

## COLGATE 2019 PREVIEW

In 2015 Colgate went 9-5, reached the FCS Playoffs and took down #5 James Madison along the way. The following year Colgate fell to 5-5 but were +110 ypg. In 2017 won their final 5 games and finished 7-4, but were only +24 ypg. Last year the Rams brought back 18 starters and 17 of their top 20 tacklers were back on defense. Colgate won their first 9 games, and over an 8 game stretch, the Rams allowed just 12 points including a 2 game stretch where they allowed 64 total yards! They knocked off James Madison in the first round of the FCS Playoffs before losing to eventual National Champs North Dakota St 35-0. The Rams finished 10-2 and outscored their Patriot League competition 223-26 (+251 ypg in Patriot play). HC Dan Hunt is 24-6 vs conference foes and enters his sixth year.

In 2016 Colgate peaked at 432 ypg and 31 ppg. In 2017 they slipped back to 341 ypg but still put up 28 ppg. Last year Colgate returned 9 starters but only avg 344 ypg and 27 ppg. They've averaged 37 ppg in Patriot League play each of the last 2 seasons. Grant Breneman was the Patriot League Frosh POY in '17. In 9 starts he threw for 1,594 (57%, 18-5) and rushed for 401 (3.0). Last year he returned and started the first 9. He missed 2 games before returning for the playoffs. Breneman threw for 1,605 (61.8%) but his ratio slipped to 6-4 and he rushed for 307 (2.3). Sage Atwood started 2 games and threw for 240 (64.5%, 1-0). Breneman is back but they will need to find a new backup. Last year the Rams got their leading rusher, James Holland back (722, 5.8 '17) along with bkp Alex Mathews (578, 4.4 '17). Holland was the catalyst for the offense, rushing for 1,219 yards (5.9, 196 rec) and was a 2nd Tm AA. Malik Twyman rushed for 292 (5.5). Mathews dipped to 147 (3.3). This unit needs rebuilt with Holland and Frank Ferrari (152, 9.5 in 4 gm) both departing. Colgate had their top 3 WR's return. Owen Rockett led with 716 (20.5). Owen Buscaglia was #2 with 307 (13.4). '17's leader, Thomas Ives dipped to 263 (17.5). The WR unit needs completely rebuilt with all of their top 3 gone as well as TE Nick Martinsen (7 st, 49, 6.1). Their top returning guy, TE Nick Diaco, had just 114 (12.7) last year. The Oline returned 4 starters from a group that paved the way for 185 (4.2, 25 sk) rush ypg in '17. They posted similar numbers last year, rushing for 190.6 (4.5) but sacks did increase to 30. This year Colgate gets 3 starters back plus Jovaun Woolford returns (2nd Tm All-Patriot '17) after getting injured in last year's opener. This is the most experienced unit on the offense. They do lose a pair of 1st Tm All-Patriot Oline's in C Scott Hirshman and RG Max Hartzman. Jaylion Queen was 2nd Tm All-Patriot as a frosh.

The Rams allowed 432 ypg and 23 ppg in 2016. In 2017 Colgate improved to 341 ypg allowed and only gave up 17 ppg. Last year the Rams had 9 defensive starters returning in their 3-4 defense. They gave up 282 yards and 17 pts in the opener vs Holy Cross then went on a historical run over their next 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! Last year 2 starters returned on the Dline from a unit that allowed 115 (3.1) in '17. In their first 9 games, they allowed a total of 510 rush yds (56.7 ypg, 1.9). In their last 3 they gave up 699 (233 ypg, 4.9), though one of those was an admirable performance vs Army's option where they only all'd 261 (4.4). This year they lose 2 starters in NG Chuck Moore (#9 tkl'r, 3.5 tfl) and DE Caleb Fell (#14 tkl'r, 4 tfl). 2nd Tm AA DE Nick Wheeler (#5 tkl'r, led with 9 sacks) returns and Abdoul Kouyate gained valuable experience last year (4 st, 10 tkl). Their top backup, Jacob Esarco (#13 tkl'r, 2.5 tfl) also returns. Five LB's who had at least 4 starts returned LY (1 starter lost in 4 man unit). This was the top unit on the defense, led by Patriot League Def POY TJ Holl, and they allowed just 9 ppg. Two starters graduated and Holl (#1 tkl'r, 17 tfl) transferred to Louisville. Also gone are OLB's Dillon Deluliis (#3 tkl'r, 12 tfl) and John Steffen (#6 tkl'r, 7 tfl) and their top backup, Nick Alvarez (16 tkl) departs as well. The lone returning starter is 2nd Tm All-Patriot Nick Ioanilli (#4 tkl'r, 6 tfl) and with 4 of their top 5 guys gone, this unit will need rebuilt. All 4 starting DB's returned last year after they finished #2 in pass eff D in '17 (202 pass ypg, 55%, 9-16). They improved to #1 in pass eff D in '18, allowing just 137 ypg (50.5%, 5-15). Three starters are gone in '19, incl 1st Tm All-Patriot CB Tyler Castillo (#7 tkl'r, 6 int, 7 pbu), SS Ben Hunt (#8 tkl'r) and 2nd Tm All-Patriot FS Alex Wisniewski (#2 tkl'r, 7 pd) as well as bkp Cortney Mimms (#11 tkl'r). 1st Tm All-Patriot CB Abu Daramy-Swaray had 3 int's last year and they do have 2 backups returning that totaled 45 tkls but this is yet another inexperienced unit.

Colgate returned both P Chris Puzzi and P Josh Cerra last year. Cerra averaged 36.5 ypp (34.6 net). Puzzi was 15-17 (L/47). This year they get 2x All-Patriot K Puzzi back. Cerra departs but his backup, Tommy Halkyard averaged 37.4 in 17 punts last year.

Last year Colgate had 18 returning starters and were a favorite to win the Patriot League. They dominated conference play, winning by 33 ppg before being eliminated in the 2nd round of the FCS Playoffs. This year they only have 7 starters back and should face much stiffer competition in league play. Last year's defense was historically good. 11 defensive players were all-conf and 4 return. They are once again in contention to win the Patriot and reach the FCS Playoffs.