Carleton Football Report - Week Six

KNIGHTS BATTLE FOR BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE WITH SCOTS

Carleton College goes after another traveling trophy this week when it goes head-to-head with Macalester College with possession of the Book of Knowledge on the line. The Knights have beaten the Scots in each of the last two meetings, including a 55-14 trouncing last year as the Knights put 21 points on the board in the first 1:26 of the contest. The Knights are 2-3 on the season, but their three losses are to teams with a combined 16-0 record. The Scots, meanwhile, have struggled to a 0-6 start and have lost 11 consecutive games, dating back to last year. Macalester plays an independent schedule in football, as it left the MIAC after the 2001 season. The Scots went 5-5 in their first year as football independent in 2002, but are 2-14 versus 2003. The Knights, playing in the rugged MIAC, have posted seven wins over the past three seasons.

BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE UP FOR GRABS

This will mark the seventh season Carleton and Macalester have played for the Book of Knowledge traveling trophy, a large wooden book, symbolizing the rivalry between the top two liberal arts colleges in the state. The Carleton-Macalester series has been dubbed the "Brain Bowl" with good reason. The most recent U.S. News & World Report rankings placed Carleton fifth among the best liberal arts colleges in the nation, marking the fifth consecutive year Carleton's been ranked in the top five and the tenth consecutive year Carleton has been in the top 10. Macalester ranked 25th in the latest rankings. The two institutions are the only Minnesota schools to make the magazine's top 25 list.

CARLETON-MACALESTER SERIES ONE OF MINNESOTA'S OLDEST

The Carleton-Macalester series is one of the oldest in the state, as it started in 1892. The Knights have dominated the series, taking 44 of the 56 meetings to lead 44-11-1 overall. At Laird Stadium, Carleton has won 22 of the 28 meetings and holds a 22-5-1 record. Carleton has won four of the last seven match-ups.

BROKKE MIAC, NATIONAL DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE WEEK

Junior cornerback Nick Brokke (Roseville, Minn.) was named as one of three Division III national defensive players of the week by Don Hansen's Football Gazette on Oct. 4. Brokke tallied two interceptions and a forced fumble in the Knights' win over Augsburg. He was also named the MIAC's defensive player of the week. Brokke's first pick came early in the first quarter as he wrestled the ball away from an Auggie receiver. He forced a fumble resulting in Carleton's second TD of the day. He returned his second interception of the day 49 yards to the Auggies 34, setting up the eventual game-winning score. He ended the day with six total tackles, four solo, and three pass break-ups. His effort paced a defense that forced five Auggie turnovers.

JACKSON, THOMPSON REACH HISTORIC MILESTONE TOGETHER

Sophomore R.J. Jackson (Roseville, Minn./De La Salle) and junior Wade Thompson (Peterson, Minn./Rushford-Peterson) have both surpassed 1,000 career rushing yards this season. Jackson moved past the milestone with 79 yards in the Oct. 1 victory over Augsburg while Thompson's 52 yards against St. Olaf this past week 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 1,000 career rushing yards in the same season.

**JACKSON PACES MIAC IN KICK RETURNS, ALL-PURPOSE YARDAGE**

Carleton sophomore R.J. Jackson continues to be ranked in the top five nationally in kickoff returns, averaging 35.4 yards per return. Jason Curry of Marietta College (Ohio), a junior wide receiver, is the top-ranked returner at 40.4 yards per return. The sophomore returned his third career kickoff for a touchdown in the Sept. 24 narrow loss to Concordia-Moorhead and was named the MIAC special teams player of the week for the third time in the past three seasons. In Saturday's loss to St. Olaf, Jackson rushed 15 times for 92 yards and added 42 yards in kickoff return yardage, giving him 135 all-purpose yards. He is averaging 68.2 all-purpose yards on the season, ranking him first in the MIAC by more than 20 yards per game and 20th in all of Division III. He ranks third in the MIAC in rushing yards per game at 93.4 yards per contest and fourth in scoring at 7.2 points per game. He needs to average 107 yards per game over Carleton's last five contests to become only the fifth Carleton player to reach 1,000 rushing yards in a single season.

**RUNNING BACK TANDEM DRIVES KNIGHTS**

This season, Carleton has used a two-running back system to get the talents of junior Wade Thompson and sophomore R.J. Jackson on the field at the same time. So far the results are positive as the Knights are averaging 144.8 yards rushing per game despite facing the MIAC's top two rushing defenses in St. John's and Concordia. The Knights rushed for a season-best 216 yards against St. Olaf and faces a Macalester defense that has allowed an average of 188 rushing yards per game.

**MUELLERLEILE CONTINUES QUEST FOR 40-YARD SEASON AVERAGE**

Carleton punter Luke Muellerleile (White Bear Lake, Minn./Martomedi) had another solid game booting the ball against St. Olaf, averaging 45.5 yards per punt on four attempts, the second-best single-game average in school history. Only Andy Quist's 46.3 yards-per-punt average in an Oct. 16, 1999, game with the University of St. Thomas is better in the Carleton record book. (This season Muellerleile has matched two of the top three single-game punting averages in school history.) The performance raised his season average to 41.1 yards, which is on pace to shatter his own school record of 38.2 yards per attempt set last season. He is one of only three MIAC punters to rank in the top 20, as Augsburg College's Nick Schiller is second in the nation at 43.7 yards per attempt and St. Olaf's Paul Fortman is ninth in 41.6 yards per attempt. He is Carleton's career leader with 192 punt attempts and 6,978 punt yardage. He enters Saturday's contest with a 36.3 yards-per-punt career average. The Carleton career record, held by Neil Volker '93, is 35.7 yards per attempt.

**KOOTSIKAS CREEPS TOWARD ALL-TIME TOP 10 IN RECEIPTIONS, YARDS**

Junior wide receiver Mike Kootsikas (Rosemount, Minn.) tallied six catches for 68 yards in Saturday's loss to St. Olaf, giving him nine catches for 113 yards over Carleton's last two games. That leaves his career total at 70 receptions for 948 yards and five scores in 15 career games. Only 13 other Carleton receivers have reached the 1,000-yard mark in receiving yardage, and Kootsikas needs 243 yards to move into the all-time top 10 in reception yardage. He needs just two more catches to move alone into ninth on the all-time receptions list and needs 12 to move alone into eighth on that same list. The junior, playing his second year of collegiate football, ranks seventh in the MIAC in terms of receptions per game (4.6) and ninth in receiving yardage (53.4 yds./g).

**LARGEST ROSTER SINCE WORLD WAR II FOR KNIGHTS**

This season's roster is the largest at Carleton since 1948, the year after World War II ended and all the men returned home from the war fronts to college. Of these 82 players, 40 are returning letterwinners and 24 have started at least part-time. Thirty-three are first-year players, which is believed to be the largest recruiting class in Carleton history.

**LAST TIME: CARLETON 55, MACALESTER 14, OCT. 16, 2004**

Wade Thompson (Peterson, Minn./Rushford-Peterson) rushed for 175 yards and four touchdowns and host Carleton scored three times in the game's first 1:26 to coast to an

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**BY THE NUMBERS**

- Number of Carleton players that have rushed for 1,000 career yards: Wade Thompson joined teammate R.J. Jackson in the exclusive club.
- National ranking of punter Luke Muellerleile, who is averaging 41.1 yards per punt attempt. He is on track to break his own single-season record average of 38.2 yards per attempt.
- Yards needed by junior receiver Mike Kootsikas for 1,000 for his career. Only 13 Carleton receivers have reached the mark in their careers. His next catch will put him into Carleton's all-time top 10 in receptions. He has 70 career catches entering Saturday's game.
- Career-long run by junior quarterback Darren Caspers in Saturday's loss to St. Olaf.
- Number of years since Carleton started 3-3. The 1996 club was 3-3 after six games en route

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**MIAC STANDINGS**

as of Oct. 8 contest

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**Games This Week**

Carleton at Macalester, 1 p.m.
Bethel at St. Thomas, 1 p.m.
St. John's at Concordia
Hamline at Augsburg, 1 p.m.
Gustavus at St. Olaf, 1 p.m.

**Games Last Week**

St. Olaf 44, Carleton 14
St. John's 30, Bethel 7
Concordia 24, Hamline 7
Gustavus 42, Augsburg 27

**Games Next Week**

St. Thomas at Carleton, 1 p.m.
Concordia at Bethel, 1 p.m.
Augsburg at St. John's, 1 p.m.
St. Olaf at Hamline, 1 p.m.

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**CARLETON CAREER RECEPTIONS LIST**

1. 212 - Jim Bradford (212-371) - 1988-91
2. 182 - Steve Gorka (180-213) - 1994-97
3. 143 - Erik Miller (143-250) - 1992-96
4. 117 - Scott Hanks (117-244) - 1989-92
5. 117 - Jeff Scherer (117-215) - 1988-91
6. 99 - John Winton (99-212) - 1981-84
7. 99 - Mark Wobschläger (99-248) - 1984-86
8. 81 - Dan Niemitsu (81-226) - 1983-86
9. 80 - Dan Reider (80-216) - 1997-00
10. 71 - Brad Tompkins (71-190) - 1984-87
11. 71 - Chris French (71-237) - 1992-96
12. 70 - Mike Kootsikas (70-248) - 2004-05

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easy 55-14 Homecoming victory over Macalester.

The Knights rolled up 367 yards rushing, the third-most in school history, paced by Thompson's big day. The sophomore's 11.7 yards-per-carry average was the second-best in school history. Thompson had scoring romps of 6, 46, 11 and 8 yards in the contest, the second-most rushing touchdowns in a single game in Carleton history. Carleton's scoring output was the Knights' most in 13 seasons.

R.J. Jackson (Roseville, Minn./De La Salle) took a lateral on the opening kickoff, returning it 83 yards for his second kickoff return for a touchdown this season. After the Knight defense forced a three-and-out, the Knights ran a flea flicker play after a reverse and Darren Caspers (Bemidji, Minn.) hooked up with Mike Kootsikas (Rosemount, Minn.) from 56 yards. The Scots fumbled the ensuing kickoff away, and on the next play Caspers hit Ben Cooprider (DeKalb, Ill.) from 23 yards away, putting the Knights ahead 20-0.

Carleton extended the lead on its next drive, moving 58 yards in 11 plays, with Thompson covering the final six for his first score of the day. Macalester answered with its first score with 3:37 left in the first, but Thompson's 46-yard burst through the middle of the Scot defense pushed the hosts' advantage to 34-7.

Macalester appeared to close the gap, turning a Carleton fumble into a 4-yard scoring toss from running back Vernon to quarterback Denny on fourth-and-goal with 1:37 left in the half. A short kickoff gave the Knights excellent field position, however, and Thompson ran for 9- and 27-yarders, putting the ball at the Macalester 17. Jackson ran twice for 12 yards after a Carleton false start penalty, and Caspers scrambled for 10 yards and the score, bowling over two Scots to get into the end zone.

Thompson tacked on scoring runs of 11 and 8 yards in the third quarter to cap the scoring, as Carleton Coach Chris Brann substituted liberally over the final 17 minutes of the game. Macalester's Nate Vernon racked up 154 yards on 12 carries, running for 73 yards and tallying 81 yards receiving. Quarterback Adam Denny went 24-of-35 for 225 and caught two touchdown passes, one from backup quarterback Nick Hancs and another from Vernon. Tim Burns paced the Scot defense with 13 tackles, 10 solo, and Dan Haley made 12 stops, eight of the solo variety.

Carleton rolled up 476 yards of total offense to 323 for the Scots, who actually held a 10-minute time of possession advantage.

Jackson added a career-best 75 yards rushing and Caspers was 7-for-15 for 109 yards and two score and added 52 yards rushing, also a new career high. Tom McHugh (Elmhurst, Ill./York Community) added 49 yards rushing on only five carries. Mike Gravelle (Austin, Minn.) led the defense with nine tackles, two for losses, and Adam Rossov (Le Sueur, Minn./Le Sueur-Henderson) and Eric Paul (Lake Forest, Ill.) added seven stop each.

Caspers Moves Past 2,500 Passing Yards

Junior quarterback Darren Caspers had his best game of the season against St. Olaf, passing for 122 yards on 12 completions. The yardage total pushed his career yardage to 2,615 yards, making him the eighth different Carleton signal caller to surpass 2,500 yards passing in a career. He needs 60 more yards to pass Bill Ford '82 for seventh on Carleton's all-time passing yardage list and one more touchdown pass to get onto the all-time top 10 list in that category. Caspers' 2,929 total offensive yards leaves him 71 shy of becoming only the eighth player in Carleton history to reach the 3,000-yard mark in total offense. He ranks ninth all-time with 245 career completions.

Kootsikas, Jackson MIAC Players of the Week

Sophomore running back/return man R.J. Jackson (Roseville, Minn./De La Salle) was named MIAC special teams player of the week and junior wide receiver Mike Kootsikas (Rosemount, Minn.) was the MIAC's offensive player of the week for their performances in the Knights' Sept. 24 loss to Concordia.

Kootsikas caught eight passes for 105 yards and two touchdowns as Carleton nearly upset 16th-ranked Concordia-Moorhead. Kootsikas caught a 10-yard TD pass early in the first quarter to answer the Cobbers' first score and his 25 TD reception midway through the second have the Knights a 21-18 lead. He had a big third-down catch late in the third quarter to set up a touchdown that brought Carleton within 11 points, and he had two catches on Carleton's final drive as the Knights had four shots from the Cobbler 7-yard line in the final moments to potentially tie the game.
Jackson returned a kick 83 yards for a touchdown and rolled up 227 all-purpose yards in Carleton's loss to defending conference champions. He also rushed 16 times for 81 yards and one touchdown and added six catches for 65 yards, including a 30-yard catch-and-run that set up Carleton's first touchdown. The kick return was his lone return of the day, as the Cobbers made a concerted effort to kick away from the speedy sophomore.

It is the fourth time in Jackson's career he's been named MIAC player of the week and the third time he's been honored on special teams. It is the first MIAC player of the week award for Kootsikas.

MUELLERLEILE MIAC SPECIAL TEAMS PLAYER OF THE WEEK

Carleton senior Luke Muellerleile (White Bear Lake, Minn./Mahometedi) was named this week's MIAC special teams player of the week on Sept. 19 after putting eight times for 357 yards in a Sept. 17 loss to St. John's, an average of 44.6 yards per punt. Included in this total were two punts of more than 40 yards early in the game that helped Carleton in the field position battle, a 59-yarder in the second quarter and a 65-yard boomer in the fourth. The 357 yards punting is a school record, the average is the second-best single-game average in school history and the 65-yard boot is tied for the fourth longest in school history. Also Carleton's starting free safety, Muellerleile tallied seven tackles and an interception in the contest. It marked the second time in his career that Muellerleile has been named the MIAC special teams player of the week. It was the second time this season a Carleton player has earned MIAC special teams player of the week honors as R.J. Jackson (So./Roseville, Minn./De La Salle) earned the same honor for his week one performance against Beloit College (Wis.).

KNIGHTS MORE EXPERIENCED GROUP IN 2005

It will be an experienced group that takes the field for Carleton in the 2005 season. Offense, only sophomore left guard Sam Larsen and receiver Matt Frank are first-time starters. Frank and offensive lineman Jon Nelson are the only two first-year players to crack the offensive two-deep. On the defensive side of the ball, youth was served a bit more as the unit has three players - sophomore end James Clark, tackle Kaizen Yang and linebacker Jerad Phelps - as first-year starters. In addition, rookies John Hanks (end), Tim Kane (end), Ty Thorsen (defensive back), Drew Ziller (defensive back) and Nick Cesarek (cornerback) cracked the two-deep.

JOTTINGS

Rookie wide-out Matt Frank (Caledonia, Minn.) tallied seven catches for 88 yards and one touchdown in his first game against arch rival St. Olaf. The first-year player had four of his seven catches on the final drive of the first half, as his 20-yard TD grab put the Knights within a pair of scores right before halftime.... Ten different Knights had receptions on Saturday, a season high.... Carleton, which had a turnover margin of +6 in its six games leading into the showdown with St. Olaf, ended up +4 against the Oles. The Knights committed a season-high five turnovers. The Oles turned those five turnovers into 20 points, two coming off defensive scores... Despite Carleton’s five turnovers, the Knights rolled up a season-high 464 yards of total offense against the Oles. They actually out-gained the Oles by 47 yards and tallied 25 first downs to 19 for the Oles... Carleton rushed for 216 yards against St. Olaf, its highest total of the season against a MIAC foe... Carleton remains the least penalized team in the MIAC, having committed but 12 penalties in five contests... Carleton didn't have a turnover in its Oct. 1 win over Augsburg. It marked the second year in a row the Knights haven't turned the ball over against the Auggies.... Sophomore Jerad Phelps (Northfield, Minn.) recorded a career-high 12 tackles in Saturday's win over Augsburg. He had nine tackles all of last year. He is second on the squad with 39 stops... Senior Luke Muellerleile tallied a team-high 13 tackles and recovered a fumble in the Sept. 24 loss to Concordia. The total was four shy of his career high of 17, set against Bethel last year. It is the 50th time in 34 career games he's tallied 10 or more tackles in a game... Sophomore James Colbenson (Rushford, Minn./Rushford-Peterson) had his best game of the young 2005 season against Concordia, tallying seven tackles (six solo) and forcing a fumble, which he recovered, with 2:41 left in the game that gave the Knights a chance to tie the game in the final moments. He added four stops, two solo, in the Oct. 1 game with Augsburg.
TRIO OF DEFENDERS IN 200-TACKLE CLUB

Seniors Luke Muellerleie and Nick Brokke and junior Randy Foss have all tallied 200 tackles for their career. Muellerleie leads the group with 265 stops, followed by Foss at 235 and Brokke at 229. Brokke has added 10 career interceptions, while Muellerleie has six picks.

RUN GAME IMPROVED UNDER BRANN

Since Chris Brann’s arrival at Carleton, the Knights have made significant strides in their rushing attack. They rolled up 284 yards rushing in the win over Beloit (Wis.) in week one and added 216 yards in the loss to St. Olaf. They have surpassed the 200-yard mark as a team in four of their last 10 games and nine since the start of the 2003 season, a span of 25 games.

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*most since 22 rushing TDs in 1996

KNIGHTS’ FOOTBALL LIVE ON AIR, OVER INTERNET

For the second 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.

KNIGHTS BACK HOME TO HOST TOMMIES

Carleton returns home and begins the stretch run towards the end of the 2005 season by hosting the University of St. Thomas in the penultimate home game of the season. Kickoff in Laird Stadium is 1 p.m. The game can be heard live on KQCL 95.9 FM and on Knights Online (www.carleton.edu/athletics/broadcasts/).