

"Baby you can drive my car," but you're no athlete

By Chris LaFuria
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In 2006, NASCAR is projected to bring in \$3.5 billion of revenue. Millions of fans flock to race-tracks all over the country throughout the year to support their favorite drivers. From Jeff Gordon to Tony Stewart, many drivers have gained celebrity status in the United States and beyond. The common misconception is, however, that these drivers have received the status of an athlete. Driving your car 250 miles per hour does not classify as a sport.

There are many varieties of mindless human activities that have mistakenly been considered sports. Even though experts offer their professional opinion on why an activity should be considered a "sport," their definition for their justification is rather flawed.

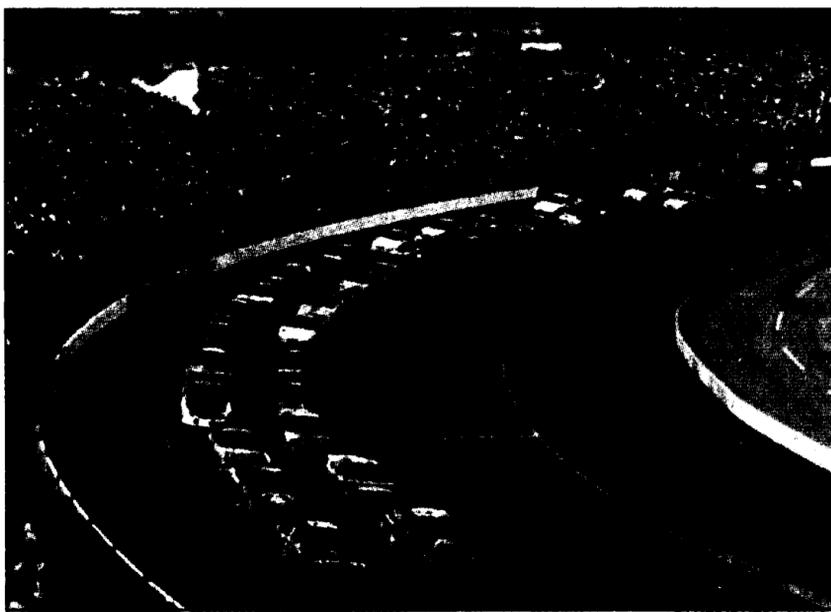
When claiming an activity as a sport, you must scrutinize the level of actual athleticism that is involved with the particular activity. The criteria for receiving the term "sport" should not be as

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relaxed as the American community has made them out to be. Sports are activities that require a genuine physical exertion. A professional sport should not be something that the average American can do well.

Furthermore, there is a long list of activities that have received the term "sport" and should not have.

The first activity, which is arguably the least ath-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

NASCAR draws in large crowds to every race. The Daytona 500 is one of the most viewed sporting events on television. However, all of the drivers inside these cars lack the physical element of an athlete.

letic of this entire list, is NASCAR racing. This "sport" does take a lot of training to become superior, but so does calligraphy. In auto racing, the drivers do not follow the standard for being considered "athletic." No clear physical exertion is needed to be at the top of the game. Not much conditioning is needed to become in-shape for a race. Granted, NASCAR draws the largest crowds and is highly entertaining, but it should not possess the

"sport" label.

I was flipping through the channels the other day when I stumbled on another such activity. As I watched the professional fishing tournament in utter comatose boredom, I heard one of the commentators say, "This sport takes a lot of concentration and skill." When I regained my breath after laughing hysterically for exactly 58 seconds, I did the same assessment of fishing that I did of

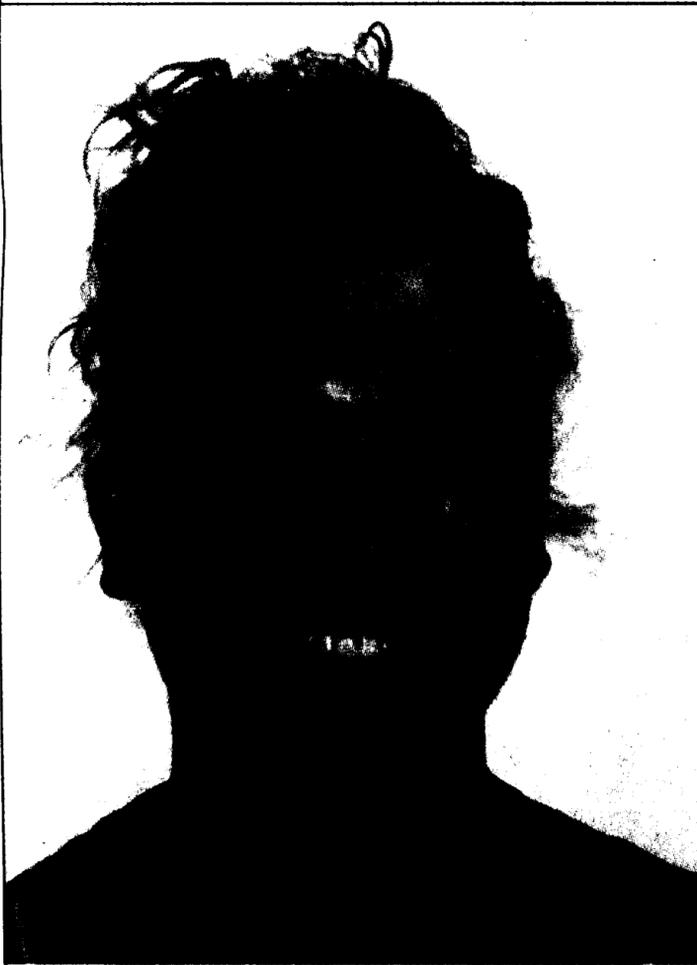
NASCAR. In order to be a fisherman, some skill is necessary to be able to find fish and lure them into your boat (but then again, companies have manufactured Fish Finders that do the work for you). However, this is an activity that your overweight Uncle Remus can do easily, so it is not a sport. Fishing is not physically demanding in the least and requires very little physical prowess.

Immediately apologizing to out neighbors in the Great White North, I would like to take the chance to revoke the title of "sport" from one of the most popular activities to Canadians. Relax hockey fans; Canada's national sport is indeed a sport in all aspects. The sport to which I am referring is curling. Using brushes to slide polished granite stones down the length of a sheet of ice ranks up there with watering a garden as a sport. Even though it is an Olympic sport, the basic premise of being a curling player is not athletic at all. Maybe you could get a job as a Zamboni driver and watch an actual sport up in Canada.

Running. Jumping. Diving. Sprinting. Physical Exertion. These are all criteria for something to be considered a "sport." If you can compete in an activity by sitting down or standing still for more than ten minutes, the activity is not a sport. Driving an automobile and searching for fish should not be considered sports because of their lack of physical demand. Even though there are competition and professional leagues for these activities, they are not sports.

Voice your opinions about what activities should or should not be considered sports. Email Chris LaFuria at csl5005@psu.edu and have your opinion heard.

HOUSING AND FOOD SERVICES ATHLETE OF THE WEEK



NAME: Katie Whitby
SPORT: Softball
CLASS: Freshman
DATE: March 13, 2006

Katie Whitby (Tyron/Tyrone) has been named the Housing and Food Services Athlete of the Week.

The freshman led the Behrend softball team to a spectacular first week of play. Whitby batted an astonishing .484 during the team's spring training in Fort Meyers, FL, bolstering the Blue and White to a 10-0 start, the best start in school history. She also hit four homeruns, two doubles, and a triple and recorded 14 runs and eight RBIs.

"Katie had an exceptional week," said head softball coach Stacy Pondo. "It is a great way to start her career."

The Behrend softball team resumes play Saturday, March 18 when they travel to Bethany for a doubleheader against the Bison. The team will then travel to Westminster on March 22, before opening up conference play at La Roche College on March 25.

Housing and Food Services Athlete of the Week is selected by the Sports Information Staff.

Sports Fans! We need your help! Write for the Beacon and contribute your ideas to help keep the Beacon Sports Page one of the winningest teams at Penn State Behrend.

This Week's Sports Schedule

March 18-19, Women's Water Polo	Behrend Tournament	9 a.m.
March 18, Men's Tennis	Pitt-Greensburg	12 p.m.
March 18, Baseball	@ Bethany (DH)	1 p.m.
March 18, Softball	@ Bethany (DH)	1 p.m.
March 19, Men's Tennis	Penn State Altoona	1 p.m.
March 19, Baseball	@ Bethany (S) w/JV	1 p.m.
March 22, Baseball,	Grove City (S) w/JV	1 p.m.
March 22, Softball	@ Westminster (DH)	3 p.m.
March 22, Women's Water Polo	@ Gannon	7:30 p.m.

Methods for managing March Madness

By Nicholas Underhill
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Selection Sunday is over. The brackets are set. Office workers everywhere are blowing off work to search for that little something that will give them the edge in their office poll. People will conveniently get sick this Thursday and Friday; the smart ones put in for their vacation time. Don't try to fight it; it's a beautiful thing. If you're here reading this you know why it's called March Madness, and you probably have caught the bug. We're here to give you what you need, whether it's to gain an advantage in your bracket, or if you're just trying to quell that thirst until the games start, we've got your back.

Will Allan Ray Play?

Ray, a first team all Big-East selection and Villanova's second-leading scorer and rebounder, nearly had his eye gouged out during Friday night's loss to Pittsburgh. He has been cleared to participate in non-contact basketball drills, but it is unknown if he will be available for the opening round. I'd wait to see video of him in the gym before writing the team in for the Final Four.

How is Tyrus Thomas' ankle?

LSU stated that the freshman forward was only sidelined as a precaution and that he is healthy and ready to play.

Can Pops Mensah-Bonsu recover from knee surgery?

George Washington's storybook season could possibly be over. Without their center who they lost for the first time since December. Mensah-Bonsu has been out for their last four games while recovering from a surgery in order to fix a meniscus tear. If you're picking the Colonials to make a big run, be careful; the big man may not be back.

Are they telling the truth about Robert Vaden's ankle?

Vaden left late in the Big Ten Semi-finals in a wheelchair after injuring his ankle. Coach Davis said the injury was not serious, but things didn't look favorable for the forward. If Vaden isn't ready for their opener, Davis will be on his way out of Indiana sooner than he'd like.

Can the Bruins hold up?

If any team is at a disadvantage entering the tournament, it has to be UCLA. Every member of the rotation has missed games or practices with different ailments. Fragile senior Cedric Bozeman, who has suffered many injuries throughout his collegiate career, missed eight games due to a shoulder injury. Josh Shipp is out for the season due to a hip surgery, and point guard Jordan Farmar has had ankle troubles all season. After winning the Pac-10 title, UCLA is hoping to carry their success into the tournament, but can this squad survive the rigorous schedule?

Will The Big East Own The Tournament?

With a record breaking eight seeds entering the tournament and a couple of number ones, it sure looks that way. The last time they took the tournament field by storm was back in 1985, when they put three teams in the Final Four with Villanova winning the title.

Can Rashad Anderson, Josh Boone, Hilton Armstrong and Denham Brown win their second national title?

Kentucky's Jeff Sheppard and Allen Edwards were the last players to do so, winning titles in 1996 and 1998. For Connecticut to get these four men their second titles they will have to keep their focus, something they have had trouble with this season. Rudy Gay is their offensive leader, 15.3 ppg, but can only dominate in spurts. Marcus Williams does an excellent job at point guard, 10.7 ppg, 8.6 apg, and exploits defenses beautifully. If they can keep their heads in the game they are headed to Indianapolis.

Can UNC do it again?

Early on, the answer would have been no, but because of the level of inexperience, you almost have to erase the first half of their season. To have a chance to repeat, they will have to rely on Tyler Hansborough to put up 20 points and ten rebounds every night. Rayshaun Terry played excellently in February, averaging 17.3 points, and if he can carry that over to March, their title hopes are definitely legit.

Will Izzo Surprise everybody again?

Does anyone get more out of his team in March than Michigan State's Tom Izzo? He has gotten to four of the last seven Final Fours and has a staggering 23-7 tournament record. Unfortunately, they are not very deep. Outside of Paul Davis, Maurice Ager and Shannon Brown's combined 54.8 points per game, they get very little production. Fatigue is also a very big factor; four of their starters average at least 31 minutes, and PG Drew Neitzel looks to be wearing down. They will also be without PF Matt Trannon.

Will Duke and the Zag's meet in the Final Four?

Duke's J.J. Redick and Gonzaga's Adam Morrison have been holding the nation's attention all season. Their scoring race has been brilliant. Unfortunately, they may not get to face off in a dual that would most likely be reminiscent of the 1979 Final Four, which featured Indiana State's Larry Bird and Michigan State's Magic Johnson. For this to happen, Duke's offense is going to have ride Redick to Indiana, and let's not forget that the Zag's haven't been to the Sweet 16 since 2001.

Can McNamara keep carrying Syracuse?

Before the Big East tournament, it looked like Syracuse was headed for the "other" tournament. Then, McNamara had an insane performance that vaulted them from a bubble team to a number five seed. Gerry Lusk to be on a mission, and after their last few games, he is demanding to be taken seriously. If his groin holds up he could lead them on a big run.