Holy Cross alumni feuding in recent weeks

BY JIM MALONEY
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Holy Cross has produced many graduates who have gone on to careers that have put them in the everyday spotlight of America. NBA Hall of Famer Bob Cousy, Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas and CNBC's Chris Matthews are probably three of the most well know HC alumni in the spotlight.

However, die hard fans will probably include "The Boston Globe's" Dan Shaughnessy and ESPN's Bill Simmons on the list for their work covering the never dull world of sports. Shaughnessy is a household name among Boston sports fans for his daily column in "The Globe" that has run for many years. Simmons is not as well known, but is starting to make a name for himself with his weekly column that he titled "The Ramblings" beginning in his freshman year. During his sophomore year, Simmons realized that his calling was to write about sports and make a career out of it.

Upon graduating from HC in 1992, Simmons attended Boston University to pursue a graduate degree in print journalism. After he obtained his degree, Simmons was hired by "The Boston Herald" as a high school reporter. Simmons worked for three years at the "Herald" before leaving to do work as a freelancing writer. In 1997, Simmons started a website on AOL Digital City Boston and started gaining recognition with his humorous columns.

Simmons' primary goal as a columnist is to entertain his readers. "That's my goal. I do my homework, I break a sweat and I put a lot of work into my columns and I try to remain a sports fan and think like a sports fan." Although he has been around sports for a number of years now, Simmons tries to remain just a fan by avoiding the "behind the scenes" aspect of sports that could taint his image of the games he loves so much. "Going into clubhouses and press boxes would invariably jade me and make me approach sports from a different angle. I never want to end up grizzled and anti-sports like some of these guys.

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Although Simmons is rapidly gaining popularity, not everyone appears to be happy for him. In his column "Holiday Leftovers Worth Repeating" on Nov. 24, Shaughnessy alludes to Simmons. Shaughnessy wrote, "What exactly qualifies one to be the Sports Guy? If Joe-from-Revere says he's the Astronaut Guy does he get to board the next space shuttle mission?"

A week later in his column on ESPN.com's Page Two, Simmons was not afraid to respond to Shaughnessy's verbal attack. "I must be doing well since "Boston Globe" columnist Dan Shaughnessy took a shot at me in his column last week. You know how every city has a bitter sports columnist who stopped liking sports 10 years ago, so they just start ripping everybody and trying to make everyone else miserable? Well, I finally made Shaughnessy's list. Big day. Can I put this on a resume?"

Apparently Simmons feels Shaughnessy is one of the reporters who has lost his love for sports after being involved in Boston's hectic atmosphere. Who can forget Shaughnessy's run-in with Carl Everett in the clubhouse in 2000. After having years of contact with arrogant and sometimes ignorant athletes like Everett, who can blame Shaughnessy if he has lost some of the love for sports that prompted him to a career in the field in the first place. Simmons hopes to avoid this problem by staying away from the off the field aspect of sports as much as possible to avoid ugly incidents with the many loveable sports figures such as "Crazy Carl." However, when asked directly about Shaughnessy, Simmons declined to give much of a comment. "We both went to HC and we both should be playing nice.

Both columnists have their own unique style, but both manage to entertain readers in each column. The majority of sports fans who hail from the Boston area are probably familiar with Shaughnessy's work, but some may not be acquainted with Simmons yet.

If I can give you one piece of advice, I'd urge you to log on to ESPN.com and check out Simmons columns that he writes on Page Two three times a week. If you like sports, or even if you just like to be entertained, check out his work. You won't be disappointed.