Columbia

When Columbia hired Al Bagnoli, they were coming off B2B winless seasons. Bagnoli quickly turned the Lions around. After posting 5 wins in his their first 2 years, the Lions made a remarkable turnaround, going 8-2 in '17 (+30 ypg) and tied for 2nd in the Ivy. In '18 Columbia was considered a contender to win the Ivy but slipped to 6-4 and were -82 ypg. In '19 the Lions returned 15 starters including 9 on offense but had major question marks at QB, lost their top 4 tkl'rs and their star K. After winning their opener Columbia avg'd just 215 ypg in a 3 game losing streak. They blew out Penn at home 44-6 then lost 4 of their L/5 by 30 ppg. They finished 3-7 and were -82 ypg. HC Bagnoli is the winningest active FCS Head Coach and owns the 2nd most Ivy League Titles with 9 from his stint at Penn ('92-'14).

In 2013 Columbia hit rock bottom, avg just 7 ppg in a winless campaign. They made small incremental improvements each year from '14-'17, topping off with 24 ppg in '17. In '18 they lost a 2nd Tm All-Ivy QB and 4 QB's started at least 1 game. They slipped to 23.1 ppg. In '19 they brought back 9 starters on offense but only avg 298 ypg and 19.3 ppg. Josh Bean started the first 4 games in '19 but hit 50% or less in 3 games and the offense sputtered to just 245 ypg so they switched to Ty Lenhart for the last 6. Under Lenhart, Columbia improved to 333 ypg. Lenhart led with 1,278 (60.5%, 8-6, 193 rush) while Bean threw for 534 (57.1%, 3-4). Lenhart returns, and the offense was much more potent under him. John Foreback (8 pass att, 70, 50%, 0-1 '19) also returns. In '18 Ryan Young was Columbia's #1 rusher with just 365 (3.7). Their top 3 rushers returned in '19. Young improved to 460 (4.3). Dante Miller started 2 games and had 150 (2.9) and Broderick Taylor added 118 (2.7). This year the only loss is Marquavious Moore (#3, 192, 3.2). WR Josh Wainwright was 1st Tm All-Ivy with 1,001 (12.8) in '17 but was OFY in the opener in '18 and their top WR, Ronald Smith only had 430 (10.5) while Ronald Smith was #2 with 399 (11.). In '19 they lost their top guy but Wainwright returned from injury. Wainwright started 8 and led with 571 (12.4). Mike Roussos was #2 with 395 (8 st, 11.3). TE Rory Schlageter started all 10 and was #3 with 329 (10.0). 4 of their top 5 depart and Roussos is the only returnee that topped 100 yards in '19. TE Casey Mariucci did start 3 games in '19 (95, 11.9). In '19 Columbia had 4 starters returning on the Oline but was only able to repeat '18's performance, rushing for 109 ypg (2.9, 21 sk). This year only 2 starters return and they lose 5 of their top 8 including 2x All-Ivy C Parker Coogan.

Columbia

In 2017 Columbia was #2 in the Ivy League in scoring defense, allowing 18.6 ppg in conf play. In '18 the Lions had starters return on defense but allowed 418 ypg in Ivy League play and gave up 25.2 ppg on the season (388 ypg). Columbia only had 6 starters return in '19 and while they improved to allowing 380 ypg, they also slipped to 28.6 ppg allowed. In '18 Columbia allowed 148 (4.4, 29 sk) ypg but in Ivy League play they gave up 196 (5.0). In '19 they had 3 starters back on the Dline including Daniel DeLorenzi who led the Ivy with 9.5 sks in '18. They held 4 opponents under 100 rush yds and improved to 151 (4.4) vs Ivy foes and 141 (3.9) overall but sacks slipped to 23. This year they lose all 4 DL starters including 2x All Ivy DE DeLorenzi (10 st, #8 tkl'r, 5.5 sk) along with DT Arman Samouk (10 st, #14 tkl'r), DT Alex Robin (9 st, 13 tkl) and Cooper Wilson (8 st, 13 tkl). Their top 6 DL depart and no one returns with starting experience. In '19 only 1 starter returned at LB and they got Justin Woodley back from injury (3 st, 11 tkl '18). Cam Dillon started the first 3 but was hurt and OFY. Scott Valentas, John Harris, Michael Murphy and Jalen Williams all topped 30 tkls. This year they lose Murphy (10 st, #4 tkl'r, 4.5 tfl) and Williams (4 st, #6 tkl'r) but the Valentas and Harris are back (#2 and #3 tkl'rs) along with Dillon (22 tkl) who returns from injury. Three with starting experience are back so the LB's go from a weakness to a strength. In '18 the Lions streak of improving their comp % allowed for 5 straight years ended with them giving up 59.1% (16-8). In '19 they had 4 back with starting experience and allowed 55.9% (12-6). This year Columbia 3 starters. Gone are Hunter Lunsford (3 st, #5 tkl'r) and CB Ben McKeighan (10 st, #7 tkl'r, 8 pbu). 4 of their top 6 are back including #1 tkl'r Ben Mathiasmeier and this is the most experienced unit on the defense.

In '19 Alex Felkins made 9-14 fg's (L/51). Drew Schmid avg'd 36.2 ypp (32.7). Mike Roussos avg'd 17.3 PR and 23.8 KR. All 3 return, giving Columbia one of the best ST units in the Ivy League.

Only 10 starters are back for Columbia this year (5 on both sides) and they've got top notch ST's. They do have an experienced QB, their top RB, solid LB and DB units. They only get 3 Ivy League home games but those are winnable and they should top '19's win total.