



Football | 10/18/2017 3:43:00 PM | Shawn D. Smith, Director of Athletic Media Relations

Golden Eagles Host MSU Moorhead in Red River Valley Showdown Saturday



The Scoop

The University of Minnesota Crookston football team will play Minnesota State University Moorhead in the Red River Valley Showdown for the State Farm Traveling Trophy Sat., Oct. 21. The Golden Eagles last took home the trophy with a win in 2013.

UMCNOTES MSUM2
MINNESOTA CROOKSTON TWO DEEP

Previewing the Golden Eagles

Minnesota Crookston comes into the Ed Widseth/Agassiz Bowl Scholarship Weekend with an 0-7 mark. The Golden Eagles have shown improvement in recent weeks against St. Cloud State University and University of Mary, but were unable to convert on key opportunities. The Golden Eagles welcomed back quarterback [Joseph Nava](#), to the starting line-up last weekend after he had missed the previous two weeks due to injury. Nava has passed for 839 yards with five touchdowns on the season. His most potent threats have been receivers [Adam Connette](#) and [Rod Stewart](#). Connette is the all-time leading receiver in school history. He has had a great senior season with 45 catches for 528 yards and six touchdowns. Stewart has added 31 catches for 392 yards and two touchdowns. Minnesota Crookston has struggled to get the run-game going. [Kevin Evans](#) has led the way with 69 carries for 197 yards. Defensively, [Austin Howard](#) is the top pass-rush threat with 6.5 tackles for loss and 1.5 sacks on the season. The linebacking corps of [Will Cross](#), [Ali Alkhatib](#) and [Chuck Lofquist](#) have had a strong year for Minnesota Crookston. In the defensive backfield, the Golden Eagles look to safety [Will Cole](#) with 62 tackles and one interception. Freshman cornerback [Donovan Baker](#) continues to show improvement with one interception and one forced fumble on the year.

Previewing the Dragons

MSU Moorhead comes into the weekend with a 2-5 mark. The Dragons looked to have a breakout year in 2016 with a 7-4 mark, but they have taken a step back in 2017. Demetrius Carr leads the team at quarterback with 1,680 yards passing with eight touchdowns and 11 interceptions. He has one of the top receivers in the country at his disposal with Damon Gibson, who has 54 catches for 649 yards and three touchdowns. In the run-game, the Dragons look to Austin Stone who has 397 yards on the ground with five touchdowns. Defensively, the Dragons are giving up just 354.4 yards on the season. Abe Roehrich leads the way with 47 tackles. On the pass-rush, look for Darin Gipson and Miles Baggett to disrupt things for MSU Moorhead. Gipson has 6.5 tackles for loss and 2.5 sacks, while Baggett has 9.5 tackles for loss and four sacks. In the secondary, beware of Aaron Doan with his 38 tackles and two interceptions on the season.

#Rivalry

The Golden Eagles are playing in the sixth annual Red River Valley Showdown for the State Farm Traveling Trophy. MSU Moorhead leads the series 6-1, but the overall series in NCAA Division II has been more even with the Dragons leading 11-7. The two rivals located on U.S. Highway 75 have had a lot of heated games over the years.

#SeizeTheDay

Minnesota Crookston punter [Stephen Day](#) has been excellent during the last two weekends for the Golden Eagles. Day is averaging 49.0 yards per punt with five punts inside the 20 and three punts over 50 yards against St. Cloud State and U-Mary. Day will look to have another strong weekend changing field position versus MSU Moorhead.

#LastTimeOut

The Dragons took the last meeting between the two schools 41-12 in Moorhead, Minn. Connette led the way for the Golden Eagles with nine catches for 118 yards. The defense looked to [Ali Alkhatib](#) with 11 tackles, while [Chuck Lofquist](#) notched seven tackles. Demetrius Carr was 9-of-16 for the day for 162 yards and four touchdowns. His top target was Damon Gibson with four catches for 140 yards and four touchdowns, while Austin Stone rushed 13 times for 79 yards and a touchdown.

#FormerCoWorkers

[Mark Dufner](#) and Steve Laqua were former co-workers on the same staff at Minnesota Crookston during the 2004 season under Shannon Stassen. This will be the first meeting between the two head coaches.

#5StoryLines

1. Can the Golden Eagle get the ball in the hands of [Rod Stewart](#) and [Adam Connette](#)?
2. Will [Joseph Nava](#) be a difference-maker at quarterback for Minnesota Crookston?
3. Can the defense shut down wide receiver Damon Gibson?
4. Can the defense force Demetrius Carr to make mistakes?
5. Will Minnesota Crookston have a running back or a running threat step up in the game?

MSU Moorhead

2-5 Overall
0-3 NSIC North
Head Coach:
Steve Laqua

Minnesota Crookston

0-7 Overall
0-3 NSIC North
Head Coach:
[Mark Dufner](#)

Date: Oct. 21, 2017
Time: 1 p.m. C.T.
Site: Crookston, Minn.
Stadium: Ed Widseth Field
Surface: Grass
Capacity: 2,000
Series: MSU Moorhead leads 11-7
Last: MSU Moorhead won 41-12
Oct. 8, 2016 in Moorhead, Minn.

Radio: 1260 KROX AM/105.7 FM
Leo Blavin (Play by Play)
Video: [Stretch Internet](#)
[https://portal.stretchinternet.com/crk/#liveEventsTab](#)
Live Stats: <http://www.sidearmstats.com/umcrookston/football/>

#TheOtherRodStewart

Minnesota Crookston wide receiver [Rod Stewart](#) has been a playmaker for the Golden Eagles, especially in the last three games as he has amassed 15 receptions for 223 yards and two touchdowns in that span. Stewart continues to move up the record books at Minnesota Crookston as he is fourth all-time in receptions with 99 and fourth all-time in receiving yards with 1,237 yards.

#CurtainCall

Minnesota Crookston wide receiver [Adam Connette](#) has had one of the most impressive careers of any player in program history. Connette is already the program's all-time leading receiver with 222 receptions for 2,587 yards. Connette is looking to close his career out in the final four games on a strong note. Connette is coming off seven receptions for 116 yards last weekend versus U-Mary. He has notched four games with over 100 yards receiving this season. He needs just three touchdown receptions to tie Carl Aho's all-time receiving touchdowns mark at Minnesota Crookston.

#NuissanceInTheBackfield

[Austin Howard](#) has been the best Golden Eagle, at creating havoc in the opposing backfield this season. The senior from New Albany, Miss., has a team-leading 6.5 tackles and 1.5 sacks and is tied for the team lead with 1.5 sacks. Howard will look to continue to improve and impact both the passing game and run game of the Dragons this weekend.

#SteppingUp

Minnesota Crookston freshman [Brendan Kinnee](#) continues to improve each game and stepped into a major role against U-Mary. Kinnee led the team with 12 tackles on the game and notched a tackle for loss versus the Marauders. Kinnee has notched 32 tackles on the season including six tackles against Bemidji State and five versus Upper Iowa. Kinnee will look to continue to relish whatever role is given him as the Golden Eagles face MSU Moorhead. [Print Friendly Version](#)

PLAYERS MENTIONED

| | |
|---|---|
| #7 Ali Alkhatib LB / 5' 9" / Junior | #25 Will Cole DB / 5' 11" / Junior |
| #11 Adam Connette WR / 5' 9" / Senior | #54 Will Cross LB / 5' 10" / Redshirt Sophomore |
| #37 Stephen Day K/P / 6' 0" / Redshirt Junior | #9 Austin Howard DL / 5' 11" / Redshirt Senior |
| #41 Chuck Lofquist LB / 6' 0" / Senior | #2 Joseph Nava QB / 5' 9" / Redshirt Freshman |
| #1 Rod Stewart WR / 5' 11" / Junior | #21 Donovan Baker DB / 5' 10" / Freshman |

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