Football looks to break losing streak in last home game for seniors

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Last year when Holy Cross made the trip to Andy Kerr Stadium in Hamilton, NY to take on the Colgate Raiders, the story of the day for the Crusaders was the defense.

The Crusaders scored all five of their touchdowns off of Colgate turnovers, as Holy Cross went on to embarrass the Raiders 32-3. After trailing 3-0, Michael Blake turned it 22 yards for a score. After that, the Crusaders did not look back.

On the ensuing possession, Dan Allen said that a key to the game would be, “stopping [RB] Jabu Powell. He’ll be sky high for this game.” Though the defense did everything they could to stop the star tailback, Powell still finished with 104 yards on 30 carries and a score.

Colgate found a way to put up 425 yards of total offense against a team that crushed the Crusaders in a game where Holy Cross could not break the 200-yard barrier for total offense.

Before the Crusaders traveled to Bucknell last week, Head Coach Dan Allen said that a key to the game would be, “stopping [RB] Hector Cordero-Reyes and Nate Thomas this game.” Though the defense did everything they could to stop the Crusaders. Down 14-6 in the fourth quarter, Grutt found a streaking Steve Green for a 37-yard strike, then connected with Dave Thompson for the two-point conversion to tie the game at 14 apiece with plenty of time to play in the fourth. It took the Bison only seven more plays, and 75 yards later the score was 21-14 in favor of Bucknell, and that’s the score that would go in the record books. Grutt finished a respectable 15-31 with 171 yards and the score, while Dave Thompson caught 10 passes for 105 yards and the conversion.

Colgate is led by junior quarterback Tom McHune. After missing the first two games of the season to injury, McHune has gone 108-173 for 1,516 yards and 11 scores. These numbers are good enough to place McHune 10th on the NCAA Division I-AA list for passing efficiency, with a 150.08 rating. McHune’s favorite target will be senior wideout Joe Parker, who last week caught seven passes for 112 yards and a score against Lehigh. Parker leads the Raiders with 40 receptions this season, six for touchdowns.

Colgate is led by Massachusetts natives Nate Thomas and Jamaal Branch. Thomas and Branch are currently ranked 4th and 7th, respectively, in rushing in the Patriot League. These guys run behind senior All-American candidate Ken Kubec at left guard.

The Raider’s defense is certainly their weak point, as they lost their entire linebacker corps to graduation last year. As a result, Colgate is allowing over 316 yards/game, and almost 200 yards in the air. Holy Cross is going to have to exploit Colgate’s weak defense on Saturday unless they want to extend their losing streak to three.

For the Crusaders, this game is about pride, as there is virtually no chance of them taking the Patriot League at this point. Colgate will come out playing, however, as they need to win this game to stay in the hunt for a Patriot League title.

This is the 64th meeting between the two teams, and Holy Cross leads the series 36-22-5. Kickoff is at noon on Saturday, and it will be the last time the players in the Class of 2002 will play at Fitton Field. If you cannot make it to the game, listen to all of the action live on WCHC 88.1 FM.