COLGATE RAIDERS

QUARTERBACKS-QB Grant Breneman was the Patriot League Frosh POY in '17 when he threw for 1,594 (57%, 18-5) and rushed for 401 (3.0) in 9 starts. In '18 he threw for 1,605 (62%) but his ratio was only 6-4 and he dipped to 307 (2.3) rush. In '19 Breneman started 10 and threw for 1,593 (61%) but his ratio again dipped to 5-5 and only rushed for 212 (1.8). He also started both games in spring, throwing for 419 (55%) with a 0-5 ratio (90 rush, 3.9). Breneman returned last year as a 5 year starter but his numbers had progressively gotten worse each season so we felt he would have a short leash. His best game came against Georgetown (13-17-173, 1 td) and became the first Raiders QB to go 4-0 vs the Hoyas but was injured late. Dual threat QB Michael Brescia he started 4 of the last 5. Brescia had 178 and 162 rush in their last 2 and led the Raiders with 568 (5.0) while also finishing #2 in passing with 614 (56.8%, 2-3). Breneman led with 731 (56.6%, 2-5) and was their #3 rusher (257, 3.3). Harry Kirk started 1 game and added 437 (47.6%, 2-3). Breneman departs but Brescia (3rd Tm All Patriot) was the one who led them to 3 straight wins down the stretch and Kirk adds depth. It's not often you lose a 5 year starter and are better but that appears to be the case.

RUNNING BACKS - In '19 Colgate lost a 2nd Tm AA RB. Colgate only played 2 games in the spring of '21 and no RB topped 50 yards. Both of their top 2 rushers from '19 departed last year. Max Hurleman was their only experienced RB after picking up 46 (3.8, 48 rec) in spring. Hurleman started 10 games and was their #2 rusher with 346 (3.8) and also was their #2 receiver with 281 (9.4). QB's Brescia and Breneman were their #1 and #3 rushers. John Cox had their best ypc (5.8) and was #4 with 256. This year they lose Cox. They are more experienced with Hurleman back but lack depth.

RECEIVERS - Colgate lost their top 3 WR's and a starting TE in '19. Garrett Oakey led with 736 (12.7). TE Nick Diaco was #2 with 366 (14.1). Nick Gill added 288 (10.3) and Nick Draught had 261 (10.4). Oakey also led in spring with 128 (16.0). Three of their top 4 from '19 were gone but Oakey returned. Myles Bradley (71, 11.8) and Joshua Szott (65, 10.8) got valuable experience in spring. They were actually more experienced than they were entering '19. Oakey led with 601 (17.2). Bradley had 250 (10.4) while Ryan Cekay (232, 10.1) and Szott (169, 10.6) also saw significant action. This year they return their top 6 including starting TE William Parker (11 st, 4 rec). Oakey was 2nd Tm All Patriot and this is the strength of their offense.

OFFENSIVE LINE - Colgate lost two 1st Tm All Patriot OL in '19. They fell to just 123 rush ypg (3.2) and sacks went from 30 in '18 to 49! Jovaughn Woolford transferred to Rice and they fell to 93 (2.6) in spring (3 sk). Last year Colgate also lost their starting LG. They did get 3 starters back from '19 and 6 had starting experience. The Raiders rushed for 158 (4.2) and sacks dropped to 23. This year they lose 4 who started 11 games last year. Gone are 2nd Tm All Patriot LT Jayvion Queen, 3rd Tm All Patriot C Sam Diehl, RG Michael Griggs and RT Ben Bohnenberger. This is their biggest ? on offense but they do benefit from a mobile QB.

DEFENSIVE LINE -Colgate held 7 of their first 9 foes under 100 rush yds in '18 then were gashed for 233 (4.9) in the L/3 vs Army/JMU/NDSU. Their struggles continued in '19, allowing 306 rush (6.1) in their F/3 before leveling out, allowing just 128 (3.7) in Patriot League play (176, 4.7, 21 sk overall). Last year Colgate lost NT Jacob Esarco (12 st, #12 tkl'r, 3 tfl) and 1st Tm All Patriot DE Nick Wheeler (13 st, #9 tkl'r, 9.5 sk, 8.5 tfl). They returned 2 starters and got back Abdoul Koyate from injury. The Raiders allowed 226 (5.7) in non-conference play but held 4 of their 7 Patriot League foes under 100 rush and gave up 141 (4.2) in league play. This year they lose DE Koyate (3 st, #12 tkl'r) and DE Owen Rosenberger (4 st, 7 tkl). Eight of their top 10 return including 2nd team All Patriot DE K2 Dickens (4 st, #14 tkl'r). This will once again be one of the best run D's in the Patriot but they need to improve their pass rush (11 sk LY).

LINEBACKERS - Their only returning starter, Nicholas Ioanilli was their top tackler in '19 (6.5 tfl) but didn't return for spring. Last year they only lost 2 backups. All 3 starters returned and they got back their #2, #6, #8 and #11 tkl'rs so they were in much better shape. Braasch was #4 in the Patriot League with 93 tackles and was #2 with 13 tfl's. This year they lose both All Patriot LB's Braasch (2nd Tm) and Trevor Thompson (3rd tm, 11 st, #3 tkl'r, 4 sk, 4 pd). Also gone is Blane Briggs (4 st, #5 tkl'r) and Jared Petrichick (11 st, #7 tkl'r, 4 tfl). They do get their #2, #11 and #19 tkl'rs back but they are clearly less experienced and lost their top 2 guys.

DEFENSIVE BACKS- In '19 Colgate lost 3 starters from a unit that allowed just 137 pass ypg (50.5%, 5-15) and finished #1 in Patriot League pass efficiency D. They still only allowed 53% but jumped to 193 pass ypg and the ratio flipped to 16-4 and they dropped to #4 in pass efficiency. Last year they lost 2x 1st Tm All-Patriot CB Abu Daramy-Swaray (13 st, #4 tkl'r, 10 pbu), FS Aidan Gaertner (12 st, #3 tkl'r), SS Jordan Jefferson (8 st, #14 tkl'r) and Marques Bruce (4 st, #10 tkl'r). Only 1 starter returned and they were even younger than they were in '19. The Raiders allowed 197 pass ypg but only 160 in conference play and finished #3 in the Patriot in Pass D Efficiency. This year they lose CB William Gruber (8 st, #8 tkl'r) who led with 8 pbu's, Collin Heard (6 st, #10 tkl'r) and JT Hower (5 st, #17 tkl'r). Two starters return and they get their #4, #6, #9 and #15 tkl'rs back. They are more experienced and should be even better this year.

SPECIAL TEAMS - Chris Puzzi made 6-9 fg's in '19. Barney Armor avg'd 42.1 ypp (39.6 net). Abu Daramy Swaray avg'd 8.7 PR and William Gruber had 799 KR yds (22.2). Puzzi and Armor were both gone in spring and their replacements didn't fare well (1-3 fg's) so this unit was down a couple notches. Last year Jacob Jaworski and Spencer Biscoe combined to make 9-11 fg's (L/43). Shelby Pruett averaged 35.9 (33.3 net). This year they only William Gruber who had 2 KR td's so this is one of the better Special Teams units in the Patriot.

COACHES - Former Raiders player Stan Dakosty was hired last year and was previously hired as the associate HC here in '17. He recently coached the secondary and has been on the staff since 2007. OC/QB Coach Brent Bassham was hired to the staff here in 2014. He was a Defensive Quality Control Asst at Syracuse in '13. Jordan Belfiori is the Co-DC/DB Coach. This is his 5th season here and in his first year he led the D when Colgate won the Patriot League and allowed just 9 ppg.He was a grad Asst at Western Michigan for 2 years before coming to Colgate. Josh Ison is the ST's coordinator and is in his 5th year here as well. He was a 7 year ST Coor at Tiffin prior to coming here.

FORECAST

OFFENSE - In '17 Colgate averaged 341 ypg and 28 ppg then basically matched those numbers in '18 with 9 starters back, putting up 344 ypg and 27 ppg. Only 4 starters were back in '19 and they dipped to 293 ypg and just 14.8 ppg then they put up just 9 ppg and 305 ypg in their 2 spring games. Last year they lost their top 2 RB's, top 3 WR's and their best OL transferred. They only scored 8 ppg in 4 non-conference but did put up 28 ppg and 375 ypg vs league foes. This year Colgate has 7 starters back. Their Oline is a big ? with only 1 starter back but they were better under QB Brescia when they won their L/3 and had a season high 496 in their finale. This could be a surprisingly good offense.

DEFENSE - In 2018 the Rams had 9 defensive starters returning in their 3-4 defense. They went on a historical run over 8 games, allowing just 12 total points and 181 ypg. Colgate posted a ridiculous 5 shutouts in a 6 game stretch. They held Army to 286 yds (115 yds below their avg) before nearly giving up as many points in their final 2 games (55) as they had allowed in the first 10! In '19 only 4 starters returned but all 4 were All-Patriot. They allowed 34 points or more in each of their first 5 games but did allow 20 or less in 4 of their L/5. The Raiders fell to 27 ppg and 369 ypg allowed. They gave up 32 ppg and 347 ypg in the spring. Last year only 4 starters returned again. They gave up 26.1 ppg and 375 ypg but only allowed 20 ppg and 301 ypg in league play. This year the Raiders return 6 starters. Their Dline is the strength but will need to rebuilt a LB unit that lost 2 all conference guys. This will once again be one of the best defenses in the Patriot.

2022 - In '19 Colgate had just 7 starters back and faced much stiffer competition in league play. They lost 7 All-Patriot defensive players and naturally they took a big step back. They allowed 34+ points in each of their first 5 games and started 0-7 before winning 4 of their last 5 (-76 ypg). They went 0-2 in spring with both games on the road then HC Dan Hunt surprisingly resigned in May. Longtime Asst HC/DB Cch Stan Dakotsy took over as HC. They lost their first 3 by 20+ points in non-conference play then won B2B vs Patriot foes. After another 3 game losing streak by 14+ points they won their last 3. The Raiders finished 5-6 and were -56 ypg overall but +75 ypg in league play. 13 starters are back and the defense should be improved. They start the season with 3 road games including at Stanford. Their home opener is a huge one on Sept 24th vs Holy Cross but their finale is at Fordham. They should finish in the top 3 of the Patriot once again.