While the whole of Holy Cross was making their final preparations for Spring Break, the men’s and women’s hoops teams had other plans, namely, their destiny to repeat as Patriot League champs and return in the NCAA Tournament. Travelling to the Showplace Arena in Upper Marlboro, MD, it was business as usual for the men as they downed seventh seeded Vermont 62-59 in an early 12-2 lead. A game of runs ensued as HC would retake with a 9-2 run of their own to knot the game at 14, led by O’Keefe and Briscoe who tallied 16 on the day and contributed heavily to the team’s 53.8 shooting percentage in the opening stanza. Regardless, it was Holy Cross who was destined for the Championship.

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\text{Finals:} \\
\text{(2) Holy Cross- 74} \\
\text{(2) Bucknell- 88}
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It’s designed so the one and two teams meet in the finals, and the women’s bracket was no different, however, someone forgot to tell Bucknell that they weren’t supposed to emerge victorious. It was Creamer who would drop a game high 22 points on the Lady ‘Saders and prevent them from achieving their second straight bid to the NCAA tournament and third straight PL Championship. Followed closely to Creamer was Kate Franks who chipped in 19 and Vicki Quimby in the finals wouldn’t disappoint as both teams battled through a see-saw of lead changes and ties. The opening stanza would conclude with Bucknell clinging to a one-point lead (27-26) heading into the locker room. Szatko would once again lead the way for the Crusaders shooting 3-6 from the floor and an early 12-5 lead. A game of runs ensued with a 9-2 run of their own to knot the game at 14, led by O’Keefe and Briscoe who tallied 16 on the day and contributed heavily to the team’s 53.8 shooting percentage in the opening stanza. Regardless, it was Holy Cross who was destined for the Championship.

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\text{Finals:} \\
\text{(2) Holy Cross- 64} \\
\text{(2) Bucknell- 57}
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The semi-finals proved to be a day of redemption for the Crusaders as they sought to exact revenge on a Bucknell team that defeat them 75-73 Feb 23. The final showdown in Maryland for the chance to meet American in the finals wouldn’t disappoint as both teams battled through a see-saw of lead changes and ties. The opening stanza would conclude with Bucknell clinging to a one-point lead (27-26) heading into the locker room. Szatko would once again lead the way for the Crusaders shooting 3-6 from the floor and an early 12-5 lead. A game of runs ensued with a 9-2 run of their own to knot the game at 14, led by O’Keefe and Briscoe who tallied 16 on the day and contributed heavily to the team’s 53.8 shooting percentage in the opening stanza. Regardless, it was Holy Cross who was destined for the Championship.

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\text{Finals:} \\
\text{(2) Holy Cross- 59} \\
\text{(2) Bucknell- 41}
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The opening round pit two teams with bad blood still lingering from the previous year in which both battled deep into overtime before Holy Cross was able to emerge victorious and capture the Patriot League Title and a trip to the NCAA Tournament. For Navy, they would suffer the same fate as the Crusaders did one year later. After trading baskets in the opening seven minutes, Brian Wilson’s three-pointer with 13:23 remaining in the first ignited a Crusader 7-0 run over the following two minutes. The Midshipmen found themselves in foul trouble early, only to be capitalized on by a hungry Crusader squad. Szatko led Holy Cross shooting 3-6 from the floor including going 4-5 from the field and 3-3 from the line. Wilson contributed seven to aid the team’s 34 percent shooting effort, while the team’s defense held Navy to a mere 27 percent shooter.

The Crusaders looked to build quickly on their 28-19 half time lead and sink the Midshipmen. Wilson would once again spark a run as HC opened with the halves first points. Navy found themselves in foul trouble early yet again with five team fouls just 4-32 into the second. Free shooting would be clutch for the ‘Saders as the final ten points came from the line as they closed out the first round on a 7-0 run to send the Midshipmen abruptly back to Annapolis with a 59-41 loss. Szatko paced the Crusaders with a game high 19 points to lead all scorers. He was followed by Wilson who earned 12 of his own.

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\text{Semi Finals:} \\
\text{(2) Holy Cross- 59} \\
\text{(2) Bucknell- 41}
\]

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\text{Finals:} \\
\text{(1) American- 54} \\
\text{(2) Holy Cross- 58}
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Every team has its nemesis, and for the American Eagles the Crusaders proved to be just that. Holy Cross was the only team able to sweep the Eagles during the regular season as the PL titans clashed for the third time in the 2001-2002 season. American boasted PL Player of the Year Patrick Doctor who aided the team in putting up an 18-11 lead early in the contest. The team would lose their grip as the Eagles took a stranglehold of the game. Holy Cross would get its turn and respond in turn as they put up a 15-2 run of their own to capture a 26-20 lead. Refusing to be outdone, American struck back with a 6-0 run of their own, eventually able to take a one point lead into half time (26-27). Jave Meade led the Holy Cross effort with seven points at the conclusion of the opening stanza. After coming off his double-double in the semi finals, Whearty contributed six making a bid for the HC MVP of the PL Tournament.

The runs continued as American would jump out to a 34-30 lead on a 5-0 run. It would be their biggest of the half. Holy Cross turned the tide by dropping a 13-2 run but it would be one that would be cut to a mere two points at 50-48. After connecting from behind the arc, American took a 51-30 lead until Whearty notched a lay up to put Holy Cross up for good. Serravalle would cool sink two free throws to ice the game and the championship for the second seeded Crusaders and send them once again to the NCAA Tournament. The 58-54 victory was led by Szatko’s game high 19 points as well as Whearty and Serravalle who each turned in 13 of their own. Szatko was named the PL Tournament MVP at the conclusion.

In Coach Ralph Willard’s third season with the purple and white, he has led his Crusaders to two straight PL Titles. As the team gathered in Cross Roads for Selection Sunday on March 10, Holy Cross watched as their names found their way into the Bracket of 64 yet again.