment, and from Co-Rec in general. It is sad that they have turned a normally fun game into a vicious, mud slinging attack that has left Co-Rec the big loser.xiv

In response to this, Nina Axelrod defended herself by writing:

The explanation for the “Why Hinman College Dislikes I TAPPA KEG” article was accidentally omitted in Monday’s issue. We apologize for this since it changes the entire

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¹ I Tappa Keg’s banner had been stolen during Co-Rec Weekend. An article about it being laced with a skin removal agent (purportedly written by I Tappa Keg) had been published in the previous issue of *Hinman Halitosis*. 
tone of the article, but are by no means apologizing for its contents. In gathering Co-Rec quotes from the teams involved, I was surprised to find that practically everyone focused negatively on I TAPPA KEG, and in using journalistic discretion, we realized that these crude comments could not be printed. This attitude disturbed us and Steve Kraus [contributing writer for Hinman Halitosis] suggested instead that I follow it up and find out exactly why this animosity was present. The article consisted of consistent responses from teams and was not intended as a biased opinion. Words such as “a basic response” and “consensus” should indicate to any reader that it is not the opinion of any one or two individuals, but a wide majority. The Hinman Halitosis [sic] is the voice of Hinman College, and not one dorm or floor, so if these attitudes are prevalent, they should be explored.xv

Steve Kraus also offered up an apology of sorts to the members of I Tappa Keg. He wrote:

On page 7 of our co-rec issue, there were two made up, strictly for laughs, joke articles. They were entitled “Todd Wintraub Chosen as 1983 LPP” and “Public Service Announcement”. Todd’s quote in the former item was completely fabricated as was the threat of ITK’s banner being treated with a skin removal agent. I honestly felt people could not take these as real articles since it appeared to me to be obviously ridiculous. It is too bad some people did take them as the real McCoy. By the way, a cartoon, unless political should also be taken humorously. Any other items people had problems with should be taken up with the individual writers or the Halitosis Editor.xvi

Latter in the issue, Kraus, who had no doubt caught a great deal of flak from the Hinman community, further clarified his position.

As an assistant editor of the Halitosis, I try to the best of my ability to serve the interests of Hinman College as a whole. I freely admit that I am human and, being so, make mistakes. Items that I feel are newsworthy, meaning articles that would interest Hinmanites, I try to get printed. Those that are not, I would not want to waste my time or effort on. Quite plainly, I have my own feelings on the newsworthiness of an item. Nina Axelrod’s article in the co-rec issue was, in my opinion, (and obviously Mike Dzikowsky’s as well) newsworthy. After all, I requested she write it. She wrote it, I read it, we discussed it, and then it was printed. Had I had any part in the writing, I would, as any writer would, want to get credit for it—meaning a co-byline.

Never did the consequences of the article occur to me. I also never realized that because my name appeared in the article saying I prompted it (see “A Needed Explanation”, pg.2) [parenthesis in original] would it seem that I helped write it or necessarily agreed with it. I simply felt it was a necessary follow-up to events that had been occurring. I would never claim to be the spokesperson of I Tappa Keg, especially since I was not able to attend most of the games. That, however, does not make me any less happy for the floor members who were proud to have won, as they well should have been.
Guys, aren’t you going a bit too far already?\textsuperscript{xvii}

With explanations given regarding why these articles were printed, and with Steve Kraus squarely in hot water, \textit{Hinman Halitosis} Managing & Publishing Editor Michael Ditowsky had this to say on the entire issue and on the Co-Rec season in general:

An exciting Co-Rec season has finally come to an end. It may have been an excellent season, but it was not without reservations. I Tappa Keg may have been accused of playing too seriously, but are we, the accusers, all not guilty of such?

Co-Rec season is supposed to be a time of fun, enjoyment, and team spirit; it should not be a time of false accusations and envious dislike. One example came in our article “Why Hinman College Dislikes I Tappa Keg.” If people had not been so callous as to hand in derogatory quotes about ITK, we would have had an enjoyable final quotes section for our special Co-Rec issue. We found it necessary to dispose of our quotes and find out why people said what they did. We decided to print this information in order to display the pathetic attitude of many Hinmanites. When our explanation and rebuttal were accidentally left out, this changed the meaning of the whole article, and made it appear as a personal attack on ITK. The saddest part came when people congratulated me on a great article.

I was very dismayed that people could have such a malicious attitude towards any team, especially when there were other floors who took Co-Rec more seriously than ITK. They also are not as dirty as many people claim they are. It was another team we \textit{(Leave it to Beaver)} were playing when I was thrown into a tree. When we finally got to play ITK, although we beat them, thy played a very clean game and were good sports. I wonder about some of the other teams we played.

The final topic I’d like to discuss was the fate of ITK’s banner. Rumor has it that people from several different teams may have conspired and burned it. I hope this is not true, but if it is, a great injustice has been done. It is the theft of banners that may be fun provided that they are eventually retrieved by their owners. The actual permanent disposal of private property is an act capable only of pinheads. Which reminds me; Tuesday morning redecoration of the quad was uncalled for and was the act of one capable of beating a dead horse.

Fellow Hinmanites; Co-Rec football is meant to be enjoyed by everyone. The sarcastic attitudes of many of this year’s players tell a sad story. I believe that many of you owe ITK an apology and must end these animosities. Remember, ITK may not be perfect angels, but they are no more guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct than any of the other 29 teams in Hinman.

Please, Co-Rec is over, lay down your arms.\textsuperscript{xviii}
Incredibly, this was not the only letter to the editor concerning the Co-Rec season. HCC President Daniel Stermer wrote one in response to the letter published by Stu Robinson in a previous issue of Hinman Halitosis. Stermer wrote in part:

This letter is in response to yours in last week’s issue. I, too, have watched Co-Rec games over the years. Competition has become very much a part of our lives here at SUNY-B. But, before I even go on to answer your letter, I would appreciate knowing who you really are. If you have a complaint, as you do, why did you not sign your real name so we could discuss the matter? That is what bothers me the most. I’m glad to see that you are concerned.

At the Hinman College Council Meeting on October 10, in Roosevelt Hall, the executive committee stated that Co-Rec would be stopped if there was a continuation of rough playing on the part of a few people. We also directed the Co-Rec chairpeople to have meetings with the team captains and a possible re-training session for the referees. In my opinion, this was something that was desired by the committee and passed on to Council to bring back to the dorms…We saw that a problem did exist, and did attempt to do something about it. We did not stand by passively and watch it grow. Another place you possibly could have found the statement was on the front page of the Halitosis [sic] dated October 13.

I agree with you that Co-Rec is a game of touch. But, sometimes people happen to get overzealous and accidentally hit someone else a bit rough. In my opinion, I did not think anyone was out to hurt another player. Another thing that happens is that some people appear to be tagged roughly, but were really off balance and fell. When playing touch, sometimes you accidentally touch someone in a “private” place. I tend to doubt that people plan to tag you in certain places.

As you can see, we did know that a problem did exist and did make a response that we all felt was appropriate. The only matter that I regret was that you did not sign the letter so I could personally talk to you.xix

Stermer had every right to be angry. As President of HCC he oversaw everything that went on in Hinman. Excessive criticism of HCC about Co-Rec, especially at this time when the sport was so stacked with controversy, was not something that needed to done in the manner that the student whose alias was “Stu Robinson” had to do at that particular moment. In his defense, there was no way of knowing the full extent of the fallout for that season of Co-Rec.
The controversy continued in other ways. The team Pump ‘em and Dump ‘em complained of unfairness during the banner judging competition during Co-Rec Weekend.

This past Saturday something happened which seems to be happening quite often since the beginning of the semester—something deserved by Lehman Hall has been taken away from it.

...Despite being what many people considered the best banner in the contest, Pump ‘em and Dump ‘em’s banner failed even to make a place standing, rather, it is why the banner was omitted from the judges decisions. According to rumor, the banner had nothing to do with football. Other than having a man wearing the Pump ‘em and Dump ‘em jersey, carrying a football, and running into the endzone [sic], we guess we have to agree that the banner had nothing to do with football. If this is the case, then why did Coming Attractions’ banner pull the first place standing? Not that the banner was bad, but even teammates from Coming Attractions questioned the judges decision, and furthermore, questioned the “fact” that if Pump ‘em and Dump ‘em’s banner had nothing to do with football, how on Earth did their banner?

Still, the afore mentioned incidents do not measure up to Pump ‘em and Dump em’s biggest grievance. If, by some chance, our banner had nothing to do with football how could the judges have known? After all, they walked past the banner faster than Vicki’s Quickies Road Runner moved away from Wile E. Coyote. Secondly, their eyes were open on the banner less than three seconds. Now, any normal human being could not have possibly have had ample time to judge the banner in that short a time period.

Also, if the judges are supposed to be unbiased, then why did Daniel Stermer, Hinman College’s own president, make a sarcastic remark when he was walking by the banner?

Now comes the most important part of the letter: discussing the issue of Maria [Carra-RD in Hinman and Assistant Coordinator], who also served as one of the judges Saturday. What it seems to boil down to is that Maria is, in a sense, being unfair to Lehman Hall in general. As you know, Maria served as the R.D. of Lehman Hall last year. Now it seems that Maria is attempting to be nonbiased towards Lehman. However, in doing so, she is being unfair to Lehman. We can understand that she might receive flack for giving recognition to Lehman, and therefore, tries to spread awards around to other halls in Hinman. But she has to understand that if a particular group or hall deserves recognition, then they, no matter who they are, should receive that recognition.

This letter is not being written solely to criticize Maria or protest the outcome of the banner contest Saturday. This letter is being written to shed light on a problem. We hope the outcome of this letter will bring positive results.xx

The following week the team would write an apology letter to Maria, clarifying that they did not perceive her as the problem, only one of many judges that they deemed to be unfair.
Still, this letter along with the numerous other letters to the editor showed beyond a reasonable doubt that a large number of Hinmanites were dissatisfied with this year’s Co-Rec season.

So ended the 1983 season of Co-Rec football, which was by far the season most mired in protests, unsportsmanlike conduct, and controversy. Lost in the shuffle was the hard work done by the Co-Rec Committee and the many referees, players and fans who only wanted to have a good time in a sport that was Hinman’s own. In retrospect, everyone should have seen it coming. The past few seasons, almost since the time Bob Giomi left Hinman, had begun to show signs of hyper-competitiveness, unnecessary roughness, and general unsportsmanlike conduct. Part of the problem had been that referees and those in charge of Co-Rec, like the commissioners and committee members, had failed to nip these problems immediately as they arose. Over the years they had compounded into a culture of complacency and by 1983 they had come to a head. It resulted not only in a Co-Rec season that was not in line with the original mission and purpose of Co-Rec, but also in a season full of hurt feelings and alienation from the sport. Although just about all of the parities involved in the controversy had agreed to bury the hatchet, lingering issues remained. Upon witnessing the fallout, many Hinmanites became disgruntled with a sport that they once had found fun and inclusive, but was now exclusive, hyper-competitive, mean-spirited, and corrupt. Even some of the most diehard Co-Rec players and fans became disgruntled with the sport and vowed to leave it behind forever. Hinman Co-Rec football was at a crossroads. Without serious and immediate reform it had the potential of going the way of Hinman Follies and other once great Hinman institutions. Many wondered if there would even be a Co-Rec season next year. The future of Co-Rec football was in jeopardy.

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