

Five Years Ago This Season

Prologue

2002

(9-3, PL 6-1)

Coach: Dick Biddle

Captains: Tom McCune,

Max Wynn

0	Villanova	20
31	at Fordham *	40
30	Dartmouth	26
38	Columbia	6
13	at Bucknell (OT) *	10
10	at Princeton	14
42	at Cornell #	13
9	at Towson *	7
31	Lafayette *	24
28	at Lehigh *	14
44	Georgetown *	22
25	Holy Cross *	20

* Patriot League game
1,000th game played

Andy Kerr Trophy, Offensive MVP
Luke Graham

Hal W. Lahar Trophy, Defensive MVP
Tm Lukabu

By Jim Leach

In Colgate's 2003 run at the national championship, the Raiders won 21 consecutive games before stepping onto the field in Chattanooga. Those wins included six straight to close the 2002 season, where football's historians will discover the nascent of the championship squad.

Two-time Patriot League Defensive Player of the Year Tem Lukabu '04 looks back on a 14-10 loss at Princeton in '02 as a moment of resolve: "We said we'd had enough - we had no business losing that game."

Thank you, Princeton. The record string of victories would begin the following week at Cornell's Schoellkopf Field, Colgate's 1,000th intercollegiate football game.

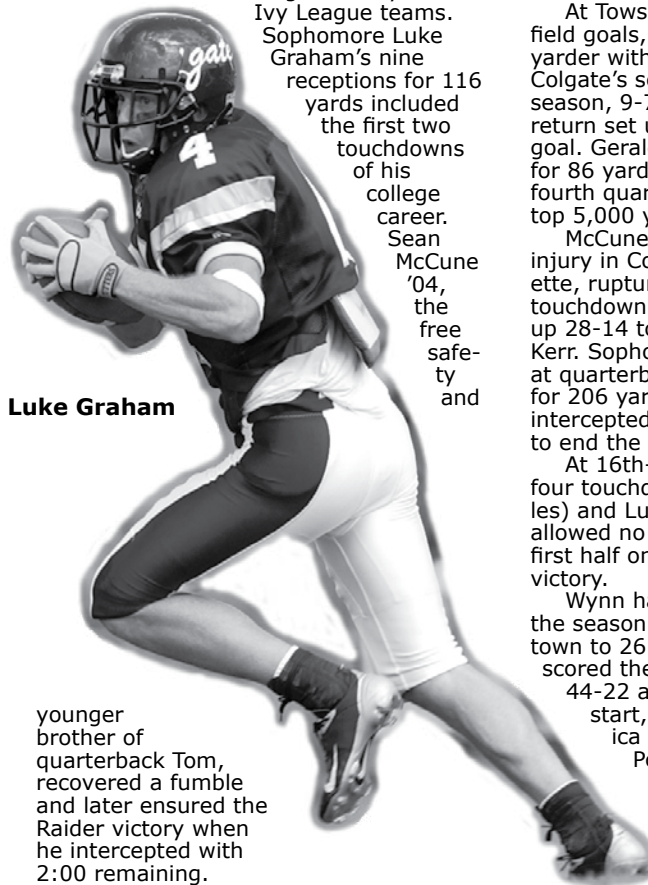
"Our goal is to win the league," head coach Dick Biddle said in the 2002 Press Guide. Reasonable enough, considering the personnel: Senior quarterback Tom McCune was 12-3 as a starter going into the season, with only one Patriot League loss. Seniors Maurice Robertson and Max Wynn were called "one of the best cornerback duos in team history." At 6'5", 321 pounds, senior Andy Barr would center the offensive line, flanked by experienced guards Mark Iacone '03 and Mark Sclafani '04. Senior tailback Nate Thomas was returning after an all-league season. Biddle's son Brendan '03 was a special teams MVP as punter and, with tight end John Frieser '04, a veteran of the '01 Verizon Division I All-Academic team.

Imagine the disappointment, then, when Villanova's defense allowed the Raiders only 11 yards in the first half (134 all day) during the season-opener at Andy Kerr, the first time the team had been shut out at home (20-0) since

1988. Frieser caught a pass in his 11th straight game, and Colgate's defense recorded four sacks and blocked a punt, but Villanova's 83 snaps to the home team's 50 was the statistic of the day.

At Fordham the Raiders dropped to 0-2, giving up the final 13 points of the fourth quarter to lose 40-31 to their first Patriot League opponent of the season. A sack by Josh Sabo and an interception by Wynn set Colgate up for the opening touchdown, but by halftime Fordham was up 24-14. Thomas scored on a 16-yard run, wide receiver J.B. Gerald scored on a 9-yard shovel pass, and Lane Schwarzb erg kicked a 29-yard field goal to put Colgate ahead 31-27 by the fourth quarter, but Fordham would score twice more to claim a win that would prove decisive at season's end.

When Thomas was injured in the third quarter against Dartmouth, senior fullback Justin Polk stepped in to rush for 167 yards on 13 carries in the fourth quarter to lead the Raiders to a come-from-behind win at home, their 12th straight victory over Ivy League teams.



Luke Graham

Sophomore Luke Graham's nine receptions for 116 yards included the first two touchdowns of his college career. Sean McCune '04, the free safety and

younger brother of quarterback Tom, recovered a fumble and later ensured the Raider victory when he intercepted with 2:00 remaining.

Columbia became Colgate's 13th consecutive Ivy League victim. The defense held Columbia to 18 yards rushing and forced six turnovers in the 38-6 win at home. Senior tackle Maurice Bowers recovered three Lions fumbles, one of which led to a 33-yard touchdown run by senior fullback Tim Lavoie, starting for the first time since 1999. Rowland had one of Colgate's three interceptions, and ran it back six yards for a touchdown to

end the first half.

Colgate needed a 23-yard Schwarzb erg field goal in overtime to win at Bucknell, 13-10. Lukabu recorded 13 tackles, 11 on his own, to be named the league's best defender of the week.

Princeton scored on the first play from scrimmage - a 62-yard pass - then struck again on a 73-yard pass with 2:46 left in the game to down visiting Colgate 14-10 and exact revenge for the Ivy League. Colgate's lone TD had come on a 74-yard pass from McCune to Gerald in the third quarter. The loss was Colgate's third of the season, but the last for a long while.

Sophomore tailback Ray Lamonica ran 29 times for 160 yards and two touchdowns in his first start to lead the Raiders to a 42-13 win over Cornell at Schoellkopf - Colgate's 1,000th football game. Big Red scored first, but Colgate ran off 35 points unanswered, including three touchdowns in 2:06 of the second quarter. McCune's three touchdown passes included two to Frieser and one to Graham.

At Towson, Schwarzb erg kicked three field goals, including a career-long 39-yarder with :01 on the clock, to seal Colgate's second league victory of the season, 9-7. Gerald's 71-yard kickoff return set up Schwarzb erg's second field goal. Gerald also caught seven passes for 86 yards, as McCune became the fourth quarterback in Colgate history to top 5,000 yards passing.

McCune suffered a career-ending injury in Colgate's 31-24 win over Lafayette, rupturing his spleen on a five-yard touchdown plunge that put the Raiders up 28-14 to end the first half at Andy Kerr. Sophomore Chris Brown took over at quarterback. Graham had 12 catches for 206 yards and two TDs. And Lukabu intercepted Lafayette's desperation pass to end the game.

At 16th-ranked Lehigh, Brown ran for four touchdowns, and Rowland (15 tackles) and Lukabu (13) led a defense that allowed no Mountain Hawk scores in the first half on the way to a 28-14 Colgate victory.

Wynn had his second interception of the season and the defense held Georgetown to 26 yards rushing as the Raiders scored their fifth Patriot League victory, 44-22 at home. Brown, in his second start, completed 20 of 25; Lamonica ran for three touchdowns and Polk ran for two.

The season-ending 25-20 victory over visiting Holy Cross was settled with :03 remaining when cornerback TJ Smith intercepted a Crusader pass into the end zone. The lead changed five times in the second half. Lukabu had 20 tackles and an interception. The Raiders shared the Patriot League title with Fordham, but the Ram's win in Game Two sent them to the NAAs.

There would always be next year...