



Men's Basketball | 10/26/2017 11:20:00 AM | Shawn D. Smith, Director of Athletic Media Relations

Minnesota Crookston Picked in a Tie for 14th in NSIC Men's Basketball Preseason Coaches' Poll



BURNSVILLE, Minn. – The University of Minnesota Crookston men's basketball team were picked in a tie for 14th place in the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference (NSIC) Preseason Coaches' Poll released Thursday morning.

The Golden Eagles received 44 votes, which put them in a tie with Concordia University-St. Paul. They were just two votes behind University of Minnesota Duluth in 13th place and 11 votes ahead of University of Mary in 16th place. In addition, Minnesota Crookston was picked seventh in the NSIC North.

Minnesota Crookston returns a more experienced team to the fray for the 2017-18 season with three returning starters and seven returning players. [Harrison Cleary](#), [Chase Knickerbocker](#) and [Gable Smith](#) were all key starters for Minnesota Crookston last season, with [Chase Johnson](#) also earning time as a starter for the Golden Eagles.

Minnesota Crookston will look to returning NSIC Freshman of the Year [Harrison Cleary](#) to lead the way. Cleary had one of the best single-season performances of a player in program history, breaking the single-season points, field goals and free throws mark of NSIC great Joe Hasz, who still ranks fourth all-time in scoring in the conference. Cleary also earned national awards from Division II Bulletin and Hero Sports last season. He was named as the Golden Eagles' NSIC Player to Watch for the 2017-18 season.

[Chase Knickerbocker](#) also returns after averaging 11.7 points per game last season.

The Golden Eagles were very competitive last season, as they fell just one win shy of the most victories in program history. Minnesota Crookston had conference wins over Bemidji State, St. Cloud State, Concordia-St. Paul and U-Mary. They lost 12 games by 10 or less points last season, showing how close they were with a young squad.

2017-18 marks year four under Head Coach [Dan Weisse](#). The Golden Eagles also return key reserves [Darin Viken](#), [Nate Lorenz](#) and [Aaron Hollcraft](#). In addition, look for newcomers [Gabrys Sadaunykas](#), [Ben Juhl](#), [Alan Hodge, Jr.](#), and [Javier Nicolau](#) to make immediate impacts for Minnesota Crookston.

Northern State University was picked to win the league with eight first-place votes and 213 points. They narrowly edged Southwest Minnesota State University, who had seven first-place votes and 211 points. Augustana University was slotted third in the NSIC Preseason poll. Northern State was also picked to win the NSIC North, while Southwest Minnesota State was selected as the NSIC South favorite.

St. Cloud State University guard Gage Davis was picked as the NSIC North Preseason Player of the Year. Davis is a two-time First Team All-NSIC pick. Southwest Minnesota State guard Ryan Bruggeman was selected as NSIC South Preseason Player of the Year. Bruggeman was a First Team All-NSIC pick following the 2016-17 season.

Minnesota Crookston will open up their exhibition slate Sat., Nov. 4 at 1 p.m. at NCAA Division I Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. The Golden Eagles will lift the lid on the 2017-18 regular-season Nov. 10 at 7 p.m. at Arkansas Tech University at 7 p.m. in Russellville, Ark.

Overall	Points		North Division	Points
1. Northern State (8)	213		1. Northern State (6)	48
2. Southwest Minnesota State (7)	211		2. MSU Moorhead (2)	42
3. Augustana	190		3. St. Cloud State	38
4. MSU Moorhead (1)	187		4. Minot State	32
5. Minnesota State	172		5. Bemidji State	24
6. St. Cloud State	153		6. Minnesota Duluth	19
7. Minot State	134		7. Minnesota Crookston	13
8. Upper Iowa	123		8. University of Mary	8
9. Sioux Falls	97		South Division	Points
10. Bemidji State	92		1. Southwest Minnesota State (4)	45
11. Wayne State	91		2. Augustana (2)	44
12. Winona State	90		3. Minnesota State (1)	37
13. Minnesota Duluth	46		4. Upper Iowa (1)	32
14. Concordia-St. Paul	44		5. Sioux Falls	23
Minnesota Crookston	44		6. Wayne State	20
16. University of Mary	33		7. Winona State	15
first place votes in ()			8. Concordia-St. Paul	8

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PLAYERS MENTIONED ▾

- | | |
|---|---|
| #0 Harrison Cleary
G / 6' 1" / Sophomore | #22 Aaron Hollcraft
G / 6' 0" / Junior |
| #21 Chase Johnson
F / 6' 8" / Sophomore | #25 Chase Knickerbocker
G/F / 6' 7" / Junior |
| #34 Nate Lorenz
F/C / 6' 7" / Junior | #10 Gabrys Sadaunykas
G/F / 6' 4" / Redshirt Freshman |
| #24 Gable Smith
F / 6' 7" / Redshirt Junior | #13 Darin Viken
G / 6' 1" / Junior |
| #2 Ben Juhl
G / 6' 1" / Freshman | #44 Javier Nicolau
F/C / 6' 10" / Sophomore |

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