

25 Years Ago This Season

On To The Playoffs

**1982
(8-4)**

Coach: Frederick H. Dunlap

Captains: Dave Wolf, Mark Owens

31	Connecticut	17
21	at Lehigh	14
21	at Cornell	6
38	at Dartmouth	21
21	Holy Cross	17
17	at Rutgers	34
15	at Syracuse	49
13	at Pennsylvania	21
24	Temple	17
22	at Boston Univ.	21
21	Boston Univ. #	7
13	at Delaware #	20

NCAA Division I-AA Playoffs

Andy Kerr Trophy, Offensive MVP
Rich Erenberg

Hal W. Lahar Trophy, Defensive MVP
Dave Wolf

by Jim Leach

Yielding to pressure from major college football powers, the NCAA in December 1981 reclassified 40 smaller teams – Colgate among them – from its highest football division (I-A) to I-AA, setting the stage for a 1982 season of dramatic highs and lows in the Chenango Valley.

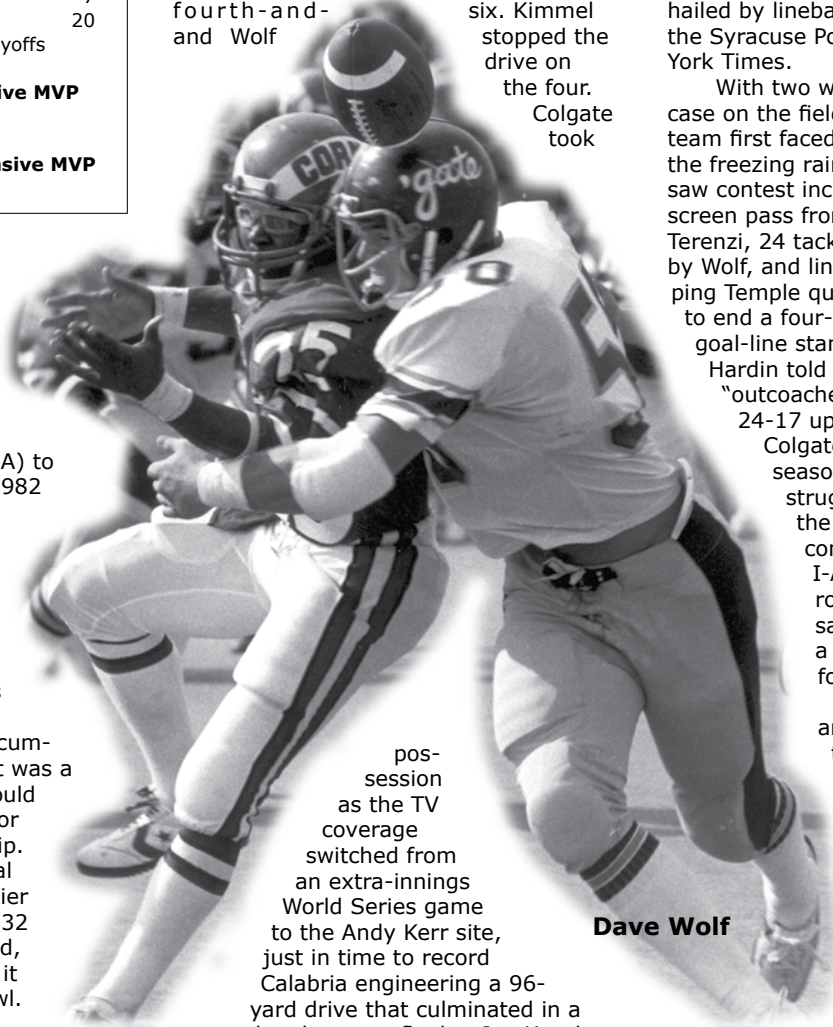
Throughout its football history, Colgate had competed as an independent at the highest level of play. The politics of the reclassification aside, Coach Fred Dunlap was faced with recruiting and motivating a team under new circumstances. The lead selling point was a season-ending playoff that would involve 12 teams competing for the I-AA national championship. That playoff had special appeal at a college that 50 years earlier had seen the dreams of its 1932 "Un-Team" (undefeated, untied, unscored upon) dashed when it was uninvited to the Rose Bowl.

Many of Colgate's traditional opponents (including the Ivy League and Holy Cross) were either longtime I-AA members, or were reclassified at the same time as Colgate. With an excellent history versus I-AA competition, the Raiders came into the season focused on making a championship run. Behind sophomore quarterback sensation Steve Calabria, running back Rich Erenberg, and defensive stalwarts such as safety Carl Boykin, nose tackle Mark Rakowski, linebacker Dave Wolf,

and defensive end John Kimmel, the team rolled through its first four contests defeating Connecticut 31-17, Lehigh 21-14, Cornell 21-6, and Dartmouth 38-21 before taking on Holy Cross in a game that was televised regionally from Andy Kerr Stadium.

Colgate struggled through much of the contest as Holy Cross intercepted the normally steady Calabria five times. But the defense hung tough and Erenberg added an 11-yard touchdown run to punt returns of 35 and 44 yards to keep the score close. Leading 17-14 with the game inside the final three minutes, Holy Cross elected to go for a touchdown on fourth-and-six. Kimmel and Wolf stopped the drive on the four.

Colgate took



Dave Wolf

possession as the TV coverage switched from an extra-innings World Series game to the Andy Kerr site, just in time to record Calabria engineering a 96-yard drive that culminated in a go-ahead pass to flanker Joe Kozak. The 21-17 victory earned Colgate a number two ranking in the NCAA Division I-AA football poll. (Historical side note: On the same day, in Washington, DC, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education honored Colgate's Anthony Aveni as the National Professor of the Year.)

The Raiders faced Division I-A opponents Rutgers and Syracuse the following two Saturdays, losing both games, then

dropped a 21-13 decision to I-AA Penn at Franklin Field to risk dropping out of playoff contention.

The playoffs had created a stir off the field, as well, when university president George Langdon – after learning that the playoffs extended into the final examination period – ruled the team would not be allowed to participate if it qualified. Dunlap informed the team following the Rutgers game. But soon after making the initial announcement, Langdon was told that playoff commitments had been made to the players and the NCAA prior to the season. He reversed his ruling in a decision that was hailed by linebacker Wolf and others in the Syracuse Post-Standard and the New York Times.

With two weeks left to make their case on the field for a playoff berth, the team first faced Division I-A Temple in the freezing rain at Andy Kerr. That seesaw contest included a 51-yard gain on a screen pass from Calabria to fullback Gil Terenzi, 24 tackles and an interception by Wolf, and linebacker Jeff Knight stopping Temple quarterback Tim Riordan to end a four-down, fourth-quarter goal-line stand. Temple coach Wayne Hardin told the press his team was "outcoached and outplayed" in the 24-17 upset.

Colgate closed the regular season at Boston University, struggling to a 22-21 win on the margin of a two-point conversion to earn its first I-AA playoff bid. The first-round opponent was that same BU squad, creating a rare home-and-home football doubleheader.

With a week to adjust, and playing on the natural turf that covered Andy Kerr Stadium in 1982, Colgate recorded a 21-7 victory in its first-ever (and long-awaited) post-season football game. The defense coached by defensive coordinator Dick Biddle forced seven turnovers, including a fumble recovery and blocked punt by Boykin.

The championship dream would end the following weekend on the road against the University of Delaware Fightin' Blue Hens. Erenberg was injured on the second offensive series, allowing Delaware's defense to key on Colgate's passing attack, sacking Calabria five times before the contest and the season ended, 20-13.