By Brad Holzwart
Cruiser Sports Staff

The fallen temperatures and looming clouds that have plagued Worcester for the past six months are finally beginning to lift as spring begins to push winter away. As the rejuvenation begins, so too does the Holy Cross Women's Softball team's season.

While many took advantage of the long Spring Break to rest and relax, the Lady 'Saders were hard at work preparing for their Patriot League season by competing at the Rebel Spring Games in Kissimmee, Florida. The squad was scheduled to compete in ten games over the five day trip; however, contests versus Detroit-Mercy and UNC-Wilmington were cancelled. Holy Cross returned to Worcester with a 3-5 record, capturing wins versus Sacred Heart 5-0, St. Joseph's 6-3, and St. Bonaventure 10-7.

The other girls were off a rough start as they were handed a 13-3 drubbing by Providence College to open the games on March 6. The losing woes continued as the Lady 'Saders dropped their next two, 6-5 to Yale later that afternoon and 6-4 to Robert Morris on their next two, 6-5 to Yale later that afternoon.

A scoreless first inning was quickly finished with the weekend with a 1-2 record, boasting a 3.50 ERA over 18 innings and seven strikeouts.

"We have the potential for a good pitching staff," commented Crusader head coach Bob Neville. "Consistency will be the key."

The Lady 'Saders offense was powered by junior Caitlyn McCarthy and senior Jamie Olenoski who each went 2-3 in the field. Freshman Nicole Vitti added a triple as she went 1-3.

After having March 8 off, the adrenaline continued to course through the Crusaders in their next matchup versus St. Joseph's on Mar. 9. A scoreless first inning was quickly ended in the second as Holy Cross drew first blood. The game blow open in the fourth as the 'Saders were able to tally four runs against St. Joe's pitcher, Kristen Doris. At 6-0 heading into the final two innings, St. Joe's attempted to rally but fell short as they were able to merely cut the Crusaders ahead in half.

Sophomore Kaitlyn Hannen was at the helm for Holy Cross. The win was her first of the year. She pitched six innings giving up a scant four hits and two runs. After facing two batters in the seventh, Manner entered to close out St. Joe's. McCarthy continued her offensive presence going 2-3 once again.

"(Alyssa) Hayden and (Caitlyn) McCarthy led the way with their bats," said coach Neville. Freshman Christine Palmieri added the offense as she was a perfect 2-2 in the game, posting one RBI and a triple.

Their win streak now at two games, the Lady 'Saders took to the field against St. Bonaventure Mar. 10. After a slow start, falling behind 4-0, Holy Cross picked up where they left off against Sacred Heart and St. Joe's. Resurrecting their offensive power with a one run fifth inning, the Crusaders stormed back in the sixth crossing the plate six times and taking the lead 7-4. St. Bonaventure would not lie down, as they went right back at Holy Cross in the seventh with a comeback of their own.

Three late runs knotted the game at seven and sent it into extra-innings. Not willing to have their comeback spoiled, the Crusaders struck with three runs in the eighth and the pitching of Palmieri kept St. Bonaventure off the board and bolted the door shut.

McCarthy led the way on offense once again, pacing Holy Cross going 2-3 on the day and driving in three runs. She pitched six innings giving up eight hits and notchting one strikeout on the mound. McCarthy led the team throughout the tournament with a .450 batting average. Combined with Alyssa Hayden and Jean Connolly, the three have 16 RBIs on the year.

Holy Cross's three game tear would suddenly wither away during the remaining two games of the tournament, though, as the girls suffered losses later in the day on Mar. 10 to the University of Maine 7-2, and to round out the trip, they were dealt a 2-1 loss to Wagner. The two final losses sent the Crusaders home with a 3-5 record.

"The team played well," said Neville. "Although the win/loss record could have been better. This year's team has improved its offense to this point by leaps and bounds and could very well be the team's strength."

Upon their return, Holy Cross took on Ivy League Brown in a makeup from Mar. 14. The teams split the doubleheader with the Crusaders taking the first game 7-6 and the Bears dominating 7-1 in game two.

Game one saw Holy Cross battle back from 2-0 and 3-1 before knocking in two runs in the sixth to be immediately followed by a four run explosion in the seventh. Brown attempted a late comeback scoring twice in the sixth but only managed to get one in the seventh. The run proved to be the last as the Lady 'Saders closed the door.

On the mound for Holy Cross was Vitti who pitched six innings entering in Relief for Manner after the second. Vitti gave up five hits and registered two Ks. A shortseconded game due to darkness had Brown routing the Crusaders 7-1 through five innings.

The Bears struck first in the opening inning and pushed their lead to 1-0 in the second bringing in three more runs. Holy Cross was only able to hold Brown off the scoreboard in the third inning.

"Most of our work is needed on the defensive side of the game," noted Neville. "To be successful, we must make the plays we are supposed to." In her second start, Hannon gave up nine hits and saw her record fall to 1-1 on the young season. She boasts an ERA of 3.24.

The Brown doubleheader extended the team's record to 4-6. The girls will return to the field May 28 versus Siena for their home opener.

BY ALAN RAMSAY
Cruiser Sports Staff

As the winter thankfully comes to a close, the Men's Golf team here at Holy Cross is awaiting the beginning of its spring season. Coach Bob Molt is somewhat concerned that his team is unprepared going into the season.

"Because the weather has been so treacherous this winter, our players have not had many opportunities for practicing. Our opening tournament is rapidly approaching us, and I have to wonder how rusty our players will be."

Despite his apprehensions, Molt believes that his team can build on the success that it enjoyed during a solid fall campaign. Molt also added that he hopes that some of the younger players on the team, such as freshmen Andrew Sullivan and Kevin Madden, will continue to improve. The team's players feel good about their chances this season.

Senior Matt Swentkofske stated, "We have some young players who gained valuable experience during the fall season. Since we made such great strides in the fall, I think that we will be extremely competitive." Junior Chad Rusek added, "In the fall, we had a very young team that continued to develop each week. If everyone continues to play well, I think that we have an excellent shot at achieving our ultimate goal of winning the Patriot League Championship."

A win at the Patriot League Championship would give the Crusaders a berth in the NCAA tournament. For other players who will be participating as members of the men's golf team are freshmen David Crall and Tom Schneckendorf, sophomore Bobby Loguidice; and juniors Steve Finocchi and Justin Silvia.

Over Spring Break, the team participated in the Spring Tournament in Rock Hill, SC, finishing in seventeenth place.

The men will play in four more tournaments this spring, with their next challenge being the Yale Spring Tournament in New Haven, CT on Apr. 7 and 8.

The Men's Golf team is confident that it will represent Holy Cross well this season.