Colgate Field Hockey Fall Highlights 2004

Seniors Lead Team Back To The Patriot League Tournament
By Alex Clark

Sometimes there is justice in sports. Sometimes you get what you deserve. The senior class of the Colgate field hockey team finally got the taste of victory after three painful years of paucity in the win column, and, by fighting their way to the Patriot League championship, truly earned their just desserts.

For many on the 2004 Raider club, the semi-final victory over Holy Cross and the tight defeat at the hands of the seventh best team in the nation, American, were a fitting way to end a season which had shown the maturation of a team. For the seven seniors, that brisk final Sunday represented a fitting end to careers which had stood the test of time and tribulation.

Four years ago, Courtney Collins, Natalie Heller, Sally Mazzocchi, Kelly McKallagat, Nancy Miller, Ashley Schneider, and Kath Shelley struggled through a heart-trampling 3-15 season. Over their first three years, the class of 2005 never experienced a season with more than six victories, let alone a winning campaign.

“It’s really hard to articulate how hard and trying those first three years were,” said Shelley, one of the captains of the 2004 Raiders. “The freshmen that are here now have no idea how much hard work and chemistry was needed to work together through losing seasons. It’s hard to be happy when you’re not winning.”

Through internal problems and frustrations on the field, the women stuck it out and became the core of this year’s Raider club which found itself vying for a Patriot League championship after bumping off Holy Cross in the semifinals. Down a goal to the Crusaders at halftime, the team exploded in the second half for four tallies in front of an ecstatic home crowd.

At halftime Coach Foto told us “Today is not going to be the last day of our season,” said Collins, another of the Raider captains. “In the second half we just came out and banged in four goals in 20 minutes. That was the most excited I’ve ever been in a game. I get chills even thinking about it now.”

“It captured our four years here,” added Schneider, who also captained the 2004 Colgate club. “We’ve never been a team that’s come from behind. This year we had two games, one against Albany and one against Holy Cross. Our seniors have done a full circle. Our first game freshman year was a road trip to Maine and our last regular season game this year was a road trip to Maine, and we went from losing against Maine to winning against Maine.”

The Raiders made a point of coming from behind, not only in single games but also in the season. Colgate stumbled out to three straight losses at the outset of the year, causing many to fear that much of the same was in order.

“I remember waking up the next day after going 0-3 and thinking, ‘This is absolutely horrible,’” said head coach Cathy Foto. “I had greater expectations, and it was important that we reassess where we were. It didn’t mean we couldn’t get where we wanted to be. The players didn’t skip a beat.”

“We started off the year 0-3, which was hard because we had such high expectations of ourselves,” Shelley concurred. “I remember that things weren’t always easy in terms of teamwork at that point. But we didn’t give up, and things got in order.”

In response to challenges from their coach and themselves, the women reeled off an impressive seven consecutive victories, reaching the crooked digit for the first time in any of the players’ collegiate careers. The teamwork which had been lacking throughout the first three games and first three years of the seniors’ college experience suddenly came through in a triumphant wave.

“This year showed the importance of teamwork and what it means to be a team,” said Collins. “This was the first year where I felt there’s been great chemistry. One of the things we’re all so happy about is how everyone feels so close.”

Colgate carried an 11-7 record into the league tournament, ensuring themselves a winning season and reaching one of its primary goals. The victory against Holy Cross only solidified the knowledge that this year’s version of Raider field hockey had finally come into the success and achievement which its strong senior class had deserved so many times before.

They exceeded every goal we set for them,” said Foto. “Our main goal was to get back to the Patriot League Tournament. The fact that we got there was very exciting, and we knocked off some teams from bigger leagues with more scholarships.”

“We got to see the transformation over four years,” said Schneider, whose high school career closely paralleled her experience at Colgate. “It’s really easy to go to a school that’s really successful and just join in, but it’s a completely different feeling to be a part of making that success.”

The Raiders faced a giant in the championship game. Ranked seventh in the nation, American had knocked off the NCAA’s top team earlier in the season and had its sights set on the NCAA tournament regardless of the outcome of its match with Colgate. Though their experience with winning showed at the start of the contest, the Eagles found themselves out-raced to balls and out-hustled to
Regional Recognition Comes to Three Raiders

rebounds for much of the second half.

“They scored on us early,” said Foto. “In that first minute all of our inexperience in being in a championship game showed. It was nice to see that after that first minute we regrouped and moved on. I couldn’t be prouder of [my team]. They came out in the second half and played the best half of field hockey that I’ve seen as a coach.”

Though hosting the tournament, Colgate actually entered the game as the official visitor, as its 3-2 league record was good for second place behind American. Therefore, as the game progressed the Tyler’s Field scoreboard showed the home team with a 3-0 advantage. With the Raiders flying around and past Eagle players, however, late-comers assumed it was Colgate with the lead.

“It was funny, because some people who came in late to the game thought we were ahead,” said Shelly. “We had some opportunities that just didn’t go our way. It’s unfortunate that we can’t get them back and I think a lot about it.

“To win that game we needed to play out of our minds and we needed a little bit of luck, too,” added Schneider. “We did what we could control. We played well enough, but we needed the ball to bounce our way.”

Despite the lack of Lady Luck, the women of Colgate won pride and respect which they had literally bled for throughout four grueling seasons. The senior members of the 2004 Raiders look back not on an overall losing record, but a winning attitude which carried them to a type of glory often not contested: that which has been earned.

“More so than any class I’ve had here, they’ve been challenged in terms of wins and losses,” said Foto. “They had to develop a toughness in a lot of ways. They had to really lead themselves.”

Colgate’s seniors led Raider field hockey back to winning ways, and left behind them a legacy of hard work and gritty determination which will undoubtedly be on the minds of those who follow for years after those seven sticks are silent.

Colgate Earns Three Major Patriot League Awards

The Colgate Raiders were pleased to receive three major league awards in 2004. Sophomore goalkeeper Jacque DeMarco was selected as the Goalkeeper of The Year for leading the defense to four shutouts and a .809 save percentage. Senior Kath Shelley was selected as the Defensive Player of the Year for her contributions as the team’s center midfielder. Shelley broke the single season record for assists in a season and was responsible for playing tough defense on most teams’ leading scorers. Head coach Cathy Foto was named Coach of the Year for guiding the Raiders to a 12-8 overall record and a second place league finish. Shelley, DeMarco and Ashley Schneider were named to the leagues first team and Courtney Collins and Dana Shaner were named to the second team.

Regional Recognition Comes to Three Raiders

Senior Kath Shelley was named NFHCA All Mid-East Regional first team All American.

Sophomore Jacque DeMarco was named NFHCA All Mid-East Regional second team All-American.

Senior Ashley Schneider was named NFHCA All Mid-East Regional second team All-American.
Colgate Assistant Coach Talks About Her First Year On The Sidelines

Sensational is how I would describe my first, of hopefully many, many more seasons on the sidelines. I definitely had mixed emotions when I first arrived on Colgate’s campus— I was extremely excited to be back in the field. I couldn’t help but wonder if I would be a good ‘fit’ in the Raiders’ world. By the first day of preseason I knew I was a pretty decent ‘fit’ when I walked out onto Tyler’s Field I immediately felt at home and not just because I was back on the turf, but because I felt like a part of the team from the first day.

As a former Patriot League player, I had one goal in mind for our team—the PL tournament. And that we did! We took that 5th place preseason poll and finished out the season in 2nd place. It was such an amazing thing to be a part of as a coach—to watch our team rally around each other and push everyone to the next level. I told the girls in the beginning of the season that I have never been part of a team that is so tight-knit and all on the ‘same page’ in terms of their goals for the season and I still felt that way at the end of the season.

Their confidence in themselves and in their teammates continued to grow throughout the season. It was such a delight to see all of their hard work and team chemistry pay off in the end. They finally got what they deserved and only good things can continue to come from such a hard fought season. I can not wait to get the 2005 season underway.

Overall, I never imagined that my first coaching season could have been so amazing. I have learned an enormous amount about coaching from Coach Foto in just the past 4 months and there is still so much more for me to learn. I definitely consider myself very fortunate that I was given the opportunity to begin my coaching career both here at Colgate and under her tutelage.

2005 Captains Looking for Back to Back PLT Appearances

Dana Shaner and Jacque DeMarco were named as team captains for the 2005 season. DeMarco and Shaner each received post season honors from the Patriot League and will return to help lead the team back to the Patriot League Tournament.

Dana Shaner is from Pottstown, PA and is a graduate of the Hill School. Jacque is from Hudson, Ohio and graduated from Hudson High School.

DeMarco and Shaner talk about their goals for the upcoming season.

“My goals for the team next season are to continue the momentum and perseverance that we established this past season.” said DeMarco, “I would like to see us get back to the Patriot League finals and win. I would also like to improve our overall record!”

“One of my biggest goals for our team next season is to not only make it back to the PLT but go out and win it too!” said mid-fielder Dana Shaner. “I think that this past season we had great team chemistry and I have a good feeling that it will only be stronger next season. We’re a great group of girls who work hard with one goal in mind, getting that trophy! GO GATE!”

TENTATIVE 2005 GAME SCHEDULE

Saturday, August 27th Appalachian State
Saturday, September 3rd @ Rider
Friday, September 9th St. Francis
Sunday, September 11th Columbia
Wednesday, September 14th Siena
Saturday, September 17th Robert Morris
Sunday, September 18th Lock Haven
Saturday, September 24th @ West Chester
Sunday, September 25th @ Providence
Saturday, October 1st @ Holy Cross
Sunday, October 2nd @ Brown
Wednesday, October 5th Syracuse
Saturday, October 8th Bucknell
Saturday, October 15th Lafayette
Tuesday, October 18th @ Cornell
Saturday, October 22nd @ Lehigh
Tuesday, October 25th @ Albany
Saturday, October 29th @ American
Saturday, November 5th PL Tournament
Sunday, November 6th PL Tournament

Dana Shaner was named second Team All League and co-captain for the 2005 season, Dana played at The Hill School in Pottstown, PA.
The Colgate University Field Hockey program seeks student athletes who are eager to compete at the Division 1 level and are committed to developing themselves on and off the field. Colgate offers its athletes the opportunity to compete at the League, Regional and National Levels. Women’s teams at Colgate have represented the University in NCAA competition and traveled abroad to represent Colgate and the United States during out of season foreign tours.

Staying in Touch...

We look forward to keeping in touch with you as your college search moves forward. Please don’t hesitate to contact us with questions that you or your family may have.

Update your file whenever you have additional information to share with us. It is helpful for us to have a listing of your post season honors and awards for each year that you have played.

We also look forward to seeing you play in person so be sure to inform us of winter or spring tournaments that you may be involved in. Once your summer plans are confirmed, we would also like to know where you may be playing.

Video tapes are also very helpful and we encourage all interested players to have one on file. If you have questions concerning tapes, please let us know.

If you do not yet have an information form on file with us please fill out an online form via the COLGATE FIELD HOCKEY WEB PAGE. You can do this by going to the main athletic page www.gocolgateraiders.com, click on the field hockey page and click on recruit information form.

For more info on COLGATE ATHLETICS go to: www.gocolgateraiders.com

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