Prompt: Is Providence College more of a hockey or basketball school?

Some believe this is a strong debate. Some have already been programmed to answer basketball. Others probably wonder why this is even a conversation. Personally, at a place like Providence College, where possibilities are endless, I believe there is a very strong case for another answer: hockey. Basketball may have the bigger stage, more fans, March Madness, but hockey thrives on a different kind of energy: a solid identity.

It starts with the leader. Head coach Nate Leaman has led the Friars from the bench since 2011. He has given the program stability, a quality that's hard to find in college sports. Now, entering his 15th year at PC, Leaman has built a program that consistently competes in one of the toughest college hockey leagues while keeping a strong identity. Players come and go, but his culture remains.

Beyond the ability to perform each season, that culture is what stands out most. As a college, it feels like we can really see the hockey team as a team in every sense of the word. The level of chemistry and togetherness is so prevalent, on and off the ice. The team creates an atmosphere that translates to the nights at Schneider. On those nights, the crowd is ready for a fast, physical, unpredictable game, as the students are there because they want to watch hockey.

This is obviously a good debate. There's no question that the AMP is bigger, basketball games get national attention, the entire student body travels to games, and the team has consisted of iconic players and great seasons. But there is no secret that things have changed over the last few years. Coaching drama and player turnover can always make it feel like something is happening off the court. And while this new season and fresh roster look exciting for basketball, we know this season will be for hockey.