

# Sports @ HCC

For nearly 60 years, sports has been a part of Holyoke Community College.

## 1946 - 1968

In 1946, HCC was established as Holyoke Junior College with a total enrollment of 97 in three academic areas. Dr. George Frost was the founding father of this city-sponsored institution. Within 2 years the college began its basketball program with games against business schools, municipal jr. colleges, pharmacy schools and freshmen programs at the four-year level. . Students groups participated in other sports during the early years, however basketball was the prime sport that was recognized as "intercollegiate."

It was not uncommon for HCC to play a preliminary game at Providence College, BU, UConn, Harvard, or at UMass. Freshmen teams were a big part of HCC's competitions until 1968, when "freshman eligibility" was voted into the NCAA By-Laws. This deminished opportunities for 4-year students and increased it for two-year institutions.

In 1964, HCC became a state, rather than a municipal institution of higher learning. It was one of 15 state community colleges within the Massachusetts public higher education system.

In 1968, a group of Community College administrators gathered to initiate a "Conference" for the 15 Community Colleges. The result was the "Massachusetts Community College Athletic Conference" (MCCAC) which was officially established in 1969 by the Massachusetts Board of Regional Community Colleges. Men's and Women's Basketball, Baseball, and Softball were the first sports sanctioned by the conference. Championships were held and policies and procedures to keep an even playing field were developed. Tennis, cross-country, golf, ice hockey, soccer, lacrosse and even football were played by some of the 15 colleges.

In 1971, HCC joined the "National Jr. College Athletic Association" (NJCAA) and participated in Region 3 - an area that ranged from Providence, Rhode Island to Buffalo, NY. HCC students were selected to All Star teams in Basketball and Baseball and in 1971 the golf team finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in this large region. The NJCAA, which dates back to 1938, is a national organization founded to promote and supervise sports and activities with educational objectives consistent with two-year colleges. The Massachusetts Colleges gravitated to the NJCAA and adopted many policies and eligibility rules of that organization.

In 1973, a separate Region (21) for New England colleges two-year split off from Region 3 in Upstate New York. HCC and sister colleges were competing at both a conference level and at a regional level that provided students with opportunities to compete for national honors. In the inaugural year of the NJCAA Region 21, HCC finished second in the New England Championship for men's soccer and since hen has continued to be a competitive institution in a variety of sports.

Since 1971,

- the baseball team has participated in post season play in 27 seasons
- men's and women's basketball have won state championships
- softball has won state, new england and competed in district championships
- women's soccer has competed in state and new england tournaments
- golf has won 8 new england championships and competed in national tournaments on twelve occasions

- men's soccer has won eight state titles, 6 new England championships, and competed in district championships - in 1999 HCC finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in the nation and in 2000 the team was a "final four" team at the national level.
- Volleyball has won two new England championships
- tennis has won 4 new England championships and competed in national tournaments on 5 occasions - in 2005 the team finished 8<sup>th</sup> in the nation
- throughout the years, HCC has hosted championships in baseball, soccer, basketball, golf, tennis, and softball.

Today with more than 6,000 students enrolled in different degree programs in five academic divisions: Arts & Humanities, Business, Health Sciences, Science, Engineering and Mathematics; and Social Science. The College continues to offer opportunities to participate and compete in intercollegiate sports.