

HOLY CROSS 2019 PREVIEW

Holy Cross has been if anything, consistent over the last 6 years, winning between 4 and 6 games each season. In 2016 they went 4-7 but were -59 ypg and -122 ypg in Patriot League play. In 2017 again they went 4-7, but this time they were +30 ypg and +73 ypg in Patriot League play. Last year Holy Cross returned 14 starters. Bob Chesney took over after spending 5 years at Assumption College where he had a 44-16 record. The Crusaders lost 6 of their first 7 games including close losses in Chesney's first 2 conference games vs Colgate and Bucknell. They won their last 4 games and finished tied for 2nd in the Patriot League (+105 ypg).

In 2015 Holy Cross put up 32 ppg and 404 ypg and finished with a winning record for the first time since 2011. They dipped to 24 ppg and 356 ypg in '16. In '17 they improved to 398 ypg though ppg actually dropped to 23. Last year they had 7 starters back on offense. The Crusaders were held under 300 yards in 6 games but also put up over 400 3 times and finished with 334 ypg and ppg remained consistent with 24.4. Geoff Wade, who only had 10 attempts in '17 stepped in to replace a 2nd Tm All-Patriot League QB. Emmett Clifford actually won the job in camp and started the first 3. Wade took over vs Yale and started the last 8. Wade threw for 1,844 (60.4%, 16-12, 119 rush). Clifford added 204 (61.5%, 1-3). 2nd Tm All-Patriot Wade departs but they actually have more experience coming back with Clifford than they had last year. In 2018 Holy Cross lost their top 2 RB's. 2nd Tm All-Patriot Domenic Crozier led with 643 (4.9). Miles Alexander added 379 (3.6). Peter Oliver was #3 with 236 (3.8). All 3 return this year. Five of Holy Cross' top 7 WR's returned last year including their top 2, Blaise Bell (601, 13.1) and Martin Dorsey (590, 13.7). Dorsey was 1st Tm All-Patriot and led with 633 (12.8). DeNicola was #2 with 469 (17.4). Bell dropped to #3 with 282 (9.7). TE Derek Mountain had 212 (7 st, 15.1). This year they lose their top 3. In '17 the Crusaders improved to 143 rush ypg (4.1, 27 sk). Last year Holy Cross had to replace 4 starters on their Oline. They only dipped to 139 rush ypg but ypc dropped to 3.4. Three starters are back. Gone are 1st Tm All-Patriot LT Brian Foley (11 st) and C Max Daurelle (7 st) as well as bkp Rory Costello (4 st). Brett Boddy (2nd Tm All-Patriot is their top returner).

In 2016 Holy Cross allowed 32 ppg and 415 ypg. They improved to 25 ppg and 368 ypg in '17. In conference play they only gave up 20 ppg and 299 ypg. Last year the Crusaders brought back 7 starters. They were feast or famine, allowing 439 yds or more in 5 games, while holding their other 7 opponents to 295 yds or less. Holy Cross allowed 26 ppg and 369 ypg on the season but only 17 ppg and 252 ypg in conference play (509 ypg vs non-conf). Five of their top 7 Dline returned last year. They lose 3 starters on their Dline this year, gone are 1st Tm All-Patriot DE Teddy Capsis (#4 tkl'r, 6 sk, 9 tfl), 2nd Tm All-Patriot NT Neil Vorster (#6 tkl'r, 9 tfl) and DT Jake McArdell (#8 tkl'r, 8 tfl). The only Dline returning with starting experience is DE Mark Ebo (20 tkl, 4 tfl). Three of Holy Cross' top 4 LB's returned last year and they made up their #1, #2, #12 and #14 tkl'rs. This year they lose 2 starters incl 1st Tm All-Patriot LB Ryan Brady (#1 tkl'r, 15 tfl) but they do get back 2 with starting experience including WS Joe Lang (#2 tkl'r, 3 sk). Holy Cross allowed 66% completions in '16. In '17 they improved to 63%. Last year they brought back 6 of their top 9 but they did lose 2 starters. Holy Cross finished 4th in the Patriot in pass eff D and only allowed 61.2% completions (20-5). This year get 6 of their top 8 back but they do lose 2 starters in CB Damion Baker (#11 tkl'r, 5 pbu) and SS Akeem Walcott (6 st, #5 tkl'r, 6 pbu). They get their #3, #7, #9, #10, #13 and #15 tkl'rs back. The secondary will be the strength of the defense.

Holy Cross had to replace both their P and K last year. Derek Ng hit 6 of 9 fg's (L/45). Ng also split P duties (35.6 avg) with Cody Wilkinson (39.0 avg). They combined for a 34.7 net. Both return in '19.

Holy Cross only returns 9 starters in '19 but they do have experience at QB, RB, and the Oline should be improved. Five of their top 10 tkl'rs are gone from a defense that largely dominated Patriot opponents. The Crusaders have a brutal start to their schedule with trips to Navy, Yale, and Syracuse in their F/4 games. They host both Colgate and Georgetown but with such a young team they are probably a year away from contending for the Patriot League Title again.