



Men's Basketball | 4/18/2018 9:32:00 AM | Shawn D. Smith, Director of Athletic Media Relations

Minnesota Crookston Men's Basketball Inks Illinois Prep Bariffe-Smith to NLI



CROOKSTON, Minn. – The University of Minnesota Crookston men's basketball program announced the signing of Demarion Bariffe-Smith (G/F, 6-4 165, Skokie, Ill./Niles North H.S.) to a National Letter of Intent. Bariffe-Smith is the third signee for the men's basketball program, joining Sergio Nanu (F/C, 6-9 210, Kenosha, Wis./St. Joseph Catholic Academy) and Zach Westphal (G, 6-2 155, West Fargo, N.D./West Fargo Sheyenne H.S.).

"During the recruiting process I heard of a player from a very good Niles North team that has done everything his coach has asked and will do anything to help his team win," said Head Coach [Dan Weisse](#). "He sounded like the type of person we try to get in our program. In getting to know Demarion and his high school coach, that is exactly what we are getting. He has very good athleticism and length. Demarion also has a quality shot and high motor. Perhaps what impressed me the most was that Demarion has the perfect mindset that fits exactly what we look for in our program. He comes from a system and program philosophy with Coach Olson that aligns with ours. Demarion comes from a wonderful family and he has a great support system. I am excited to get working with Demarion and we welcome him to the Golden Eagle basketball family."

Bariffe-Smith is a versatile player that can plug in at several positions in the back-court and on the wing. He adds to a guard court that includes D2CAA All-America Honorable Mention pick [Harrison Cleary](#) (So., G, Oak Creek, Wis.). Also returning for Minnesota Crookston is [Ben Juhl](#) (So., G, Clive, Iowa), who was a starter last season. [Darin Viken](#) (Sr., G, Fosston, Minn.) saw time as a starter off the bench, while [Aaron Hollcraft](#) (Sr., G, Crookston, Minn.) also saw time for Minnesota Crookston. [Brian Sitzmann](#) (R-Fr., G, Savage, Minn.) also looks to factor into the guard court. On the wing, Minnesota Crookston returns [Chase Knickerbocker](#) (Sr., G/F, Annandale, Minn.), while [Malcolm Cohen](#) (R-Jr., G/F, Detroit, Mich.) also looks to be an important piece after redshirting.

The Golden Eagles return 13 players from last season's roster as they have the strongest core returning that the program has had in Coach Weisse's time at Minnesota Crookston. Leading the way for Minnesota Crookston is Cleary, who led the league in scoring at 24.2 points per game. Cleary also led the nation in free throw percentage at 96.0 percent and was an All-NSIC First Team pick. The Golden Eagles also return [Cable Smith](#) (R-Sr., F/C, Lodi, Wis.), who finished second nationally in blocked shots at 3.76 blocks per shot. Juhl and Knickerbocker also return as starters for the Golden Eagles, while Viken and [Josh Collins](#) (Sr., F, Minneapolis, Minn.) also saw significant time last season.

Bariffe-Smith continues the Midwest pipeline for the Golden Eagles as he is the 15th player on the roster from the region with [Javier Nicolau](#) (Jr., F/C, Castellon, Spain) as the only player not from the Midwest. The Golden Eagles have always had the philosophy to focus on top players in the region and that has continued this season with, Bariffe-Smith from Illinois, Westphal from North Dakota and Nanu from Wisconsin.

Demarion Bariffe-Smith (G/F, 6-4 165, Skokie, Ill./Niles North H.S.)
 Bariffe-Smith helped Nile North High School win the state championship in 2017. He was named MVP out of necessity in his prep career as he stepped in for a teammate who was injured. He averaged 10 points and six rebounds per game for the Vikings. He is the son of Eugene Smith and Wendy Smith. Bariffe-Smith was born May 25, 2000. He plans to major in software engineering at Minnesota Crookston. Bariffe-Smith was a National Honors Society member. He received the Sportsmanship award and the Principal's breakfast award. He was named MVP in the honor roll at Niles North High School eight times. His nickname is Taz. He has a wingspan of 6-11.

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"Demarion is a coaches' dream," said Niles North Head Coach Glenn Olson. "He is a player who puts the team before himself and goes above and beyond with work ethic and effort. Demarion is just scratching the surface of his basketball ability. He will bring a willingness to do whatever it takes for Minnesota Crookston to win games. He will play with great energy and enthusiasm. Demarion has great athleticism as he has great length and is a dynamic finisher with boundless energy. As a person, Demarion is top notch. He has been a great role model for other players in the program and also my two sons (ages 11 and 13). Demarion is also a stand-out in the classroom. We are very proud of Demarion and he has truly earned this opportunity."

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PLAYERS MENTIONED ▾

#0 Harrison Cleary
G / 6' 1" / Sophomore

#25 Chase Knickerbocker
G/F / 6' 7" / Junior

#13 Darin Viken
G / 6' 1" / Junior

#14 Brian Sitzmann
G / 6' 4" / Freshman

#44 Javier Nicolau
F/C / 6' 10" / Sophomore

#22 Aaron Hollcraft
G / 6' 0" / Junior

#24 Gable Smith
F / 6' 7" / Redshirt Junior

#2 Ben Juhl
G / 6' 1" / Freshman

#12 Malcolm Cohen
G/F / 6' 6" / Junior

#30 Josh Collins
F / 6' 6" / Junior



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