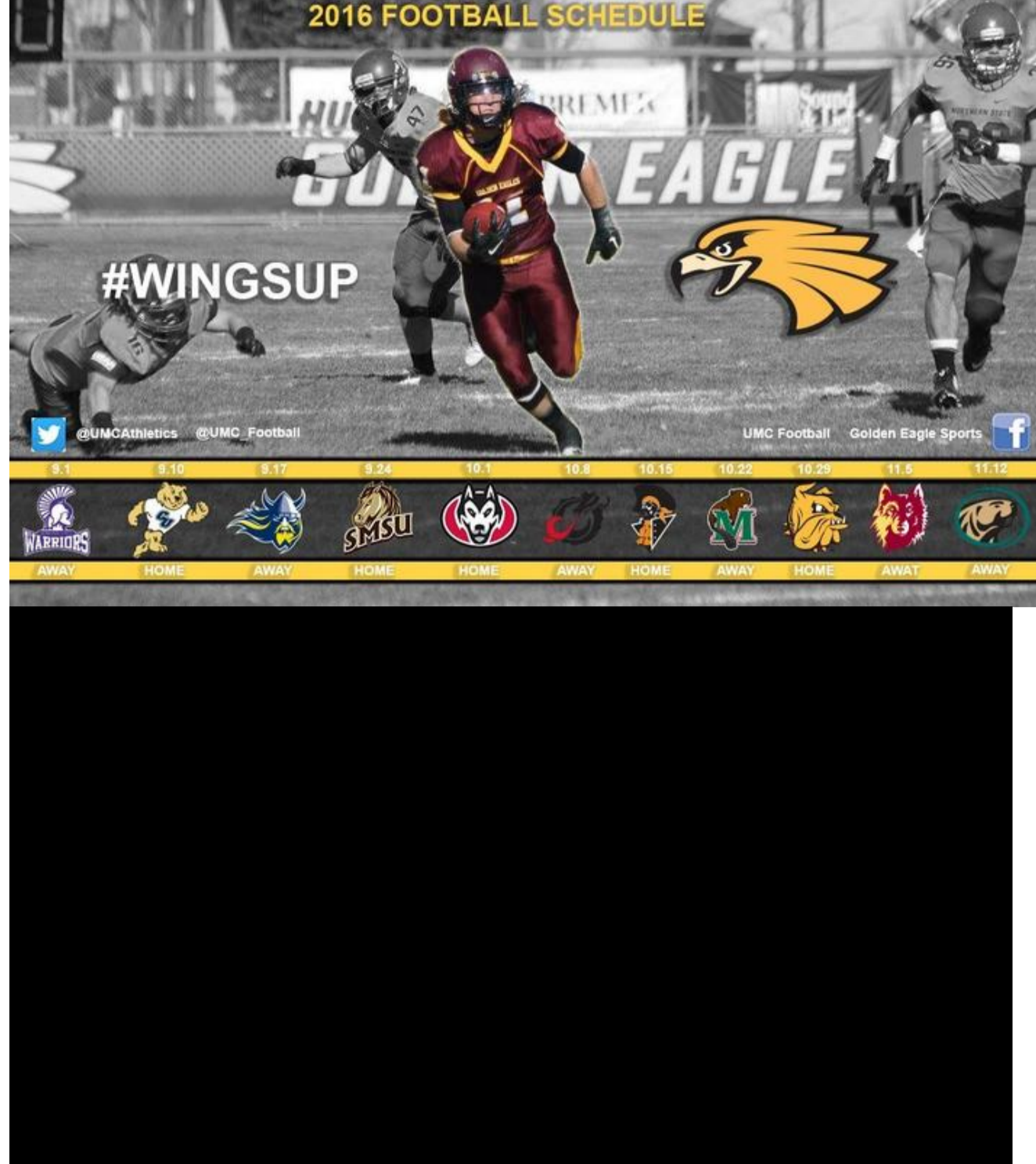




Football | 4/8/2016 11:01:00 AM | Shawn Smith, Sports Information Director

UMC Football Releases 2016 Schedule



CROOKSTON, Minn. – The University of Minnesota Crookston football program officially announced their 2016 football schedule Fri., April 8. The Golden Eagles will play 11 Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference (NSIC) football games. Five will be played at the friendly confines of Ed Widseth Field in Crookston, Minn., while six will be played on the road.

"We are excited about our 2016 schedule," said Head Coach [Mike Fritze](#). "We get the opportunity to play some great NSIC opponents at home including NSIC North rivals U-Mary, St. Cloud State and Minnesota Duluth."

The Golden Eagles open up the schedule Thurs., Sept. 1 at 6 p.m. against Winona State University. The Golden Eagles last played the Warriors Sept. 20, 2014 as they played the Golden Eagles close at home, losing 33-7 to No. 24 Winona State. The Warriors went 5-6 on the 2015 season.

"Starting out the season we are at Winona State," Fritze said. "It is a mid-week trip with the game on a Thursday. It puts a bind on us with our guys having almost a full day before we play at 6 p.m. We love to play Winona State and they are a classy group of guys and it will be a good game for us. I also enjoy it because it is my alma mater and this will actually be my first time getting to coach at their stadium as an opposing coach."

Minnesota Crookston will open up their home slate Sat., Sept. 10 at 1 p.m. as they face Concordia University, St. Paul. UMC last played the Golden Bears Sept. 27, 2014 and fell 44-3 in St. Paul, Minn. The Golden Bears are in their first season back under the leadership of Shannon Currier, who is returning to Concordia-St. Paul. He coached the Golden Bears from 2000-03. Concordia-St. Paul went 1-10 last season.

"That will be a very big game for us, being home for the first time this season and having over 100 guys for the game," Fritze said. "It will be a game that we are very competitive in. Coach Currier will be new, but he has been the head coach at Concordia-St. Paul before and he is very knowledgeable and he is a very good coach."

UMC will take on Augustana University Sat., Sept. 17 at 1 p.m. in Sioux Falls, S.D. The Golden Eagles last played Augustana Sept. 6, falling to the Vikings. Augustana went 9-3 last season.

Minnesota Crookston will then return home to host Southwest Minnesota State University Sat., Sept. 24 at 1 p.m. The Golden Eagles last played against the Mustangs Sept. 13, 2014, falling 56-31 to SMSU in Marshall, Minn. The Mustangs went 8-3 on the 2015 season.

UMC will remain at home as they open NSIC North play on Sat., Oct. 1 at 2 p.m. at Ed Widseth Field. The Huskies went 6-5 on the 2015 season.

The Golden Eagles will then head to Moorhead, Minn., for the Red River Valley Showdown sponsored by State Farm Insurance. UMC will battle for the State Farm Traveling Trophy against Minnesota State University Moorhead Sat., Oct. 8 at 1 p.m. The Dragons went 6-5 on the 2015 season.

UMC will return home Sat., Oct. 15 for their Homecoming game against University of Mary. The Golden Eagles will take on the Marauders at 1 p.m. UMC fell in a close game on the road to the Marauders last season, 33-28. U-Mary went 1-10 on the 2015 season in their third season under Head Coach Josh Kotelnicki.

"We are very excited to have U-Mary as our homecoming opponent," Fritze said. "They have become another big rivalry game for us. We have had some great games against them and hopefully we will be able to compete and have a good game at home for homecoming." The Golden Eagles will then hit the road Sat., Oct. 22 as they take on Minot State University at 1 p.m. UMC upended Minot State 45-14 at Ed Widseth Field last season. The Beavers went 1-10 on the 2015 season. The year in their third season under Head Coach Tyler Hughes. UMC will return home for the last time on the 2016 season Sat., Oct. 29 as they take on University of Minnesota Duluth at 1 p.m. The Bulldogs went 9-3 on the 2015 season. The game will serve as Senior Day for the Golden Eagles.

The Golden Eagles will end the season with two games on the road. It will start as they face Northern State University Sat., Nov. 5 at 1 p.m. in Aberdeen, S.D. The Wolves went 6-5 on the 2015 season.

The season will conclude Sat., Nov. 12 at 1 p.m. as UMC ends the year with a rivalry game. The Golden Eagles will take on Bemidji State University in the "Hub Cap Game" as they take on their foe from 88 miles down U.S. Highway 2. The Beavers were 7-4 on the 2015 season. UMC last defeated the Beavers in 2013 with a 16-14 win at Ed Widseth Field.

"It is kind of tough for us, every other year we end up on the road two games in a row," Fritze says. "That happens with us at the end of this season when we have Northern State on the road and then Bemidji State on the road to end the season. It will be great to finish up with Bemidji State this year. They are one of our top rivals and our players are always excited to play BSU. We get to play on Lake Bemidji, it is a great place to play and we really enjoy going there."

Minnesota Crookston is in their fourth season under Coach Fritze in 2016. They return their entire staff including Offensive Coordinator [Robby Case](#) and Defensive Coordinator [Mark Dufner](#). The Golden Eagles went 1-10 on the 2015 season.

UMC looks primed for improvement with seven starters returning on both offense and defense. Offensively, the Golden Eagles are led by three All-NSIC picks from 2015. All-NSIC North Second Team pick [Dre Person](#) (Sr., RB, Detroit, Mich.) returns after rushing for 767 yards and seven touchdowns as a junior. Fellow All-NSIC North Second Team selection [Adam Connette](#) (Jr., WR, Corona, Calif.) also returns. Connette is on pace to break every receiving record at UMC after 671 yards and four touchdowns as a sophomore. UMC also returns All-NSIC Honorable Mention pick [Noah Lee](#) (R-So., OL, Vadnais Heights, Minn.) on the offensive line. He will help anchor the most experienced offensive line UMC has had in recent history, returning four starters.

Defensively, UMC also returns seven starters on the defensive side of the ball. The Golden Eagles return a lot of experience in the secondary led by [Jake Newman](#) (Jr., DB, White Bear Lake, Minn.), who had 58 tackles last season with three interceptions. [Dion Wallisch](#) (R-So., DB, Oakdale, Minn.) also returns after a strong freshman year, as does [Ali Alkhatib](#) (R-So., DB, Rosemount, Minn.). UMC also returns [Bubba Cook](#) (So., DL, Surprise, Ariz.) on the defensive line. Cook had 40 tackles and five tackles for loss as a freshman for UMC.

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PLAYERS MENTIONED

#7 Ali Alkhatib LB / 5' 9" / Sophomore	#11 Adam Connette WR / 5' 10" / Junior
#94 Bubba Cook DL / 5' 10" / Sophomore	#69 Noah Lee OL / 6' 3" / Redshirt Sophomore
#47 Jake Newman DB / 6' 0" / Junior	#30 Andre Person RB / 5' 10" / Redshirt Senior
#20 Dion Wallisch DB / 5' 11" / Redshirt Sophomore	

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