



Men's Basketball | 11/7/2018 2:03:00 PM | Shawn D. Smith, Director of Athletic Media Relations

Golden Eagles Open 2018-19 Slate in St. Paul Versus Arkansas Tech and Arkansas-Monticello



CROOKSTON, Minn. – The University of Minnesota Crookston men's basketball team will commence the 2018-19 regular-season Sat., Nov. 10 and Sun., Nov. 11 at the Gangelhoff Center in St. Paul, Minn. The Golden Eagles will take on Arkansas Tech University at 12 p.m. Saturday, and University of Arkansas-Monticello Sunday at 12 p.m.

The games will be rematches of last season's contests in Arkansas. The Golden Eagles put up strong efforts in both games. Minnesota Crookston led 94-92 over Arkansas Tech heading into the final six minutes before giving up a 22-11 run and falling 114-105. In the tilt with Arkansas-Monticello, the Golden Eagles outscored their foes 38-36 in the second half but ultimately came up short 71-64.

Minnesota Crookston Preview

Projected Starters

Jr. G 0 [Harrison Cleary](#), 6-1 180, Oak Creek, Wis.
So. G 2 [Ben Juhl](#), 6-1 186, Clive, Iowa
Sr. F 25 [Chase Knickerbocker](#), 6-7 210, Annandale, Minn.
Sr. F 30 [Josh Collins](#), 6-6 230, Minneapolis, Minn.
R-Sr. C 24 [Gable Smith](#), 6-7 225, Lodi, Wis.

Minnesota Crookston returns a ton of experience for the 2018-19 season. The Golden Eagles have seven players who saw substantial playing time last season back in the fray. Minnesota Crookston is led by [Harrison Cleary](#) (Jr., G, Oak Creek, Wis.), who was an All-NSIC First Team pick and D2CAA All-America Honorable Mention selection. Cleary averaged 24.2 points, 4.6 rebounds, and 3.6 assists per game as a sophomore for Minnesota Crookston. In addition, he was the NCAA Division II leader in free throw percentage last season shooting at a 96.0 percent clip. Cleary had 22 points, six rebounds, and six assists in last Saturday's exhibition against University of Northwestern (Minn.).

The Golden Eagles also return [Gable Smith](#) (R-Sr., F/C, Lodi, Wis.), who was the NSIC Defensive Player of the Year last season. Smith led NCAA Division II in blocked shots for the majority of the season, finishing with 4.3 blocked shots per game last season. Smith notched six points, seven rebounds, and seven steals against Northwestern-St. Paul in the exhibition.

Minnesota Crookston also returns [Ben Juhl](#) (So., G, Clive, Iowa), who averaged 11.0 points per game last season, while shooting 31.9 percent from beyond the arc. Juhl notched 14 points on 5-of-8 from the field in the 104-70 win over Northwestern-St. Paul last Saturday. The Golden Eagles also welcome back [Chase Knickerbocker](#) (Sr., G/F, Annandale, Minn.), who missed the last half of the season last year due to injury. Knickerbocker tallied 11.0 points and 5.3 rebounds in 13 games last season, while hitting three-pointers at a 44.3 percent clip last season. In his first action since Dec. 30, 2017, Knickerbocker had 17 points and eight boards, including going 3-of-4 from beyond the arc versus the Eagles.

[Josh Collins](#) (Sr., F, Minneapolis, Minn.) returns for Minnesota Crookston after joining the squad as a mid-year transfer last season from Division I University of North Dakota. Collins notched 5.3 points and 2.5 rebounds per game in 2017-18, including 10 starts. In the exhibition, Collins was a major factor with 10 points and four boards, including going 5-of-7 from the field.

[Javier Nicolau](#) (Jr., F/C, Castellon, Spain) and [Darin Viken](#) (Sr., G, Fosston, Minn.) return off the bench for the Golden Eagles. Nicolau tallied nine points against Northwestern-St. Paul, while Viken had three boards in 14 minutes. [Aaron Hollcraft](#) (Sr., G, Crookston, Minn.) also returns for Minnesota Crookston. He had four points in five minutes in the exhibition last Saturday.

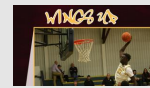
In addition to a strong core of returnees, Minnesota Crookston has three redshirts who have added to the fray this season. [Malcolm Cohen](#) (R-Jr., G/F, Detroit, Mich.) sat out last year after transferring from Macomb Community College. He came off the bench for five points and three boards last weekend. [Brian Sitzmann](#) (R-

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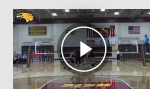
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Fr., G, Savage, Minn.) also redshirted last season, playing 27 minutes and tallying 10 points, six boards, and three assists. [Joey Meyer](#) (R-Fr., F/C, Shullsburg, Wis.) also sat out last year as a redshirt and will look to add size with his large 6-9 260 frame. [Demarion Bariffe-Smith](#) (Fr., G/F, Skokie, Ill.) is the lone freshman who will play this season for Minnesota Crookston. Bariffe-Smith had three points and a rebound last weekend for the Golden Eagles. [Zach Westphal](#) (Fr., G, West Fargo, N.D.) and [Sergio Nanu](#) (Fr., F, Kenosha, Wis.) will both redshirt for the 2018-19 season.

The Golden Eagles averaged 74.8 points per game last season, while allowing 75.5 points per contest to their foes. Minnesota Crookston shot at a 45.0 percent clip from the field. In addition, they were 38.2 percent from beyond the arc and 79.6 percent from the charity stripe.

Arkansas Tech Preview

Key Returners

Sr. F 2 Mason Cline, 6-4 180, Springdale, Ark.

Sr. G 3 Alex Brown, 6-3 195, Vernon, Fla.

So. G 11 R.J. Glasper, 5-11 185, Forrest City, Ark.

R-Sr. G 12 Freddy Lee, 5-7 155, Clarksville, Ark.

Newcomers to Watch

Jr. F 1 Ramses Sandifer, 6-8 210, Arcola, Miss. (Division I transfer from Louisiana-Monroe)

Sr. F 13 Kiir Deng, 6-8 200, Adelaide, Australia (Division I transfer from Louisiana-Monroe)

Jr. C 30 Jacob Patterson, 6-8 255, Cave City, Ark. (Junior college transfer from Allen County C.C.)

Sr. G 10 Will Adler, 6-6, Andover, Kan. (Division II transfer from Angelo State)

Arkansas Tech is coming off an 18-11 mark on the 2017-18 season with a 12-10 record in the Great American Conference (GAC). The Wonder Boys have a strong core returning led by University of Arkansas transfer R.J. Glasper, who tallied 19.9 points, 4.6 rebounds, and 4.3 assists per game. Glasper shot 35.4 percent from beyond the arc last season. Glasper was a thorn in the side of Minnesota Crookston last season as he came off the bench for 26 points on 9-of-15 from the field and 4-of-8 from beyond the arc.

Arkansas Tech also brings back senior guard Alex Brown, who notched 13.4 points and 6.2 rebounds per game last season. Brown was a 37.4 percent shooter from behind the three-point line last season. Senior guard Freddy Lee also is back in the fray after notching 7.0 points, 3.0 rebounds, and 5.0 assists per game. Lee is a 49.5 percent shooter from beyond the arc. Forward Mason Cline is also back for the Wonder Boys after tallying 6.5 points and 4.0 rebounds per game last season.

Arkansas Tech has added a pair of Division I transfers from University of Louisiana-Monroe in Ramses Sandifer and Kiir Deng. Both players saw very limited time for Louisiana-Monroe last season. Jacob Patterson joins the Wonder Boys from Allen County C.C., after averaging 8.9 points and 6.4 rebounds per game last season. Will Adler transfers to Arkansas Tech from Division II school Angelo State University after tallying 9.5 points and 3.4 rebounds per game last season. Adler was a 41.8 percent shooter from beyond the arc.

The Wonder Boys averaged 85.2 points per game last season, while allowing 81.5 points per contest. Arkansas Tech shot 45.1 percent from the field, 35.6 percent from beyond the arc, and 76.8 percent from the charity stripe.

Arkansas-Monticello Preview

Key Returners

Sr. G 22 Keelin Jackson, 6-5, Clarksdale, Miss.

Newcomers to Watch

Jr. G 3 K.J. Lesure, 5-10, Indianapolis, Ind. (Junior college transfer from Columbia State C.C.)

Jr. G 15 Marcus Gilbert, 5-11, Birmingham, Ala. (Junior college transfer from Southern Union State C.C.)

Jr. G 10 Damontrez Hawkins, 6-3, Augusta, Ga. (Junior college transfer from New Mexico J.C.)

Jr. F 2 Darnell Wright, 6-6, Chicago, Ill. (Junior college transfer from Waubensee C.C.)

Jr. F 25 Kwame McBean, 6-8, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands (Junior college transfer from Frank Phillips J.C.)

Jr. G/F 30 D.J. Franklin, 6-5, Monticello, Ark. (Division II transfer from Henderson State)

Arkansas-Monticello posted a 19-12 record and tallied a 12-9 record in the GAC. The Boll Weevil's graduated the majority of their roster from last year's team. The lone returner is Keelin Jackson, who started 17 games as a junior. Jackson notched 7.3 points and 3.5 rebounds per game, while shooting 37.2 percent from beyond the arc.

The rest of the roster is relatively unknown for the Boll Weevils. Guard K.J. Lesure was a great facilitator at Columbia State Community College. He tallied 13.0 points and 7.4 assists per game for the Division I junior college. Marcus Gilbert is also coming off a strong junior college season at Southern Union State C.C. Gilbert tallied 17.2 points, 3.6 rebounds, and 3.3 assists per game last season. In addition, D.J. Franklin joins the team from Henderson State University after tallying 8.3 points and 4.0 rebounds per game. Damontrez Hawkins could also factor in after transferring from New Mexico Junior College. Hawkins averaged 11.2 points per game last season. Darnell Wright could also be a major player as he tallied 15.5 points and 10.2 rebounds per game at Waubensee C.C., while Kwame McBean notched 10.5 points and 4.5 rebounds per contest at Frank Phillips Junior College.

The Boll Weevils could look to junior college transfers Austin Hardy, Jordan Embry, and Jared Embry, along with Jerrick Cole.

Last season, Arkansas-Monticello tallied 79.5 points per game and allowed 72.8 points per contest. The Boll Weevils shot 49.1 percent from the field and 36.0 percent from beyond the arc. Arkansas-Monticello out-rebounded their foes 33.1 to 31.5 last season.

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PLAYERS MENTIONED ▾

#0 Harrison Cleary

G / 6' 1" / Sophomore

#25 Chase Knickerbocker

G/F / 6' 7" / Junior

#13 Darin Viken

G / 6' 1" / Junior

#14 Brian Sitzmann

G / 6' 4" / Freshman

#12 Malcolm Cohen

G/F / 6' 6" / Junior

#22 Aaron Hollcraft

G / 6' 0" / Junior

#24 Gable Smith

F / 6' 7" / Redshirt Junior

#2 Ben Juhl

G / 6' 1" / Freshman

#20 Joey Meyer

F/C / 6' 8" / Freshman

#44 Javier Nicolau

F/C / 6' 10" / Sophomore



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