

TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE

1896-1929: THE EARLY YEARS

The first four seasons of Holy Cross football gave little indication of the great successes to come. In the school's first varsity game on Oct. 17, 1896, the Crusaders lost to Worcester Polytechnic Institute by a 10-0 margin. Later that first year, the Crusaders played the most controversial game in school history, a contest against Boston College which each school claims as a victory.

THE DISPUTED 1896 BOSTON COLLEGE GAME

On Nov. 14, 1896, Holy Cross claims to have won a 6-4 game over Boston College, while the Eagles claim to have won by a score of 8-6. With less than three minutes to play and the Crusaders leading 6-4, a fight broke out on the field. During the melee, Boston College's Hugh McGrath picked up the ball and crossed the Holy Cross goal line. The officials, however, did not allow the score, and the Eagles left the field in protest. The referee then awarded the win to Holy Cross, and the Crusaders left the field with an apparent victory. However, the story, does not end there. The referee decided to reverse his decision after a Boston College protest, and asked both teams to return to the field. Holy Cross refused and claimed a 6-4 win, while the Eagles returned to field, scored without opposition, and claimed to have taken an 8-6 victory.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Sept. 26, 1903: The Crusaders defeat Massachusetts Agricultural College 6-0 in their first home game on campus.

Sept. 26, 1908: Holy Cross defeats Norwich 5-0, in the first game played at the present site of Fitton Field.

Oct. 30, 1920: Lou Smith boots a 38-yard field goal to hand Syracuse its first loss, 3-0.

Sept. 27, 1924: Holy Cross defeats Catholic 13-7, in the first game at the newly-constructed Fitton Field.

Nov. 29, 1924: The Crusaders whip Boston College 33-0, before 50,000 fans at Braves Field.

Oct. 17, 1925: Holy Cross scores its first victory over Harvard, as captain John Crowley kicks the extra point in a 7-6 comeback victory.

1930S: THE ANDERSON ERA

The great Crusader teams of the 1930s were among the most dominating in school history, compiling a 75-15-7 record. The outstanding .809 winning percentage is the best of any decade in Holy Cross history, and the 76 wins were only exceeded by the 78 victories during the 1980s.

A large part of that success was due to Dr. Eddie Anderson, who took over as the Crusaders' coach in 1933. Anderson led Holy Cross from 1933-1938, and later returned for 15 more seasons from 1950-1964. During his initial stint, Anderson racked up a 47-7-4 mark, including the school's first two undefeated campaigns — 1935 (9-0-1) and 1937 (8-0-2).

The Anderson era began with a bang, as Holy Cross crushed St. Michael's 50-0 in his first game as Crusader mentor on Sept. 30, 1933, and just got better from there.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Oct. 10, 1936: "Bullet" Bill Osmanski's 76-yard interception return sparks Holy Cross to a 7-0 win over Dartmouth, its first in the series.

THE UNDEFEATED 1935 SEASON

Dr. Eddie Anderson's 1935 squad finished the season with an overall record of 9-0-1, to become the first undefeated team in school history. En route to the undefeated season, Holy Cross topped Colgate 3-0 on a Rex Kidd field goal, handing the Red Raiders their first loss to an Eastern opponent in four years. Also included in that season was a 79-0 blitzing of Bates on Nov. 16 (the school's largest ever margin of victory), in which the Crusaders totaled 736 rushing yards and 12 touchdowns. Fittingly, Anderson's Crusaders finished their undefeated season with a 20-6 victory over Boston College on Nov. 30.

Nov. 26, 1938: Holy Cross completes an 8-1 season with a 29-7 win over Boston College, and the Crusaders end the season ranked ninth in the final Associated Press poll. Dr. Anderson leaves Holy Cross for the University of Iowa after compiling a 47-7-4 record over six seasons.

Oct. 14, 1939: Holy Cross beats Georgia 13-0, giving the Crusaders three victories over the Bulldogs in three years. The visiting Crusaders had to overcome some shaky officiating from the southern officials, who later got into a shoving match with the two northern officials.

1940S: OF BOWLS & UPSETS

The Holy Cross teams of the 1940s did not distinguish themselves with their record (47-41-8), but instead with a pair of performances that are vivid in the minds of many even today.

In one of the greatest upsets in college football history, Holy Cross stunned undefeated and top-ranked Boston College 55-12 at Fenway Park on Nov. 28, 1942. Johnny Bezemes caught two touchdown passes from John Grigas, threw for a score, and returned an interception 64 yards for another touchdown, helping knock the Eagles out of a Sugar Bowl berth. Holy Cross finished just 5-4-1, but was 19th in the final Associated Press poll. That night, 496 people died in a fire at the Cocoanut Grove night club, where Boston College had planned a victory celebration, but cancelled after the loss. The fire was the nation's worst since 1903.

A few years later, the Crusaders faced Miami on Jan. 1, 1946, in the Orange Bowl, suffering a 13-6 defeat. The game was tied 6-6 in the closing seconds when Holy Cross tried a last-play long pass, but Miami's Al Hudson intercepted the tipped pass and took it back 89 yards for the game-winning touchdown.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Sept. 27, 1941: The Crusaders open the season with a 19-13 victory over Louisiana State at Tiger Stadium in Baton Rouge, La.

Oct. 14, 1945: A Fitton Field crowd of 26,000 sees Stan Kozlowski score two touchdowns, pass for another and kick two extra points in a 26-7 victory over Villanova. Later that season, Kozlowski would throw Holy Cross' only touchdown pass in the Orange Bowl loss to Miami.

TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE

1950S:

THE ANDERSON ERA, PART II

After departing Holy Cross for Iowa in 1939, Anderson returned to Worcester to guide the Crusaders from 1950 to 1964. Although not quite as successful as his first stint with Holy Cross in the 1930s, Anderson's teams in the 1950s team compiled a 56-38-3 mark (.593). During his second tenure, Anderson's Crusaders also managed to defeat Boston College seven times.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Dec. 2, 1950: Trailing Boston College 14-0, after suffering a 76-0 defeat against the Eagles the year before, Johnny Turco's 97-yard kickoff return sparks Holy Cross to a 32-14 win.

Sept. 26, 1953: Holy Cross defeats Dartmouth 28-6 in Lynn, Mass., in the first nationally televised game from New England.

Nov. 6, 1955: After Tony Santaniello recovers a Dayton fumble, Tom Roberts hits Dale Hohl for a nine-yard score with just 50 seconds remaining for a 13-7 victory.

Dec. 1, 1956: Bill Smithers finds Paul Toland with 39 seconds left for a 7-0 win over Boston College.

Nov. 30, 1957: Vince Promuto recovers eight Boston College fumbles in Holy Cross' soggy 14-0 victory.

Oct. 18, 1958: John Esposito's 81-yard return of a blocked field goal late in the game gives the Crusaders a 14-8 win over Dartmouth.

1960S:

A SHORTENED SEASON

The highlight, such as it is, of this decade was the season that wasn't — 1969. Along with the 1918 team, the 1969 squad played the shortest schedule of any Crusader team — just two games. After losing to Harvard and Dartmouth to start the season, nearly 90 players and coaches from Bill Whitton's squad were inflicted with hepatitis, forcing the cancellation of the final eight games of the season. In a touching gesture, the team from Sacramento State decided to dedicate its season to Holy Cross, wearing the Crusaders' purple jerseys against Puget Sound and flying Crusader co-captains Tom Lamb and Bill Moncevicz to the game. Sacramento State flanker Mike Carter, who initiated his school's involvement with Holy Cross, was presented with an honorary O'Melia Award.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Nov. 28, 1964: In Anderson's final game as Crusader coach, Holy Cross falls to Boston College 10-8. Anderson finished his 21 seasons at Holy Cross with a 129-67-8 (.652) record.

Nov. 26, 1966: Jack Lentz hits Pete Kimener for a touchdown in the final minute to beat Boston College, 32-26. Mike Kaminski had kicked a pair of then-record 44-yard field goals in the first quarter. Lentz becomes the first player to win the Edward O'Melia Award twice.

1970S:

TRYING TIMES

Any program that spans over a century is bound to have some down years, and for Holy Cross football that period was the 1970s. Amazingly, this is one of just four decades in which the Crusaders finished below .500, as they posted an overall mark of 37-68-3 (.352) from 1970-1979. Even in the down times, however, Holy Cross had some high points — in this case back-to-back wins over Boston College in 1977 and 1978. In addition, head coach Ed Doherty took over a team that had not won a game since 1968 and directed the Crusaders to a 4-6 mark in 1971 — becoming the first coach to earn New England Coach of the Year honors with a losing record.

PAT MCCARTHY IN THE NCAA RECORD BOOK

A trio of NCAA records by a Crusader quarterback have stood the test of time. Pat McCarthy (Class of 1963) stands among Holy Cross' all-time leaders in scoring (176 points), touchdown runs (25), total offense (4,534 yards) and passing yards (3,289), but his knack for the two-point conversion remains impressive over 50 years later. In 1960, McCarthy scored six two-point conversions, which is still tied for the best single-season performance in NCAA history. His career totals of 13 conversion runs and 19 conversion passes are also NCAA records, which he continues to hold by himself.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Oct. 17, 1970: In a 33-23 loss to Boston University, Colin Clapton connects with Eddie Jenkins on a 99-yard touchdown pass, tying an NCAA record.

Sept. 16, 1972: Joe Wilson romps to what was then a school-record 274 yards rushing, to lead Holy Cross to a 24-14 victory over Rutgers.

Sept. 21, 1974: John Provost intercepts four passes and returns two punts (59 and 82 yards) for scores against Brown. Provost would finish his career with 27 interceptions and 470 interception return yards, both of which currently rank as the second-most in NCAA Division I-AA history.

Sept. 23, 1978: The Crusaders travel to Colorado Springs, Colo., and post a 35-18 victory over a Bill Parcels-coached Air Force team.

1980S:

RETURN TO DOMINANCE

Simply put, the Crusaders of the 1980s were the most consistently dominating of any teams in school history. The numbers are gaudy: Holy Cross won more than 70 percent of its games (78-31-2, .711), outscored the opposition by an average of more than 10.5 points per game (27-16), won five Lambert Cups, four ECAC team of the year awards, and three of the initial four Patriot League championships.

The turning point for the program came on Dec. 17, 1980, when athletic director Ron Perry announced that Rick Carter would take the helm of the Crusaders, after leading Dayton to a 14-0 mark and the Division III national championship. On Sept. 12, 1981, Holy Cross topped Boston University 14-6 in Carter's debut, and the Crusaders' first game as a Division I-AA team. Carter compiled a 35-19-2 record in his five seasons, including leading Holy Cross to its first Division I-AA playoff game, a 28-21 home loss to Western Carolina in 1983.

Mark Duffner took over as head coach of the Crusaders on Feb. 8, 1986 — just six days after the death of Carter — and made an already successful program into the finest in Division I-AA. In his six seasons, Duffner's teams never won fewer than nine games, as he compiled an unbelievable 60-5-1 record.

TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE

But great coaches need great players, and the Crusaders of the 1980s were blessed with many. In addition to Gordie Lockbaum, Holy Cross had 12 other players earn first team All-America honors during the decade, and eight more earn second or third team honors — including the school's all-time leaders in rushing yards (Gill Fenerty, 3,680 yards), passing yards (Jeff Wiley, 9,698 yards, now second all-time) and interceptions (Dave Murphy, 28 interceptions, most in New England history and second-most in NCAA Division I-AA history).

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Oct. 29, 1983: Gill Fenerty has a spectacular game against Columbia, rushing for a school-record 337 yards and six touchdowns on just 18 carries (18.7 yards per carry).

Dec. 3, 1983: Third-ranked Holy Cross falls to Western Carolina 28-21, in the Division I-AA quarterfinals. The Crusaders claim their first Lambert Cup, and Rick Carter is named National Coach of the Year.

Dec. 1, 1984: A crowd of 25,000 fans pack Fitton to see Boston College's Doug Flutie on the day he would receive the Heisman Trophy. The Eagles won 45-10.

TWO-WAY STANDOUT GORDIE LOCKBAUM

If Gordie Lockbaum is not the greatest player in Holy Cross history, he is at least the most highly decorated. Lockbaum finished fifth in the Heisman Trophy voting as a junior, and then jumped to third in the voting as a senior, after capping his remarkable two-way career as a Crusader. Lockbaum was featured on numerous television shows, newspapers and magazines — including a feature in *Sports Illustrated*. Lockbaum was more than two-way hype however, as he still holds nine school records, in addition to being a two-time All-America selection for his play as a defensive back. His most explosive effort was a six touchdown performance against Dartmouth on Homecoming in 1986. Lockbaum was elected to the College Football Hall of Fame in 2001.

Sept. 13, 1986: Scott Rudy's 82-yard interception return for a touchdown lifts Holy Cross to a 17-14 win over Lehigh in the Colonial League's inaugural game.

Oct. 18, 1986: Bill Young's 38-yard field goal and a heroic defensive stand in the final minutes lift the Crusaders to a 17-14 victory at Army.

Nov. 22, 1986: Unbeaten Holy Cross takes a 14-0 lead over Hall of Fame Bowl-bound Boston College, but the Eagles come back to win 56-26 before a crowd of 25,000 at Fitton Field. The 82-game series is discontinued three months later.

Sept. 26, 1987: Quarterback Jeff Wiley throws for 414 yards and seven touchdowns in a 63-6 rout of Lehigh.

Nov. 19, 1987: Playing before an ESPN national television audience, Holy Cross defeats Villanova, 39-6, to complete its first 11-0 campaign and finish the season ranked No. 1 in the polls. Gordie Lockbaum catches 15 passes for 196 yards and sets or ties seven school records in his final game.

Sept. 24, 1988: Darin Cromwell laterals to Tim Donovan for a 72-yard kickoff return touchdown as time expires, stunning Princeton 30-26.

Sept. 9, 1989: In his first collegiate start, quarterback Tom Ciaccio completes 31 of 43 passes for a school-record 449 yards (in addition to finishing with a school-record 491 yards of total offense) in a 38-17 drubbing of Villanova.

1990S: A DECADE OF TRANSITION

The start of the 1990s was really a continuation of the heady successes of the 1980s, as the final two seasons of Mark Duffner's reign resulted in another pair of Patriot League titles in 1990 (9-1-1) and 1991 (11-0). But the 1990s also saw full transition to the non-scholarship Patriot League.

The 1990s featured a pair of milestones, as the Crusaders won their 500th game and made their first international trip. Win No. 500 came on Nov. 3, 1990, when Holy Cross defeated Bucknell 43-14. The first trip outside the country saw the Crusaders down Fordham 24-19 on Nov. 16, 1991, at the Wild Geese Classic in Limerick, Ireland. That win was also Holy Cross' 19th straight, breaking the Division I-AA record held by Eastern Kentucky.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Nov. 17, 1990: The Holy Cross defense limits Colgate to 14 rushing yards in a 35-6 victory, clinching the Patriot League title. The Crusaders win their ninth straight game, and the defense finishes the season allowing just 106 points, the fewest since 1958.

Oct. 19, 1991: Mark Roman makes 11 catches for a school-record 216 yards in Holy Cross' 42-28 comeback win over Brown.

Oct. 26, 1991: In a battle of unbeaten teams that went above and beyond expectations, Holy Cross outslugged Lehigh for a 43-42 victory in one of the school's most exciting games ever. The score was tied 7-7 at halftime, before the teams went on to combine for a league record 1,172 yards in total offense.

Nov. 23, 1991: The Crusaders complete their second-ever 11-0 season with a 28-3 thumping of Colgate at Fitton Field. Holy Cross finishes the season at No. 3 in the Division I-AA national poll, its second-highest ranking ever.

Nov. 6, 1993: Chris Summers catches eight passes for 127 yards and a school-record four touchdowns against Lafayette. He finishes the year with a Holy Cross single-season record 13 touchdown receptions.

Sept. 17, 1994: J.R. Walz rushes for 103 yards on 12 carries, becoming the first Holy Cross freshman to record 100 yards or more in the Division I-AA era.

Nov. 5, 1994: Rob Callahan throws a 38-yard scoring pass to John Myers with eight seconds remaining, as Holy Cross tops Bucknell 27-20 at Fitton Field. Earlier in the game, Anthony Pignio hit a 47-yard field goal to become the school's all-time leader in field goals made. He would finish his career with 37.

Oct. 28, 1995: Four years after the Holy Cross-Fordham clash in Ireland, the teams once again travel abroad, meeting in Bermuda Bowl III. Fordham prevails 17-10 in a contest played in National Stadium in Hamilton, Bermuda.

Nov. 22, 1997: Jeff Laboranti breaks the school record for career receiving yards by catching seven passes for 102 yards in the final game of his career. Earlier in the season he set the career mark for receptions.

Oct. 17, 1998: In the first overtime game in school history, the Crusaders fall at Harvard 20-14.

Nov. 20, 1999: Brian Hall becomes the first player in school history to throw for more than 300 yards (301) and rush for more than 100 yards (105) in the same game, while accounting for four touchdowns.

TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE

2000S: A NEW MILLENNIUM

The Holy Cross football team entered the new millennium with high hopes of returning to the dominance of the 1980s. The opening season of the decade put the Crusaders back on the map in New England football circles. Holy Cross posted a mark of 7-4 in 2000, good for the Crusaders' highest win total since 1991.

Entering head coach Tom Gilmore's 13th season, Holy Cross has become a perennial Patriot League contender as it continues its rise back to the top of Division I-AA football. In 2009, the Crusaders won their first Patriot League championship since 1991, and advanced to the NCAA playoffs for the first time since 1983.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Oct. 7, 2000: David Thompson and Erreck Stewart are picked as co-winners of the Johnny Turco Memorial Award, becoming the first players to share the honor.

Nov. 4, 2000: Ryan Rolfert hits a 39-yard field goal as time expires to lead Holy Cross to a 10-9 win over Bucknell.

Oct. 20, 2001: Brian Hall leads the Crusaders to a 63-53 victory over Lafayette, completing 32 of 42 passes for 416 yards and five touchdowns.

Sept. 7, 2002: Holy Cross defeats a Division I-A opponent for the first time since 1987, with a 30-21 victory at Army.

Sept. 27, 2003: Holy Cross falls at San Diego 46-45 in double overtime, marking the first two-overtime game ever played by the Crusaders.

Nov. 22, 2003: Ari Confesor posts 11 receptions for 161 yards in the season finale against Colgate, to set school single-season (1,213) and career (2,352) marks for receiving yards.

Nov. 20, 2004: The Crusaders post their first-ever overtime win, defeating Georgetown 31-28.

Sept. 3, 2005: Steve Silva accounts for six touchdowns — three rushing, two passing and one receiving — in a 56-21 victory over Sacred Heart.

Oct. 15, 2005: Steve Silva sets school single-game records with 353 all-purpose yards and 167 punt return yards in a 28-16 win over Dartmouth.

Sept. 15, 2007: Dominic Randolph throws four touchdown passes, including a 40-yard strike to Thomas Harrison with 19 seconds remaining, as Holy Cross defeats Harvard 31-28 at Fitton Field.

Oct. 6, 2007: The Crusaders post a thrilling 48-37 victory at Brown, as Dominic Randolph throws for 404 yards and six touchdowns.

Nov. 17, 2007: Holy Cross comes from behind to down Colgate 27-20 at Fitton Field, with Dominic Randolph throwing for 441 yards and accounting for 473 yards of total offense.

Oct. 4, 2008: The Crusaders suffer a 31-28 double overtime loss at Yale, after rallying from 14 points down with less than four minutes left in the fourth quarter.

Nov. 15, 2008: Dominic Randolph throws a 27-yard scoring pass to Rob Koster with six seconds left, as Holy Cross comes back for a 27-26 win at Lafayette.

Nov. 14, 2009: The Crusaders rally from a 12-point second quarter deficit to defeat Lafayette 28-26, clinching the Patriot League title.

Nov. 28, 2009: During a 38-28 loss at eventual national champion Villanova in the first round of the NCAA playoffs, Dominic Randolph breaks the all-time Division I-AA record for career completions. He finished the game and his career with 1,131 completions.

Oct. 23, 2010: Ryan Taggart threw a 14-yard touchdown pass to Bill Edger with 5.2 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter, to give Holy Cross a 31-24 victory at Colgate.

Sept. 17, 2011: The Crusaders defeat Harvard 30-22 at Fitton Field, to hand the eventual Ivy League champions what would be their only loss of the season.

Oct. 5, 2013: In the first triple overtime game in school history, Holy Cross is defeated by Harvard 41-35 at Fitton Field.

Nov. 2, 2013: During a 32-30 loss at Fordham, Mike Fess posts the 191st reception of his Holy Cross career, to become the Crusaders' all-time leader. He went on to finish his career with 209 receptions.

THE LEGEND OF DOMINIC RANDOLPH

After missing his entire freshman season in 2005 due to injury, few people expected anything out of quarterback Dominic Randolph heading into the 2006 campaign. A wide receiver in high school, he was just one of the players competing for the open quarterback job that fall. When Randolph first stepped onto the field on Sept. 2, 2006, little did people know that they were seeing the beginning of one of the greatest careers in college football history. Randolph would eventually break nearly every passing record in school history, finishing his career by completing 1,131 of 1,786 passes for 13,455 yards and 117 touchdowns. He posted a 30-13 record in the 43 games he played during his collegiate career, and became the first player in conference history to be selected the Patriot League Offensive Player of the Year three times.

Oct. 17, 2015: Peter Pujals throws for 508 yards in a 47-41 overtime loss at Fordham.

Oct. 24, 2015: Brendan Flaherty ties the school single-game record with four touchdown receptions in a 42-0 victory over Lafayette.

Nov. 21, 2015: In the third quarter of a 45-7 victory over Georgetown, Brendan Flaherty makes his 102nd reception of the season, to break the Patriot League single-season record. He would finish the year with 106 total catches.

Sept. 16, 2017: Peter Pujals totals 367 passing yards and five touchdowns as the Crusaders knock off ninth-ranked New Hampshire 51-26 at Fitton Field.

Oct. 7, 2017: Peter Pujals throws for a school record 509 yards in a 48-36 loss to Monmouth.