Every year, the brothers of the Pitt-Bradford fraternity Sigma Lambda Chi brave the icy Bradford chill in warm winter gear, trudge through snow drifts to face the unknown battle of America’s favorite pastime (cue the theme song) -- football.

Since February of 1997, Sigma Lambda Chi has carried on the tradition of tackles, touchdowns, and triumphs, in an effort to continue the strong relationship between their alumni, their active members, and interested students. Not to mention, continuing the alumni’s successful winning record of 8 wins and 3 losses.

It all started during an impromptu weekend visit for a few of the Sigma Lambda Chi alumni.

According to Brad Zwierlein '94, “it started over brunch when Ed Hamby and I were talking smack with Potteiger and Yonks about playing basketball. Fixing to settle the score in a game of 2 on 2, we found the gym was occupied.”

So they played by the baseball field on Campus Drive, a two-inch coating of ice spread across the snowy tundra. Little did they know that it would evolve into an annual event.


Zwierlein explained, “One of the non-football rules made was that Matt Ryan couldn’t run the ball because we couldn’t stop him. The alumni won by about three touchdowns.”

After the active members’ disappointing loss, pure competition kept the game going. The actives were determined to beat the alumni and begged for them to return, according to Zwierlein.

“Upon beating them again by four touchdowns, the rivalry had begun to explode and lives true to this day.”

After eleven years, the game has grown from 4 on 4 to 8 on 8 with ample reserves and plenty of sideline spectators.

“I love the fact that a simple game that started between a bunch of egotists has evolved into a tradition that the fraternity embraces, both alumni and actives,” he continued.

“IT helps us get people interested,” said Ray Johnson ’07. “It shows the campus that there’s more to fraternities than parties. It brings alumni back and gives us something to look forward to. We can talk to the new members and the students who are interested in becoming brothers.”

Active member and president of Sigma Lambda, Sherard Throne said that, “the tradition keeps going because it is yet another reason for the alumni to come back and visit. It has also survived out of respect for the alumni and all they do for us. Just like every other tradition we Sigmas hold dear, it bridges the gap between alumni and actives, making our Brotherhood that much stronger.”

Rob Swales ‘99 stated, “This is a great excuse for the old guys to venture back to campus for an unofficial Alumni Weekend. Once we graduate we are still brothers and stay involved with the fraternity. When we gather for Winter Weekend, it’s testimonial to the actives and to prospective pledges that we are more than just a social organization -- we’re family.”