



Men's Basketball | 12/13/2017 9:29:00 PM | Shawn D. Smith, Director of Athletic Media Relations

Minnesota Crookston Looks For Season Sweep of Bemidji State Saturday in Road Tilt



The Scoop

The University of Minnesota Crookston men's basketball team will look to sweep Bemidji State University on the season as they head 88 miles down U.S. Highway 2 to take on the Beavers Sat., Dec. 16 at 4 p.m. at BSU Gymnasium. The Golden Eagles are looking for their first sweep of an NSIC opponent since defeating Minnesota State University Moorhead twice during the 2004-05 season.

Previewing the Golden Eagles

Minnesota Crookston continues on their best start since the 2014-15 season with their 5-6 (2-3 NSIC) mark. The Golden Eagles were close in last weekend's road games at MSU Moorhead and No. 16 Northern State

University. Minnesota Crookston led by 12 points with 612 remaining against MSU Moorhead before the Dragons closed on a 19-4 run. On Saturday against Northern State, Minnesota Crookston led by three at the half before the Wolves closed the game on a 47-31 run in the second half.

The Golden Eagles are led by reigning NSIC Freshman of the Year Harrison Cleary, who is third in the NSIC with 23.5 points per game. Cleary is shooting 49.0 percent from beyond the arc. In addition, he is sixth in NCAA Division II with a 96.3 free throw percentage.

In addition to Cleary, Alan Hodge, Jr. has made an instant impact after transferring from Southwestern College. Hodge is tallying 18.7 points per game and shooting 45.3 percent from beyond the arc. Junior Chase Knickerbocker has also had a strong season thus far with 11.7 points and 4.9 rebounds per game. Knickerbocker is also shooting over a 40 percent clip from beyond the arc at 42.9 percent.

Freshman Ben Juhl has been coming on as of late for Minnesota Crookston. Juhl is tallying 12.5 points per game over the last four contests.

Defensively, Gable Smith has been one of the best in NCAA Division II as he currently leads the country with 3.64 blocks per game. Smith is also averaging 8.4 points and 6.5 rebounds per game.

Off of the bench, Javier Nicolau, a 6-10 sophomore from Castellon, Spain, continues to show improvement. Nicolau is notching 5.0 points and 4.0 rebounds per game over the last four tilts for Minnesota Crookston.

Minnesota Crookston has been a prolific scoring offense this season with 82.3 points per game. The Golden Eagles are allowing opponents to score 77.3 points per game. Minnesota Crookston is shooting 48.7 percent from the field and 42.5 percent from behind the three-point line. The Golden Eagles are shooting 77.0 percent from the charity stripe. Minnesota Crookston is allowing their foes to shoot 46.5 percent from the field and 38.0 percent from beyond the arc.

Minnesota Crookston is being outrebounded on the season 36.3 to 33.6.

Previewing the Beavers

Bemidji State enters the weekend with a 5-5 (2-3 NSIC) mark. The Beavers are coming off a big last second win over MSU Moorhead Saturday as Derek Thompson put in the game-winner with one second remaining. Thompson has come out of nowhere after the starter Lucas Wendt left school. Thompson averaged 14.0 points and 4.0 rebounds per game last weekend after only playing in eight minutes against St. Cloud State.

BSU has been led on the season by guard Jai'Vionne Green's 14.1 points and 4.3 rebounds per game. Green is shooting 35.3 percent from beyond the arc. Senior Sharif Black has also had a major impact for Bemidji State. Black is notching 13.3 points and 5.2 rebounds per game. Black is shooting 31.3 percent from behind the three-point line.

In the post, Logan Bader leads the way with 10.5 points and 5.0 rebounds per game.

Senior Christian Pekarek has been the facilitator for the Beavers. Pekarek is notching 4.1 assists and 6.2 points per game for Bemidji State.

The Beavers are thin on the bench due to injuries and Wendt's departure. Thompson has led the way with 4.4 points per game on the season. Jacob McNallan is notching 4.3 points per game and shooting 44.4 percent from beyond the arc.

Bemidji State is averaging 74.3 points per game and giving up 73.2 points per game to their opponents. The Beavers are shooting 46.2 percent from the field and 35.0 percent from distance. Bemidji State is allowing their foes to shoot 44.7 percent from the field and 34.6 percent from beyond the arc. The Beavers are outrebounding their foes 35.4 to 34.1.

Defense Is Key

Defense has been key for the Golden Eagles this season as it has been a defining factor in their wins versus their losses. Minnesota Crookston is limiting opponents to 70.6 points per game in their five victories. On the reverse side, the Golden Eagles have allowed their foes to score an average of 83.0 points in their six losses. The Golden Eagles will look to be more consistent on defense as they head into another crucial NSIC weekend.

Great Start

The Golden Eagles are looking to continue their best start since the 2014-15 season. If they win Saturday, it will mark the earliest date they have reached six wins in the program's 19 seasons in NCAA Division II. The Golden Eagles reached six wins during the 2014-15 season on Jan. 2 when they defeated University of Mary.

Minnesota Crookston Golden Eagles

Head Coach: [Dan Weisse](#)
Record at UMC: 22-70 Season at UMC: Fourth Season

Bemidji State Beavers

Head Coach: Mike Boschee
Record at BSU: 69-80 Season at BSU: Sixth Season

Date: Dec. 16, 2017
Time: 4 p.m.
Opponent: Bemidji State
Site: Bemidji, Minn.
Arena: BSU Gymnasium
Capacity: 2,500
Live Stats: <http://www.statbroadcast.com/events/statbroadcast.php?t=18&gid=best>
Video: <https://portal.stretchinternet.com/bsu/>
Radio: 1260 KROX AM/105.7 FM
Series against BSU: BSU leads the all-time series 48-15
Earlier This Season: Minnesota Crookston beat Bemidji State 83-57 Nov. 25 in Crookston, Minn.
Recent Trends: Minnesota Crookston is 2-1 in the last three games against the Beavers. BSU has won 22-straight games in Bemidji, Minn. with the last win coming for Minnesota Crookston in Bemidji
Officials: Mike Gullingsrud, Keswic Joiner, Reggie Jackson

Minnesota Crookston

Projected Starters
 So. PG 0 Harrison Cleary, 6-1, Oak Creek, Wis. 23.5 PPG, 5.0 RPG, 4.5 APG
 Jr. SG 11 Alan Hodge, Jr., 6-0, Dallas, Texas 18.1 PPG, 3.7 RPG
 Fr. CG 2 Ben Juhl, 6-1, Clive, Iowa 10.7 PPG, 2.8 RPG
 Jr. SF 25 Chase Knickerbocker, 6-7, Annandale, Minn. 11.7 PPG, 4.9 RPG
 R-Jr. PF 24 Gable Smith, 6-7, Lodi, Wis. 8.4 PPG, 6.5 RPG, 3.6 BPG
Top Bench Players
 Jr. G 13 Darin Viken, 6-1, Fosston, Minn. 1.8 PPG, 1.9 RPG
 So. F/C 44 Javier Nicolau, 6-10, Castellon, Spain 3.7 PPG, 3.5 RPG
 Jr. F/C 34 Nate Lorenz, 6-7, Breckenridge, Minn. 2.7 PPG, 1.3 RPG

Bemidji State

Projected Starters
 Sr. PG 11 Christian Pekarek, 6-1, Little Falls, Minn. 6.2 PPG, 4.1 APG
 Sr. SG 12 Sharif Black, 6-2, Detroit, Mich. 13.3 PPG, 5.2 RPG
 So. CG 4 Jai'Vionne Green, 6-4, Wauwatosa, Wis. 14.1 PPG, 4.3 RPG
 So. SF 24 Logan Bader, 6-7, Milltown, Wis., 10.5 PPG, 5.0 RPG
 So. PF 32 Kyle Sorenson, 6-8, Caledonia, Minn., 2.5 PPG, 3.0 RPG
Top Bench Players
 Fr. F 5 Derek Thompson, 6-8, Cold Spring, Minn., 4.4 PPG, 1.9 RPG
 So. G 10 Jacob McNallan, 6-2, Andover, Minn., 4.3 PPG, 1.3 RPG
 Fr. G 20 Mike Shepski, 6-0, Lockport, Ill., 3.6 PPG, 1.0 RPG
 R-Fr. G 2 Aage Rovney, 6-3, West St. Paul, Minn., 2.3 PPG, 0.9 RPG

#5StoryLines

1. Can the Golden Eagles get the ball movement and defense that they have had in several of their wins?
 2. Will Harrison Cleary continue his strong start to his sophomore campaign?
 3. Can the Golden Eagles limit guards Jai'Vionne Green and Sharif Black for Bemidji State?
 4. Will Minnesota Crookston continue to be dangerous from beyond the arc?
 5. Will Bemidji State's Derek Thompson continue his hot streak?

#ShiningAsASophomore

UMC sophomore guard Harrison Cleary has overcome the sophomore slump in his second season as a Golden Eagle. Cleary was NSIC Freshman of the Year last season. He is third in the entire NSIC as he is scoring 23.5 points per game. Cleary has scored in double-figures in all 11 games. He has scored over 20 points on six occasions this season. Cleary had a season-high 36 points versus Jamestown. Cleary tallied 31 points versus MSU Moorhead last Friday. Cleary is sixth in the NCAA Division II with a 96.3 free throw percentage.

#Denied

Minnesota Crookston redshirt junior Gable Smith has always been a shot block machine with a school-record 163 blocks. Smith has taken it to a new level this year with an NCAA Division II leading 3.64 blocks per game. He is coming off of a school-record nine blocks against Northern State Saturday. Smith has also averaged 8.4 points and 6.5 rebounds per game on the season. He tallied 13 points to go with his nine blocks against No. 16 Northern State last weekend. He will look to make a positive impact both offensively and defensively Saturday versus Bemidji State.

#InstantImpact

Minnesota Crookston junior transfer Alan Hodge, Jr. has made an instant impact for the Golden Eagles. Hodge is averaging 18.1 points per game on the season after transferring in from Southwestern College in Kansas. Hodge has tallied 20 or more points six times this season. He has especially been an impact beyond the arc where he is shooting 45.3 percent from beyond the arc.

#CrownJuhl

Minnesota Crookston guard Ben Juhl has continued to come on this season. Juhl is averaging 12.5 points per game in the last four contests. Juhl tallied 15 points against Northern State on 6-of-9 from the field. He is shooting 38.5 percent from beyond the arc on the season.

[Print Friendly Version](#)

Related Stories

- 07.17.23 Minnesota Crookston Men's Basketball Rounds Out Class with Addition of Aguek Deng
- 06.08.23 Former Men's Basketball Player Cleary Continues Professional Journey with Lahti Basketball in Finland
- 06.06.23 Minnesota Crookston Men's Basketball Adds Fourth Signee with Grand Forks Native Ben Hoverson
- 06.01.23 Minnesota Crookston Men's Basketball Adds Joel Hanson as Assistant Coach
- 05.18.23 Minnesota Crookston Men's Basketball Set to Host Two Youth Camps this Summer

Related Videos

- 05.11.23 Post-Game - Mike Hallquist and Ben Goelz
- 05.10.23 Josh Dykhoff Grand Slam Against Minot State
- 05.10.23 Post-Game - Steve Gust vs. Minot State
- 05.10.23 Post-Game: Josh and Jake Dykhoff against Minot State
- 04.24.23 Post-Game - Mitch Goodwin and Conner Richardson



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA CROOKSTON

© 2023 University of Minnesota Crookston Athletics
 The University of Minnesota is an equal opportunity educator and employer