



Softball | 3/30/2018 10:45:00 PM | Shawn D. Smith, Director of Athletic Media Relations

Minnesota Crookston Splits NSIC Opening Series with MSU Moorhead



[Box Score 1](#) | [Box Score 2](#) **ABERDEEN, S.D.** – The University of Minnesota Crookston softball team opened up NSIC play with a split Fri., March 30 against Minnesota State University Moorhead. The game were played at the Presentation College (PC) Dome in Aberdeen, S.D. after being relocated due to field conditions in Moorhead, Minn. The Golden Eagles used five early runs in the first game to propel them to a 7-4 victory over the Dragons. In the second game of the doubleheader, MSU Moorhead fended off Minnesota Crookston 7-6.

The Golden Eagles move to 5-19 (1-1 NSIC) with Friday's split. MSU Moorhead sits at 8-12 (1-1 NSIC) after the split. Minnesota Crookston snaps their 11-game losing streak with the game one victory. The Golden Eagles lead the series in 2017 with the Dragons as they are 2-1 after defeating MSU Moorhead in non-conference Feb. 17 in Minot, N.D. The games Friday were the first for the Golden Eagles since March 17 in Clermont, Fla. Minnesota Crookston had three games either rescheduled or cancelled due to weather.

Game One
The Golden Eagles raced out to a 5-0 lead after scoring two runs in the fourth and three runs in the fifth. MSU Moorhead made a late charge as they scored four runs in the sixth frame. Minnesota Crookston held off the Dragons as they used a Bjorge two-run single in the seventh to go up 7-4. The Golden Eagles would hold on for the victory as MSU Moorhead was unable to come back in the bottom of the seventh.

[Paige Pitlick](#) (So., RHP, Jordan, Minn.) earned the win in the first game, her first of the 2018 season. Pitlick tossed 6.1 innings and allowed just one earned run on seven hits with three strikeouts and two walks. [Kassidy Klaphake](#) (Sr., RHP, Cold Spring, Minn.) appeared in 0.1 innings and gave up one runs on one hit, before the Golden Eagles re-entered Pitlick into the contest. [Mikayla Jones](#) (Jr., RHP, Huxley, Iowa) came away with the save after getting the last out with the bases full of Dragons in the bottom of the seventh.

Bjorge had a big game for Minnesota Crookston as she went 3-of-4 with five RBIs and one run scored. Antolak finished the NSIC opener going 2-of-4 with one RBI and one run scored, while [Taylor Allen](#) (Fr., OF, Neepawa, Manitoba) was 1-of-4 with one run scored.

The loss went to Becky Berth of the Dragons after she allowed six runs to score on seven hits. She notched six strikeouts and two walks in six innings.

MSU Moorhead was paced by Lexie Kennedy, who went 3-of-4 with one RBI, while Aunica Novacek was 2-of-4 with one run scored.

Minnesota Crookston broke the scoreless tie in the top of the fourth when Antolak doubled to center field to drive in Bjorge. The Golden Eagles added another run when [Khailyn Neumayer](#) (Sr., OF, Morgan Hill, Calif.) singled to right center to drive in Antolak to move the lead to 2-0.

The Golden Eagles padded their lead in the top of the fifth. With the bases loaded, Bjorge came through in the clutch again as she doubled to right center to clear the bases. She drove in [Victoria Bayliss](#) (Sr., OF, West Bloomfield, Mich.), Allen and [Haley Strachan](#) (Jr., OF, Phoenix, Ariz.) as Minnesota Crookston took the 5-0 advantage.

MSU Moorhead made up ground in the bottom of the sixth. Kennedy opened up the scoring for the Dragons as she singled up the middle to drive in Klaphake following the single.

The Dragons loaded up the bases following the single. Klaphake was able to reach on an error by [Mikaela Rasmussen](#) (Sr., OF, Moorhead, Minn.) to score to cut the lead to 5-2. The Dragons added to the deficit when [Elizabeth Johnson](#) (Sr., OF, Moorhead, Minn.) reached on a fielder's choice and Kylie Lange came home to score. MSU Moorhead was able to pull within a run as Elizabeth Johnson was walked with the bases loaded to cut the deficit to 5-4. Pitlick returned to the mound for the Golden Eagles in the final out and kept the Dragons at bay at 5-4.

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Minnesota Crookston responded in the bottom of the seventh. The Dragons again delivered a clutch hit as she singled to right field to plate Bayliss and [Maggie Morales](#) (Jr., 1B/OF, Tucson, Ariz.) to pad the lead at 7-4.

MSU Moorhead had a final scoring chance in the bottom of the seventh. The Dragons staged a two-out rally as Kennedy and Novacek singled. Pitlick offered a free pass to Dummer to load up the bases with two outs. Jones came on in the tough spot and got Kelenic to ground into a fielder's choice as the tying run stayed on first and Minnesota Crookston won 7-4.

Game Two

The Dragons used five runs in the third inning to comeback from a 1-0 deficit and win 7-6. Minnesota Crookston scored three runs in the fifth and sixth frames, but they were unable to get the equalizer as MSU Moorhead took the win.

Jones suffered the loss as she fell to 3-4 after allowing five runs on six hits with three strikeouts and one walk. [Luisa Silvain](#) (Jr., RHP, Tucson, Ariz.) allowed two runs on three hits in one inning, while Klaphake gave up no runs on one hit in 2.2 innings.

The Golden Eagles looked to Bayliss, who was 4-of-4 with one run scored. Bjorge went 1-of-3 with two RBIs, while Antolak was 2-of-4 with one run scored.

Tori White earned the win for the Dragons as she gave up six runs on 10 hits in five innings pitched with two strikeouts and one walk.

MSU Moorhead was paced by Paige, who was 2-of-r with three RBIs and one run scored. Kennedy went 2-of-3 with two RBIs and one run scored. Gaber finished 2-of-3 with one RBI and one run scored.

Minnesota Crookston jumped out to a 1-0 advantage in the top of the first of the second game. Bjorge hit a sacrifice fly to drive in Allen to score the opening tally.

MSU Moorhead finally got their bats going in the bottom of the third. Ashley McCance came through with a double to right field to drive in Johnson. Paige came through with a double with two on as she brought home Gaber and Ashley McCance. Kennedy then hit a two-run shot over the fence in left center to plate herself and Paige and move the advantage to 5-1.

The Golden Eagles would get two run back in the top of the fourth. [Luisa Silvain](#) (Jr., P, Tucson, Ariz.) delivered a ground-rule double to plate Neumayer and Antolak and cut the gap to 5-3.

The Dragons got the runs back in the bottom of the fourth. Gaber came through with a single to right field to drive in Johnson. Paige then doubled to left center to plate McCance and move the lead to 7-3.

The Golden Eagles were able to get runs back in the fifth starting with Bjorge, who singled to right field to bring Bayliss around to score. Neumayer then singled to drive in Rodriguez and cut the deficit to 7-5.

Minnesota Crookston pulled within a run on a double steal as Rodriguez stole second and Allen took home to slice the lead down to 7-6.

Antolak led off the top of the seventh for the Golden Eagles with a single up the middle as she looked to set Minnesota Crookston up for a comeback. However, Becky Berth got the final three outs as Minnesota Crookston stranded the tying run at first and fell 7-6.

The Golden Eagles return to action Sat., March 31 against Northern State University at 1 and 3 p.m. at the PC Dome in Aberdeen, S.D.

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PLAYERS MENTIONED ▾

#7 Victoria Bayliss

OF/2B / 5' 1" / Senior / L

#15 Cassidy Klaphake

P / 5' 5" / Senior / R

#25 Khailyn Neumayer

OF / 5' 8" / Senior / L

#9 Taylor Allen

C/OF / 5' 5" / Freshman / L

#22 Luisa Silvain

P/IF / 5' 4" / Junior / R

#8 Mikayla Jones

P / 5' 3" / Junior / R

#26 Maggie Morales

1B/OF / 5' 7" / Junior / R

#11 Paige Pitlick

P/1B / 5' 7" / Sophomore / R

#1 Haley Strachan

OF / 5' 2" / Junior / L

#33 Mika Rodriguez

2B/SS / 5' 4" / Sophomore / R



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