Carleton College Football Report - Week One

RAMLER ERA BEGINS, KNIGHTS OPEN AT UM-MORRIS

Carleton College begins a new era in its long and storied history when the Knights open the 2006 season under the lights against the University of Minnesota-Morris. The game marks the head coaching debut of Kurt Ramler, who became Carleton’s new coach on Feb. 22, 2006, replacing Chris Brann. Tghe 1996 Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) most valuable player as a quarterback, Ramler still holds eight school records, including most total offense and passing yards in a career. Ramler ranks third all-time in NCAA career passing efficiency and currently holds the MIAC single-season passing efficiency record at 179.91, set in 1996, and is the all-time leader in touchdown passes with 87. Ramler is the 36th head football coach in the football program’s 107-year history and becomes the second St. John’s graduate to serve as Carleton’s head coach, joining former head coach Bob Sullivan, who compiled a 103-114 record from 1979-2000 as the Knights’ head coach.

KNIGHTS UNDER LIGHTS

Carleton plays under the lights of UM-Morris’s brand-new Big Cat Stadium for its season opener. It marks Carleton’s first night game since a 2003 victory over Hamline at St. Paul’s Griffin Stadium.

FIVE CAPTAINS TO LEAD KNIGHTS IN 2006

The Knights enter the 2006 season under the leadership of five captains - four seniors and one junior. Seniors Darren Caspers, Randy Foss, Mike Kootskas and Wade Thompson join junior James Colbenson as the elected team leaders.

FOSS NEARS 300-TACKLE MARK

Senior Randy Foss enters the season with 278 career tackles through 30 career games, placing him tenth on the all-time list. Only five players have recorded 300 or more tackles in their Carleton careers, with Scott Klein’s ‘97 359 tackles standing as the current school record. If Foss can continue on his current pace of around nine tackles per game, he would overtake Klein by the end of the season, assuming he plays all 10 games this season.

THOMPSON, JACKSON NEAR 3,000 ALL-PURPOSE YARD FOR CAREER

Carleton running backs and return specialists Wade Thompson and sophomore R.J. Jackson are both closing in on 3,000 career all-purpose yards. Thompson has 2,662 all-purpose yards and Jackson 2,668. Thompson ranks ninth on the school’s all-time list and Jackson eighth. Only five players have cracked the 3,000 all-purpose yardage mark, with Adam Henry’s ‘94 5,036 all-purpose yards serving as the school record.

DEFENSIVE FRONT SEVEN EXPERIENCED, SECONDARY NOT

Carleton returns six defensive starters from last year, but all are from the front seven. Senior linebacker Randy Foss moves into his fourth year as a starter and is flanked by second-year starters and juniors James Colbenson and Jerod Phelps. On the defensive line, third-year starter Pat Frett will combine with second-year starters Kaizan Yang and James Clark. Sophomore John Hanks is the lone member of the front seven who hasn’t started at least one full season.

The secondary is a different story. Four sophomores have made their move into the starting lineup for the first time, as Nick Cesarek and Kane Bechstein, former team-
mates at Apple Valley’s (Minn.) Eastview High School will start at the cornerback spots, Drew Ziller at strong safety and Reggie Snipes at free safety.

OFFENSE HAS EIGHT STARTERS BACK

The Knights return a lot of offensive firepower from 2005 for new head coach Kurt Ramler to deploy. Senior quarterback Darren Caspers is back after starting 26 career games with 3,403 yards of total offense and 2,916 yards passing in his three-year career. Senior wide receiver Mike Kootsiukas enters 2006 with 89 career receptions for 1,209 yards, both marks placing him in the top 10. Throw in versatile running backs R.J. Jackson and Wade Thompson, and plenty of weapons will be at Ramler’s disposal.

The running back tandem of Jackson and Thompson return after both posted solid 2005 campaigns. Jackson netted 713 rushing yards, gaining more than five yards per carry, and scored eight touchdowns; Thompson added 334 yards and five touchdowns. Both are able pass receivers, as the duo combined for 48 receptions for 368 yards. Both are dangerous in the return game as well. Jackson is a two-time All-MIAC first team pick as a utility player/return specialist and averaged 30.8 yards per kick return and 15.8 yards per punt return, scoring a touchdown on both return types and Thompson added respectable averages of 19.2 yards per kick return and 9.8 yards per punt return.

Caspers will be aided by the experience of Matt Frank having a year’s worth of experience after he posted 21 receptions for 262 yards in his rookie season. Chris Gardiner came strong at the end of the season and ended with nine catches for 93 yards.

The offensive line suffered the loss of three-year starters Bobby McMillan’06 at center and Doug Lind ’06 at right guard, but capable backups wait in the wings. Senior Aaron Fanta, Sam Larsen and Paul Klick are all back after starting last season, and Andrew Roberts tallied eight starts last year and has 16 career starts to his credit.

JACKSON, KOOTSUKAS NAMED TO ALL-AMERICA TEAM

Carleton junior R.J. Jackson has been named to the Football Gazette preseason All-America second team as a return specialist and senior wide receiver Mike Kootsiukas has earned preseason All-America honorable mention status.

Jackson, a two-time All-MIAC first team pick as a utility player, was a threat as a punt and kick returner in 2005. He averaged 15.8 yards per punt return and 30.8 yards per kick return, but fell short of the required attempts in both categories to qualify for the MIAC lead or NCAA ranking in both categories. He scored a punt return and kick return touchdown this season and needed only one more kick return to qualify for the national rankings, and would have ranked third in NCAA Division III with his kick return average. Jackson was all-region honorable mention by Football Gazette at the end of the 2005 season.

Jackson, the team’s leading rusher each of the last two seasons, averaged 71.3 yards rushing per game last season, sixth best in the conference. He ranked third in the MIAC all-purpose yards at 139.6 yards per game, seventh in scoring (6.6 pts./game), and sixth in touchdowns scored with 11.

Kootsiukas was Carleton’s leading receiver for the second straight season, amassing 42 catches for 526 yards and three touchdowns. His best effort came in the penultimate contest of the season, as he tallied nine grabs for 128 yards against Gustavus Adolphus College. His 89 career receptions ranks eighth all-time at Carleton and he needs only 241 yards to move into the school’s all-time top 10 in career receiving yardage. His 4.45 receptions per game ranks fourth all-time at Carleton.

THOMPSON NEARS TOP 10 IN RUSHING SCORES

Junior Wade Thompson scored his 12th career rushing touchdown against St. Thomas on Oct. 22, 2005, moving him two touchdowns away from Carleton’s all-time top 10. Three players are tied for eighth on the rushing touchdown list with 14 scores.

JACKSON, THOMPSON REACH HISTORIC MILESTONE TOGETHER

Sophomore R.J. Jackson and junior Wade Thompson both surpassed 1,000 career rushing yards last season. Jackson moved past the milestone with 79 yards in the Oct. 1, 2006, victory over Augsburg while Thompson’s 52 yards against St. Olaf on Oct. 8 pushed him past the 1,000-yard mark. The pair are the 16th and 17th, respectively, to pass the milestone. It is the first time in Carleton football history that two teammates have reached

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## BY THE NUMBERS

17 Number of head coaches in Carleton football history, counting Kurt Ramler, who makes his head coaching debut on Saturday.

2,916 Passing yardage by Darren Caspers in his career. Making his 27th career start this year, he could become only the seventh Carleton player to throw for 3,000 yards in a career.

15 Number of starters returning for the Knights from last season. Eight of those starters are on offense, including every starter at the skill positions, and seven on defense, six from the front seven.

11 Number of catches needed by Mike Kootsiukas to reach 100 career receptions. Only five other Knights have reached the magical plateau.

0 Number of previous meetings between Carleton and UM-Morris. Saturday’s contest is the first between the two schools.

## MIAC STANDINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>MIAC</th>
<th>Overall</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bethel</td>
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<td>St. Thomas</td>
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### Games This Week
- Wiss. River Falls at Saint John’s, 1 p.m.
- Augsburg at Northwestern, 1 p.m.
- St. Olaf at Bethel, 1 p.m.
- Concordia at Carleton, 7 p.m.

### Games Last Week
- Bethel 13, Buena Vista 0
- Saint John’s, 15, Wisc.-Eau Claire 11
- Central 37, St. Thomas 7
- St. Olaf 31, Valley City State 14

### Games Next Week
- Saint John’s at Augsburg, 1 p.m.
- St. Thomas at Bethel, 1 p.m.
- Concordia at Carleton, 1 p.m.
- Hamline at St. Olaf, 1 p.m.
- Macalester at Carleton, 1 p.m.

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## CARLETON CAREER RECEIPTIONS LIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Games</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 212 - Jim Bradford (212-2719)</td>
<td>1988-91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 182 - Steve Gorla (150-2313)</td>
<td>1994-97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 143 - Erik Miller (143-1250)</td>
<td>1997-00</td>
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<td>4. 126 - Matt Kim (126-1173)</td>
<td>1999-02</td>
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<td>5. 117 - Jeff Schar (117-2155)</td>
<td>1988-91</td>
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<td>7. 103 - Mark Wickenheiser (103-1950)</td>
<td>1996-96</td>
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<td>8. 95 - Mike Kootsiukas (95-1209)</td>
<td>2004-05</td>
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<td>9. 81 - Dan Niemhuis (81-1452)</td>
<td>1983-86</td>
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<td>10. 80 - Dan Reider (80-1165)</td>
<td>1997-00</td>
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EXPLOSIVE BACKS POWER KNIGHT ATTACK

With senior Wade Thompson and junior R.J. Jackson on the field, the Knights have a pair of explosive backs capable of breaking off long runs, catching passes or making something happen in the return game. Jackson, a two-time All-MIAC pick as a return man and All-MIAC second team selection at running back last season, averaged 5.3 yards per carry last year and scored eight touchdowns. He averaged 30.8 yards per kick return and scored touchdowns returning punt and returning a kick. Thompson, meanwhile, scored five rushing touchdowns. Both have more than 1,000 career rushing yards.

KNIGHTS' FOOTBALL LIVE ON AIR, OVER INTERNET

For the third consecutive season, all 10 Carleton football games will be broadcast live on KQCL 95.9 FM/Power 96 out of Faribault, Minn. Award-winning sports director Gordy Kosfeld will be on the call in his second season as the voice of the Knights. Additionally, all the games will be carried live via the internet with Carleton's internet broadcast partner, Stretch Internet. Listeners can log on to Knights Online at www.carleton.edu/athletics and click on broadcasts to listen to Carleton football from anywhere in the world. The games are also archived on Knights Online for fans' listening pleasure after the game.

NEXT UP: HOME SCHEDULE STARTS WITH BATTLE FOR BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE

Carleton kicks off its 2006 home schedule by hosting Macalester College on Saturday, Sept. 16 at 1 p.m. The winner of the game receives the Book of Knowledge, a large wooden trophy shaped like a book that represents the two highest-ranked academic institutions in Minnesota.