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Colgate looks to defend Patriot League women's lacrosse title *Holy Cross, American and Lehigh make up the rest of the field in Hamilton, N.Y.*

CENTER VALLEY, Pa. – The Patriot League's Fifth Annual Patriot League Women's Lacrosse Tournament begins with semifinal action on Saturday, Apr. 30 at Tyler's Field on the campus of Colgate University in Hamilton, N.Y. Holy Cross, American and Lehigh will all be gunning for Colgate, the defending champion and top seed, as an automatic invitation to the 2005 NCAA Women's Lacrosse Tournament is on the line.

The Raiders were the League's representative in the NCAAs a year ago, and fell to eventual national runner-up Princeton in the first round. In 2005, head coach **Katrina Silva**'s squad completed its second consecutive undefeated Patriot League regular season, and with a 9-8 home win over Holy Cross on Apr. 23, CU earned the right to host this year's championship.

Colgate (11-6, 6-0 PL) will take on No. 4 Lehigh (7-9, 3-3) in Saturday's first semifinal at noon. The Mountain Hawks, in their first season under head coach **Liz Ota**, were the final team to make the tourney, and they got in thanks to American's 14-8 win over Bucknell on the final day of the regular season.

No. 2 Holy Cross (9-8, 4-2), the surprise team of the year in the PL, meets No. 3 American (6-10, 4-2) in the other semifinal at 3 p.m. The two winners will play for the Patriot League championship on Sunday at 1 p.m. Last year's final was an 11-10 overtime victory for the Raiders over American.

Of the four teams in this year's field, only two have hoisted the Patriot League trophy in the past. American was the 2003 champion and Colgate last year, following two consecutive championship seasons for the Lafayette Leopards. AU has twice been runner-up, while Holy Cross finished second in the inaugural edition of the tourney.

Colgate's success is made more impressive by the fact that Silva, the 2005 Coach of the Year, has just one senior on her squad in midfielder **Lauren Price**. The offense this year came from Patriot League Offensive Player of the Year, junior **Katie McVeigh** (49 goals, nine assists), as well as junior midfielder **Kelly Winning** (40 goals, 16 assists), also an All-League selection. On the other end, the Raiders boast the Patriot League Defensive Player of the Year, junior **Heidi Ross**, who led the squad with 38 groundballs. Junior goalkeeper **Sue Bielamowicz** is one of the League's best, posting an 11-4 record this year to go along with an 8.21 goals-against average and a .504 save percentage.

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American * Army * Bucknell * Colgate * Holy Cross * Lafayette * Lehigh * Navy

The Colgate name in women's lacrosse extends beyond the Patriot League. The Raiders' 2005 schedule included the likes of Temple and Syracuse, and CU ranks among the national leaders in scoring offense, scoring defense, scoring margin and win percentage.

Apparently nobody told the Crusaders that they were not supposed to be one of the last four teams standing in the Patriot League. A preseason poll of League head coaches and sports information directors tabbed Holy Cross for fifth among the seven teams, but instead head coach **Stephanie Pavlick**'s squad comes into the postseason as the No. 2 seed. HC is one of two teams in the League with an overall record above .500, and the Crusaders' 4-2 League mark was good for second thanks to a head-to-head win over American. A stretch of nine wins in 11 games over the course of March and April propelled Holy Cross into the postseason.

The Crusaders also had their share of individual achievement. Worcester, Mass., is the home of Goalkeeper of the Year **Megan Orr** and Rookie of the Year **Amy Archambault**. Orr had a 9-8 record, 8.69 GAA and .571 save percentage while winning two Goalkeeper of the Week awards. She also has tallied 190 saves thus far, just 28 shy of the 10th-highest single season total in PL history. Archambault scored 26 points in 14 games, and earned Rookie of the Week accolades on three occasions.

And discussions about Holy Cross cannot go on without mention of sophomore midfielder **Patricia Sutton**, who in two seasons with the program, has already scored 135 points, including 64 this year.

No. 3 American has as much postseason experience as any team in this year's field. The Eagles are hoping to advance to their second NCAA Tournament in the last three years, despite having just six wins on the year. Four of AU's six victories came in the Patriot League, and much of that success is owed to a trio of All League performers. Senior attack **Becky Copeland**, junior midfielder **Moriah Linnell** and sophomore midfielder **Sarah Milewski** combined for 51 of the Eagles' 83 points in League games.

Defensively, the tandem of junior defender **Laura Barnes** and her classmate, goalkeeper **Kathleen Finnegan**, make the Eagles well-balanced. Barnes picked up a team-high 46 groundballs during the regular season and earned All-League status, while Finnegan posted a 10.39 GAA with 148 saves for head coach **Ashley Flanigan**.

Lehigh is the fourth and final team in the field, and the Mountain Hawks have shown the ability to score in bunches this season. LU totaled a Patriot League single-game season-high 20 goals in a Mar. 7 win over Fairfield, and then showed a flair for the dramatic in an Apr. 2 win at League foe Villanova. The Mountain Hawks scored three goals in the game's final 47 seconds to stun the Wildcats, 16-15.

LU relies on sophomore attack **Amy Chamberlain** for the bulk of its scoring. Chamberlain, an All-League selection and a two-time Offensive Player of the Week, had 61 total points this year (47 goals, 14 assists), which trailed only Sutton in the PL. Senior midfielder **Barrie Cominsky** is also a player to watch in her final League tourney. Cominsky, another All-League pick, had 42 points and 46 groundballs, a credit to her all-around play.

Lehigh and Colgate met on Apr. 9 of this season, and the result was a 17-10 triumph for the Raiders in Bethlehem, Pa.

The winner of this year's championship will be seeking the Patriot League's first-ever victory in the NCAA Women's Lacrosse Tournament. The 2004-05 academic year has already produced three firsts in that regard: The Colgate women's soccer team and American field hockey team were the first to win NCAA Tournament games for the Patriot League in their fall sports, while Bucknell's well-documented men's basketball upset of Kansas also made League history.

The Patriot League, an NCAA Division I athletics conference founded on the principle of admitting athletes who are academically representative of their class, is in its second decade of academic and athletic excellence. A successful Division I-AA football conference since 1986 and an all-sport conference since 1990, membership includes American, Army, Bucknell, Colgate, Holy Cross, Lafayette, Lehigh and Navy, while three additional institutions hold associate membership. Patriot League member institutions are among the oldest and most prestigious in the nation, graduating alumni who are well prepared for life with the ability to make meaningful contributions to their community and society in general. In the most recent NCAA Graduation Rate Report of student-athletes, the Patriot League ranked FIRST among NCAA Division I conferences.

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2005 Patriot League Women's Lacrosse Tournament (at Colgate University)

Friday, Apr. 30 – Semifinals

No. 1 Colgate (11-5, 6-0 PL) vs. No. 4 Lehigh (7-9, 3-3), Noon
No. 2 Holy Cross (9-8, 4-2) vs. No. 3 American (6-10, 4-2), 3 p.m.

Sunday, May 1 – Championship

Semifinal Winners, 1 p.m.