Carleton College athletics

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contact Eric Sieger, Sports Information Director
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Carleton Football Report - Week Seven

KNIGHTS, TOMMIES KICK OFF MIAC’S SECOND HALF

Carleton College hosts the University of St. Thomas to begin the second half of the MIAC slate for both squads. The Knights and Tommies enter with identical 1-3 conference marks, as both own victories over winless Augsburg College. The two teams have nearly identical schedules left, as both have yet to play Gustavus Adolphus College and Hamline University. Carleton goes to Bethel University next week while the Tommies will end with arch rival St. John’s University. The Knights are seeking to snap a 12-game losing skid to the Tommies and beat them for only the fifth time since they rejoined the MIAC in 1983.

KNIGHTS RETAIN BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE

Carleton’s victory on Saturday over Macalester allowed the Knights to retain the Book of Knowledge for the third consecutive year. The Book of Knowledge is a traveling trophy exchanged between the two highest-ranked academic institutions in Minnesota. The trophy, started in the 1999 season, has belonged to the Knights for the past three seasons.

JACKSON SETS NEW SCHOOL RECORD

Sophomore R.J. Jackson (Roseville, Minn./De La Salle) rushed nine times for 112 yards and two touchdowns in Saturday’s victory over Macalester. The 12.4 yards per carry average set a new single-game Carleton record, breaking the old mark of 12.3 yards-per carry set by Adam Henry ’94, also set against Macalester in 1990. Jackson had a 74-yard touchdown scamper, a new career long for the fleet sophomore. He also returned a punt 43 yards for a touchdown, his first career punt return for a score. He’s scored four special teams touchdowns in 16 career games.

CASPERS REACHES MILESTONE IN TOTAL OFFENSE

Junior Darren Caspers (Bemidji, Minn.) tallied 59 yards passing and 12 yards rushing in limited action on Saturday. The totals give him exactly 3,000 yards of total offense for his career. He is only the eighth Carleton player to reach that milestone.

KNIGHTS STAGE SACK ATTACK AGAINST SCOTS

Carleton notched nine sacks against Macalester, led by Pat Frett’s (Jr./Wilmette, Ill./Ann Arbor Huron, Mich.) three sacks among his eight tackles against Macalester. It is the most sacks recorded in a single game by a Knight player since 1999 and is tied for the third-most in a single game in Carleton football history. Carleton held Macalester to 2 rushing yards in Saturday’s win, using those nine sacks for 57 yards to hold down the Scots’ ground attack. Seven different players recorded sacks for the Knights.

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 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 1,000 career rushing yards in the same season.

**JACKSON LEADS MIAC IN ALL-PURPOSE YARDS, CHASES RUSHING MARK**

Carleton sophomore R.J. Jackson fell out of the national rankings for kick returns this week as he doesn't have enough attempts to qualify for the rankings. He continues to be ranked first in the conference in all-purpose yards, as his 167 all-purpose yards per game is first. He ranks third in rushing yardage at 96.5 yards per game, third in scoring at 9.0 points per game and third in touchdowns with nine. He returned his first punt for a touchdown last week against Macalester and returned his third career kickoff for a touchdown in the Sept. 24 loss to Concordia-Moorhead. His all-purpose yardage average ranks him 18th in all of Division III. He needs to average 105.25 yards per game over Carleton's last four 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 153.8 yards rushing per game despite facing the MAC's top two rushing defenses in St. John's and Concordia. The Knights rushed for a season-best 216 yards against St. Olaf and added 199 yards against Macalester. The Knights rank fourth in the MIAC in rushing yardage per game and face the MIAC's worst rushing defense in St. Thomas. The Tommies have allowed an average of 202.4 rushing yards per contest, though they've faced the MIAC's top three rushing teams in Concordia, St. Olaf and Bethel.

**MUellerleile continues quest for 40-yard season average**

Carleton punter Luke Muellerleile (While Bear Lake, Minn./Mantomedi), who didn't punt in the Macalester contest last week, had a solid game booting the ball against St. Olaf two weeks ago, 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 notched 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 and ranks him 11th in the nation. He is one of only three MIAC punters to rank in Division III's top 20, as Augsburg College's Nick Schliemar is first in the nation at 43.9 yards per attempt and St. Olaf's Paul Fortman is 13th at 44.6 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.

**Kootskas into top 10 in receptions, nearing in yardage**

Junior wide receiver Mike Kootskas (Rosemount, Minn.) added three grabs for 28 yards against Macalester, pushing his career reception total to 73 and pushing him into Carleton's all-time top 10 in only his 16th career game. He needs 27 yards to reach 1,000 career receiving yards. Only 13 other Carleton receivers have reached the 1,000-yard mark in receiving yardage, and Kootskas needs 215 yards to move into the all-time top 10 in reception yardage. He needs nine more catches to move alone into eighth on the all-time receptions list.

**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: ST. THOMAS 38, CARLETON 7, OCT. 23, 2004

R.J. Jackson rolled up a then-career best 95 yards rushing but five Carleton turnovers led to 17 St. Thomas points as the Knights lost to the Tommies, 38-7.

The Tommies (5-1, 4-1 MIAC) used a 24-point first quarter to race to an early advantage and Peter Ridley rushed for a MIAC record 314 yards and three touchdowns as the Tommies rolled up 443 yards of total offense.

The hosts took the opening kickoff and marched 53 yards on 14 plays, converting on a pair of fourth-down conversions. The final was a fourth-and-goal from the 1-yard line, and Carleton appeared to have stuffed Tommie back Peter Ridley shy of the goal line, but the officials ruled the ball had crossed the plane of the goal line before his knee was down.

Carleton went three-and-out on its first offensive possession, and Ridley ripped off an 88-yard scamper on the next play from scrimmage. UST would intercept Carleton’s third-down pass on the next possession, returning the tipped pass 30 yards to the Carleton 14-yard line. The Knights defense held, however, forcing the Tommies to settle for a 37-yard field goal and a 7-0 lead.

Carleton looked like it would respond on its next drive. The Tommies, who kicked away from the nation’s top return man in Jackson all day, booted a short kickoff and Rich Juelich returned it 55 yards to the St. Thomas 30-yard line. Quarterback Darren Caspers scampered 30 yards down to the goal line. He tried to stretch and get the ball across the goal line, but the ball popped out and it was ruled a fumble, although it appeared the ground caused the ball to jar loose. UST recovered in the end zone for a touchback and covered the 80 yards in only four plays, pushing the lead to 24-0.

St. Thomas added a Ridley 79-yard sprint for the game’s only second-quarter score, taking a 31-0 at the break. Carleton’s defense stiffened in the second half, allowing only seven points and 151 yards of total offense. The Knights made a nice goal-line stand early in the third, stuffing Ridley three consecutive times from inside the 3-yard line, with Nick Brokke (Roseville, Minn./Roseville Area) knocking down a fourth-down pass in the end zone.

Carleton’s offense pushed the ball out to the 25, but was forced to punt after Caspers’ slant pass to A.J. Cookas (Burnsville, Minn./Apple Valley) was just shy of the first down, despite a great catch in traffic by the rookie. Luke Muellerelle’s punt was fumbled by St. Thomas and recovered by Zack Wollack (Novi, Mich./Novi Northville). Carleton marched 38 yards in 11 plays, with Wade Thompson scoring on a 7-yard misdirection play. Cookas’ catch on fourth down helped keep the drive alive.

Carleton had another good scoring chance midway through the final quarter, as a Jackson 39-yard burst and a pass interference call on St. Thomas put the ball at the UST 2-yard line. Carleton mishandled the hand-off exchange, however, and the Tommies recovered and Carleton never threatened again.

Jackson, who entered as the top-ranked kick returner in all of NCAA Division III, averaged five yards per carry and was also Carleton’s top receiver, catching five balls for 34 yards. The Tommies didn’t allow him to return a kick all day, though. Caspers was 10-for-20 for 86 yards.

Carleton defensive linemen Pat Frett and Ben Olson ‘05 paced the Knights’ defense, as Frett came up with seven tackles and one sack and Olson notched six stops and a pair of sacks. Brokke added six tackles, five solo.

CASPERSONS 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. He added 59 yards last week against Macalester, leaving him in a dead heat at 2,674 passing yards for seventh on Carleton’s all-time passing yardage list with Bill Ford ‘82. He needs one more touchdown pass to get onto the all-time top 10 list in that category. He ranks sixth all-time with 252 career completions.

BROKKE MIAC NATIONAL DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE WEEK
Junior cornerback Nick Brokke 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 Augies 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 Augie turnovers.

**Kootsikas, Jackson Mic Players of the Week**

Sophomore running back/return man R.J. Jackson was named MIC special teams player of the week and junior wide receiver Mike Kootsikas was the MIC'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 half gave 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 Collier 7-yard line in the final moments to potentially tie the game.

Jackson returned a kick 83 yards for a touchdown and rolled up a 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 MIC player of the week and the third time he's been honored on special teams. It is the first MIC player of the week award for Kootsikas.

**Muellerliebe Mic Special Teams Player of the Week**

Carleton senior Luke Muellerliebe was named this week's MIC special teams player of the week on Sept. 19 after punting eight times for 357 yards in a Sep. 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-yarder 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, Muellerliebe tallied seven tackles and an interception in the contest. It marked the second time in his career that Muellerliebe has been named the MIC special teams player of the week. It was the second time this season a Carleton player has earned MIC special teams player of the week honors as R.J. Jackson 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. On offense, only sophomore left guard Sam Larsen (Woodland, Minn./Minnetonka) and receiver Matt Frank (Caledonia, Minn.) are first-time starters. Frank and offensive lineman Jon Nelson (Urbana, Ill.) 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 (St. Paul, Minn./Highland Park), tackle Kaizyen Yang (Northfield, Minn.) and linebacker Jerad Phelps (Northfield, Minn.) — as first-year starters. In addition, rookie ends John Hanks (LeRoy, Minn./LeRoy-Ostrander) Tim Kane (Hopkins, Minn.) and defensive backs Ty Thorsen (Moorhead, Minn.), Drew Ziller (Byron, Minn./Rochester Lourdes) and Nick Cesarek (Eagan, Minn./Eastview) cracked the two-deep.

**Jottings**

Carleton is at .500 or better six games into the season for the first time since 1996. Carleton’s three losses are to teams with a combined 18-1 record...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 against St. Olaf, a season high...Carleton, which had a turnover margin of +6 in its 10 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. The Knights had eight turnovers in their first four games but have eight in their last two games... Despite Carleton's eight turnovers in the last two games it has averaged 365 yards of total offense in those two contests. 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 18 penalties in six 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 Augies... Sophomore Jerad Phelps recorded a career-high 12 tackles in the Oct. 1 win over Augsburg. He had nine tackles all of last year. He is second on the squad with 36 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 30th time in 36 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, wh ch 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 Muellerleile and Nick Brokke and junior Randy Foss (Hastings, Minn.) have all tallied 200 tackles for their career. Muellerleile tallies the group with 268 stops, followed by Foss at 241 and Brokke at 231. Brokke has added 12 career interceptions, while Muellerleile 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 (Wisc.) in week one, added 216 yards in the loss to St. Olaf and barely missed their third 200-yard game as the Knights rolled up 199 yards against Macalester last week. They have surpassed the 200-yard mark as a team in four of their last 11 games and nine times since the start of the 2003 season, a span of 26 games.

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 HIT ROAD FOR NEXT TWO CONTTESTS

Carleton is on the road for their next two contests, traveling to Arden Hills, Minn., next week to face Bethel University and then to St. Peter, Minn., to play Gustavus Adolphus College on Nov. 5. The games, which both begin at 1 p.m., can be heard live on KQCL 95.9 FM and on Knights Online (www.carleton.edu/athletics/broadcasts).