



Minnesota Crookston Launches Three Home Runs and Ride Strong Performance from Nelson in 7-3 Win Over Bobcats

3/4/2020 4:01:00 PM

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Box Score: AUBURNDALE, Fla. – Scott Finberg (Sr., 3B, Stillwater, Minn.) rocketed two home runs and Matt Nelson (So., RHP, Afton, Minn.) had a strong outing on the mound as the University of Minnesota Crookston baseball team upended West Virginia Wesleyan College 7-3. The game was played Wed., March 4, at Lake Myrtle Complex – Field 5 in Auburndale, Fla. The Golden Eagles are riding a four-game win streak into their final two games in Florida.

The Golden Eagles are off to their best start since opening the 2018 season with a 9-4 mark. Minnesota Crookston is currently 7-4 through 11 games. West Virginia Wesleyan falls to 0-11 with Wednesday's loss at the RussMatt Central Florida Invitational.

Nelson had a strong outing on the mound, going six innings with just one run allowed. The sophomore moves to 1-0 following his second start of the season. Nelson has allowed just three earned runs over 13.2 innings of work this season. Ben Thomas (Dr., RHP/C, Clearbrook, Minn.) had a strong relief outing, allowing just two runs over three innings of work out of the bullpen.

The Golden Eagles were led at the plate by Finberg with two home runs and three RBIs. Reller had a solo home run and two RBIs for the game, while [Egor Stora](#) (Dr., OF, Auckland, New Zealand) and [Gerson Ruhlman](#) (Sr., 2B, Algonac, Mich.) also picked up crucial RBIs.

Robbie Baker got the start and suffered the loss. The Bobcat pitcher went 5.2 innings on the mound, giving up three runs. Luke White came on in relief and allowed four runs.

West Virginia Wesleyan picked up key RBIs on the game from Sam Ingram, and two from Griffin Roe.

Minnesota Crookston took a 1-0 lead in the bottom of the first as a Morris single up the middle plated [Ben Bryant](#) (R-So., 2B/SS, Fargo, N.D.) for the Golden Eagles.

Nelson controlled the bats for the Bobcats over the first four innings. The Golden Eagles added to their tally in the bottom of the fourth as Finberg blasted his team-high fourth home run to put Minnesota Crookston up 2-0.

The Golden Eagles ran into a bit of trouble in the top of the fifth as Andrew Walker and Evan Hurt reached base with no outs. Nelson responded as he got a pop-out to [Zach Conroyea](#) (R-3r., C, Inver Grove Heights, Minn.) from David Sanders and a strikeout of Bryson Fluke to quickly get two outs. A single up the middle from Ingram plated Walker to trim the deficit to 2-1.

The Golden Eagles responded in the bottom of the fifth as Ruhlman singled to drive in Conroyea to extend the Minnesota Crookston lead to 3-1.

Dylan Gump reached base for the Bobcats to open up the top of the sixth. However, Nelson came up in a big spot as he retired the next three batters to keep Minnesota Crookston in the driver's seat with the 3-1 lead.

The Golden Eagles looked to add to their lead in the bottom of the sixth as [Zach White](#) (Fr., 1B, East Grand Forks, Minn.) hit a one-out double to left field. Baker would secure one out, but a walk offered to Bryant would give Minnesota Crookston two on with two outs. Luke White came on to try to get the final out of the sixth for West Virginia Wesleyan. White would walk, Conroyea to lead up the bases. White would retire Ruhlman in the crucial situation as the Bobcats remained two runs down from the Golden Eagles heading to the seventh frame.

Thomas came on to pitch in the top of the seventh and made quick work of West Virginia Wesleyan as the Golden Eagles held on to a 3-1 advantage.

Morris led off the bottom of the seventh for Minnesota Crookston with a triple to the right field corner as he looked to ignite the Golden Eagles in the stanza. Reller drove in Morris with a single to right field to give the Golden Eagles a 4-1 lead. Finberg then came up and jacked his second home run of the game and his fifth of the season to drive in himself and Reller and extend the lead to 6-1. White was able to get the Bobcats out of any further danger but not without the Golden Eagles scoring three crucial runs in the stanza.

West Virginia Wesleyan get two runs back in the top of the eighth as Griffin Roe doubled to deep center to drive in Nick Grotti and Gump to trim the deficit to 6-3. Thomas was able to get a crucial strikeout to prevent any further damage as Minnesota Crookston went into the bottom of the eighth with the three-run advantage.

Reller added a run to Minnesota Crookston's tally in the bottom of the eighth with a solo shot to center field to widen the gap to 7-3.

The Golden Eagles return to the diamond Thurs., March 5 to take on University of the Sciences at 4 p.m. C.T. at Chain O' Lakes Stadium in Winter Haven, Fla. The Golden Eagles have played four games since Feb. 24 at Chain O' Lakes Stadium, going 2-2. Minnesota Crookston has two more games remaining in their 10-game excursion in the Sunshine State.

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