



Football | 9/1/2016 10:20:00 AM | Shawn Smith, Sports Information Director

UMC Football Set To Open 2016 in Thursday Night Tilt with Winona State



CROOKSTON, Minn. - The University of Minnesota Crookston football team will lift the lid on the 2016 season on Thurs., Sept. 1 at 6 p.m. at Maxwell Field at Altra Credit Union Stadium against Winona State University. The game will serve as the season opener for both teams. It pits Head Coach [Mike Fritze](#) against him alma mater, where Head Coach Tom Sawyer enters his 21st season.

[DEPTH CHART WINONA STATE](#)
[GAME NOTES](#)

Minnesota Crookston Golden Eagles
Head Coach: [Mike Fritze](#)
Record at UMC: 3-30 **Season at UMC:** Fourth Season

Winona State Warriors
Head Coach: Tom Sawyer
Record at WSU: 155-74 **Season at WSU:** 21st Season

Sept. 1, 2016 • Winona, Minn. • Altra Credit Union Stadium • 6 p.m.
Video: <https://portal.stretchinternet.com/winona/>
Live Stats: <http://www.sidearmstats.com/winona/football/>
Live Audio: (Winona State) <http://www.kqal.org/listen-live/>

#5StoryLines

1. Can the Golden Eagles start out 2016 on a positive note against Winona State?
2. Will [Andre Person](#) build off his strong end to the 2015 season as the Golden Eagles open up 2016?
3. What kind of impact will [Adam Connette](#) have on the game for the UMC offense?
4. Can the Golden Eagles slow down the 1-2 punch of Jack Nelson and Paul Preston for Winona State?
5. Who will step up for the UMC defense to make big plays?

#PersonOfInterest

UMC running back [Andre Person](#) had a great end to the season as a junior. Person had 570 yards rushing and seven rushing touchdowns in the last five games last season en route to an All-NSIC North Second Team pick.

#JackOfAllTrades

UMC wide receiver [Adam Connette](#) has been a jack of all trades during his time in the Maroon and Gold. Whether it is rushing the ball, catching the ball or even throwing the ball, Connette has made an instant impact on offense for the Golden Eagles through his first two seasons. Last season, he had 1,006 all-purpose yards with 671 yards through the air and 174 on the ground, as well as making an impact in the return game. Connette will look to be one of the leaders of the offense as he enters his junior season. Along with Person, Connette was also an NSIC North Second Team pick last season.

#BigBubba

UMC sophomore defensive tackle [Bubba Cook](#) had a big influence as a freshman last season. Cook was a plug in the middle, amassing 40 tackles and five tackles for loss. Cook will look to be a lynchpin this season as a sophomore as he looks to continue to improve his game and help the UMC defense continue to improve.

#ATraditionOfLofquists

For the last five seasons, a Lofquist from South St. Paul has patrolled the defensive side of the ball for the Golden Eagles. For the second-straight season [Chuck Lofquist](#) will start at linebacker, looking to follow in the footsteps of his brother, Greg Lofquist. Greg was an All-NSIC North First Team performer as a senior in 2014. Chuck started in the middle of the linebacking corps last season and will look to move to outside linebacker as a sophomore, a more natural position for the younger Lofquist. Chuck will look to bring experience to a young group of linebackers. He had 46 tackles and 2.5 tackles for loss as a redshirt freshman for Minnesota Crookston.

#Tidbits

- The Golden Eagles will open up the 2016 season with a Thursday night game on the road against Winona State University. UMC will look to get the season off to a strong note as they enter their fourth season under Head Coach [Mike Fritze](#). The Golden Eagles have one of their most experienced teams in Fritze's tenure returning with seven starters coming back on each side of the ball. Perhaps the most important spot UMC returns experience is on the offensive line where UMC returns four starters from last season, along with another player [Kolby Castillo](#), who gained a lot of experience as a freshman. For the first time in recent history the Golden Eagles will not be starting a freshman on the offensive line which should pay dividends as they look to protect [Nathan Cole](#) and create holes for 2015 All-NSIC North Second Team running back [Andre Person](#).

- A key spot for UMC this season, like most, will be quarterback [Nathan Cole](#), who got four starts last season, will get the ball in game one. Cole has shown potential but needs to find consistency, especially when it comes to turning the ball over. Last season, he amassed 1,091 yards passing, but threw 12 interceptions to just four touchdowns. Cole will hope to find more time this season to get off passes and will hopefully find more success as he looks to lead the Golden Eagles to improvement on the offensive side of the ball.

- Defensively, the Golden Eagles have experience but will have to battle a bit of the injury bug against Winona State University. With injuries to [Jake Newman](#) and [Dion Wallisch](#), UMC will need to rely on other players including the likes of [Aeric Berner](#), [Kenneth McChristian](#) and [William Cole](#), all of which gained experience last season in the secondary. It will be a key spot for UMC on Thursday as they look to stop Jack Nelson and the Winona State passing attack.

- The Golden Eagles have experience on their side on special teams this season with both [Mike Maw](#) and [Stephen Day](#), returning. Maw has four years of experience now and has continued to improve throughout his career. He was 5-of-9 with a long of 41 last season. At punter, Day returns after averaging 35.5 yards per punt last season with 13 punts inside the 20. Both players will be keys for UMC as the Golden Eagles will look to win the field position battle.

- Winona State lost a lot of key offensive figures from last season but they still have quarterback Jack Nelson and 5-4 running back Paul Preston returning to the fray to lead the way. Nelson had a strong season last year with over 3,400 yards passing and 26 touchdowns to 15 interceptions. Preston was also effective with 897 yards rushing and five touchdowns last season. In the passing game, the Warriors' top returning target will be Cameron Johnson, who had 754 yards receiving with eight touchdowns.

- The Warriors averaged 123.5 yards rushing last season, while they amassed 324.5 yards per game through the air.

- Defensively, Winona State has a lot of key pieces to replace. The top returnee is Mike Imperiale, who had 87 tackles with nine tackles for loss and three sacks from his linebacker position. Also returning to the fray is Andrew Spencer, who led the team with three interceptions. Both will be key figures for the Warriors on Thursday.

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| PLAYERS MENTIONED ▾ | |
|--|--|
| #6 Aeric Berner DB / 5' 10" / Sophomore | #66 Kolby Castillo OL / 6' 0" / Sophomore |
| #15 Nathan Cole QB / 6' 4" / Senior | #25 Will Cole DB / 6' 0" / Sophomore |
| #11 Adam Connette WR / 5' 10" / Junior | #94 Bubba Cook DL / 5' 10" / Sophomore |
| #37 Stephen Day K/P / 6' 0" / Redshirt Sophomore | #41 Chuck Lofquist LB / 6' 1" / Redshirt Sophomore |
| #82 Mike Maw K / 5' 6" / Senior | #23 Kenneth McChristian DB / 5' 10" / Senior |

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