

News Release

U of M Crookston Women's Soccer Team to Open Season at Home on Friday Against Augustana

By Chris Vito on Tuesday, August 21, 2007

The University of Minnesota, Crookston Women's Soccer team will open their season at home on Friday, August 24. They will play host to North Central Conference foe Augustana College at 4:00 pm at the U of M, Crookston Soccer Field.

The Golden Eagles are led by Coach Chris Przemieniecki who enters his seventh season. The Golden Eagles had a record of 2-15-1 (1-8-0 NSIC) last season.

Coach Przemieniecki will have eleven new faces this season along with nine returning players from last year's squad. The twenty players make for the largest roster in the program's history. The Golden Eagles will have players from the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, Florida, Colorado, South Dakota, Washington, New Mexico, and New York. There are also players from the Canadian province of Alberta.

Leading the way for the Golden Eagles attack will be juniors **Amber Erdmann (Jr. Fwd., Crookston, MN)**, **Vanessa Copiak (Jr. Fwd., Calgary, Alberta)**, and **Richelle Copiak (Jr. Fwd., Calgary, Alberta)**. Amber who was a wide-midfielder since her freshman year will be moved to the forward position while Vanessa and Richelle look to make an immediate impact on the Golden Eagle offense. Vanessa returns to the line-up after sustaining an injury at the end of last season and Richelle has made great strides in the off-season to be more of an offensive threat. Adding to the UMC offensive punch are freshmen **Megan Gibeault (Fr. Fwd., Green Bay, WI)** who was an Offensive MVP, All-Conference and All-State selection in high school and **Melanie Kuntz (Fr. Fwd., Bismarck, ND)**, a speedy defender in high school that will be converted into a front runner.

In the midfield, experience and depth are the main ingredients for the Golden Eagles as the lone senior and captain **Kiely Bladow (Sr., Mid., Monument, CO)** will lead this year's squad. Bladow has started every game since her freshman year and will be instrumental in providing the balance between the attackers and the defenders. Also returning in the midfield are **Jacky Creelman (So., Mid., Rogers, MN)** and **Becky Thorbjornsen (Jr., Mid., Rapid City, SD)**. Jacky has come on strong since last season after making a few starting calls and proved to be a valuable addition. Like Bladow, Becky has also started every game since her freshman year and brings experience and vision to the midfield. The newest additions in the midfield are **Kelsey Palmer (Fr., Mid., Crookston, MN)**, another local standout with MVP and All-Conference honors, **Stephanie Lee (Fr., Mid., Port Chester, NY)**, a standout midfielder and three-year starter, and **Kasey Castor (Fr., Mid., Northglenn, CO)**, an All-Conference, All-Region and All-State selection.

Defensively, UMC Soccer lost two key four-year starters from last season to graduation but have since added the services of freshmen **Samantha Welch (Fr., Def., Arlington, WA)** and **Alysia Lucero (Fr., Def., Albuquerque, NM)**. Welch was a standout defender in high school earning All-Conference, All-Region and Defensive Player of the Year honors while Lucero earned MVP honors and played with club power Rio Vista FC. Returning to the backfield after spending last season as front runners are **Alyssa Jensen (Jr., Def., Rice Lake, WI)** and **Megan Hannon (So., Def., Green Bay, WI)**. Alyssa is no stranger to the backfield as she was an outside defender in 2005 and Megan, a true defender, was a walk-on from last season that will help round out the defensive line.

The goalkeeping position is the deepest for the Golden Eagles as five talented players will battle for a starting position in the goal. **Athena Mussenden (So., GK, Kenosha, WI)**, who started 17 games last season and had a 2.13 GAA will have stiff competition from a strong and talented group of freshmen goalkeepers: **Anna Ogaard (Fr., GK, Maple Grove, MN)**, **Emily Cooper (Fr., GK, Winona, MN)**, **Leyla Castillo (Fr., GK, Miami, FL)**, and **Bridget Berry (Fr., GK., Maple Grove, MN)**. All the freshman goalkeepers have earned All-Conference honors in high school and will raise the level of goalkeeping for the Golden Eagles.

This season will hopefully be the turning point for UMC Soccer team. With many new faces and an experienced group returning players, the Golden Eagles look to rewrite the record books this fall.

Augustana College

Coach Brandon Barkus and his Vikings are coming off a 5-12-1 season (2-9-1 NCC). They have been tabbed to finish sixth in the North Central Conference preseason poll.

For more information, visit the Golden Eagle Athletics website at www.goldeneaglesports.com.

The University of Minnesota, Crookston is a Division II Institution and a member of the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference (NSIC).

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