Holy Cross Softball is looking for this season to be a continuation of the success of the last three years under Coach Bob Neville's leadership. The team is still young, but they have made great improvements since he took over in 1998. He came as a welcome change for the team, taking them to a 39-19-1 record his first year.

This was a great improvement from the 15-21-1 record the team posted in the year before. In 1998, the team won its first ever Patriot League regular season title as well as the league tournament championship. For his efforts, Neville was voted Patriot League Coach of the Year. In 1999, the team finished with a 24-25 record, gaining another league title and taking its second trip to the championship game.

Last year, the team finished with a weaker record of 9-27-1 (4-6 Patri-ot), but they made a comeback at the end of the year. The team hopes the strong ending to last season will carry over to the 2001 season. After many difficult games against non- league opponents such as Harvard, Boston College, and URI, the Cross Saders will return to Providence and take on two starters from the 2000 squad: Briana Crane, .241 batting average and 16 RBI's, and Kait Hannan who last year with a .336 batting average and 13 RBI's, and Kait Hannan who last year with a .336 batting average, and 13 RBI's, and Kait Hannan who last year with a .336 batting average.

There are five seniors on the team, including captains Tiffany De-Coff, third base and Jamie Olenoski, second base. Liz Curll will be stepping into Tiffany De-Coff's shoes as a tri-captain. They hope to lead the young team which includes seven freshmen to a strong record this year. The freshman class is well-rounded, including two out- fielders, two pitchers, one catcher, and four infielders.

The team also welcomes back 1998 graduate and Patriot League Championship team member Allison Egbert as an assistant coach. During her time at Holy Cross, Egbert was an outstanding outfielder and her expertise in that area as well as her knowledge of, and experience with, the game should prove to be quite an asset.

This year for Spring Break, as many of us relax at home or on the beach, the Lady Saders will be hard at work in Kissimee, Fla. where they will compete in the Rebel Spring Games. The team will gain much experience during this trip, playing ten different teams.

Once the regular season starts, they will be playing a full schedule with up to eight games per week, facing each Patriot League opponent four times in weekend double-head- ers. With the exception of a home game against non-league opponent, Siena on Mar. 28, the Lady Saders will be hard at work in Kissimee, Fla. where they will compete in the Rebel Spring Games. The team will gain much experience during this trip, playing ten different teams.

The new weekend schedule will be 14 games in total. As of late, cheerleading has changed into a more gymnastic activity. Nowadays, cheerleaders are performing very athletic maneuvers. Therefore when asked whether cheer is a sport or not, well, these men are kidding themselves because bowling is definitely an activity and not a sport. Bowling does require skill, and there are rules that govern the competitive nature of bowling, but there is simply no physical exertion involved in bowling. I have watched bowling on ESPN and ABC, and I have yet to see a man sweat. Without sweat, there is no physical exertion, and bowling is not a sport.

The next topic of discussion is golf. Golf is the gentleman's game, it is played in nice clothes. It usually does not involve getting dirty or physical contact. As a result of this, it is commonly referred to as an activity of the rich and not a sport. This sentiment is simply wrong. To hit a golf ball the proper way, one must coordinate almost every muscle in the body, and move them all at the same time. Again some people would argue that there is no physical exertion, there is skill, and there are rules that govern it. I cannot understand why there is a debate over whether running is a sport, whether it is short or long dis- tances, running is a sport. There is physical exertion, there is skill, and there are rules that govern it. Running is not a sport because the result relies to heavily on the car. Though it is true that the re- sult of the race depends heavily on the car's performance, the driver of the car definitely played just as big a role in the result of the race as the vehicle does. The drivers of these cars physi- cally exert themselves, as they steer a car moving in speeds around 180 mph, and at the same time have the hand eye coordination to shift at the same time. Therefore, I give the definition of sport it is clear that auto racing fulfills the three main portions of the definition which are physical exertion, skill, and competitive nature.

Bowling. The word "bowling" makes me think of a fat old man, smoking a cigarette. This old man and his friends love bowling, but I think that playing bowling would most likely have in common? The answer is running. This is why I cannot under- stand why people would ever question if running is a sport. This isn't the case, running is exercise, there is skill, and there are rules that govern running. Of course these are just my opinions, and they are by no means going to end the debate over whether cheerleading is a sport. But I hope that this column will help to get the discussion started and help to educate others that all sports do not have the same rules or qualifications.

The final question that I would like to pose is whether cheerleading is a sport? This in my mind is the most controversial question that I am debating in this column. When I began high school the Massachusetts did not recognize cheerleading as an official sport, but rather an ac- tivity. However, when I reached my junior year, Massachusetts recognized cheerleading as a sport. But after all this debate, people still are constantly debating this subject. This is a re- sult of the changing nature of cheerleading. Up until the 1980's, cheerleading was simply so girls who would cheer on their team and rev-up the crowd, and maybe work some pyramids or what not. As of late, cheerleading has changed into a more gymnastic activity. Nowadays, cheerleaders are performing very athletic maneuvers. Therefore when asked whether cheer lead- ing is a sport, I would have to say that it isn't there yet, but is evolving into a sport. At this moment, some cheer leading squads are as hardworking as the teams they root for, and some aren't. Well, at all the events that I have seen cheerleaders all cheer- leading will evolve and be recognized as a legitimate sport with legitimate athletes.

Of course there are just my opinions, and they are by no means going to end the debate over whether cheerleading is a sport. But I hope that this column will help to get the discussion started and help to educate others that all sports do not have the same rules or qualifications.

P.S. To all our sports teams traveling over break, have a great time, be safe, and do us all proud.

CRUSADER World Series Picks

Doug - The Mets
Marissa - The Yankees
Kate - The Red Sox
Matt - The Reds
Judy - The Rangers