



Men's Basketball | 11/1/2018 10:47:00 AM | Shawn D. Smith, Director of Athletic Media Relations

Minnesota Crookston Opens Season with Exhibition Against Northwestern-St. Paul



CROOKSTON, Minn. – The University of Minnesota Crookston men's basketball team will officially tip off the 2018-19 basketball season Sat., Nov. 3 at 6 p.m. with an exhibition against the University of Northwestern (Minn.). The tune-up will be the only exhibition for the Golden Eagles before officially getting the slate under way.

Northwestern-St. Paul at Minnesota Crookston
Sat., Nov. 3, 6 p.m., Lysaker Gymnasium, Crookston, Minn.
Live Stats - <https://goldeneaglesports.com/sidearmstats/mbball/summary>
Radio – 1260 KROX AM/105.7 FM, www.kroxam.com, on the KROX app or on Amazon Alexa

Minnesota Crookston has a strong core returning from a squad that set the program-high for wins as they finished with a 10-19 (7-15 NSIC) mark. The Golden Eagles have four players that started 13 or more games during the 2017-18 season. NSIC First Team pick and D2CCA All-America Honorable Mention selection [Harrison Cleary](#) (So., G, Oak Creek, Wis.) is set to steer the ship for Minnesota Crookston. Cleary is second all-time in scoring for the Golden Eagles after just two seasons in the program. He averaged 24.2 points, 4.6 rebounds and 3.6 assists per game last season. Cleary also ended the season as the NCAA Division II statistical champion for free throw shooting percentage at 96.0 percent.

In addition to Cleary, Minnesota Crookston returns reining NSIC Defensive Player of the Year [Cable Smith](#) (R-Sr., F/C, Lodi, Wis.). Smith led NCAA Division II for blocks for the majority of the season. He averaged 3.8 blocks per game for the Golden Eagles. In addition, Smith notched 8.0 points and 6.7 rebounds per game. The Golden Eagles also return [Chase Knickerbocker](#) (Sr., G/F, Annandale, Minn.), who missed the last half of the season with an injury. Knickerbocker opens up the floor with his outside shooting and brings length back to the court. Knickerbocker tallied 11.0 points and 5.3 rebounds, shooting 44.3 percent from beyond the arc in 13 games last season. Minnesota Crookston also brings back [Ben Juhl](#) (So., G, Clive, Iowa.), who notched 11.0 points per game as a freshman for the Golden Eagles.

In addition, [Josh Collins](#) (Sr., F, Minneapolis, Minn.) is back in the fray for Minnesota Crookston after joining the team mid-season in 2017-18 from Division I school University of North Dakota. Collins notched 5.3 points and 2.5 rebounds per game in his 15 games, including 10 starts.

The Golden Eagles also return [Darin Viken](#) (Sr., G, Fosston, Minn.), [Javier Nicolau](#) (Jr., F/C, Castellon, Spain) and [Aaron Hollcraft](#) (Sr., G, Crookston, Minn.), who all played last season. Viken earned nine starts last season and shot 34.0 percent from beyond the arc.

[Chase Johnson](#) (R-So., F/C, La Crosse, Wis.) returns after missing most of last season due to injury. Johnson will add size and depth to the post position for the Golden Eagles. Minnesota Crookston also adds three players who redshirted last season. [Malcolm Cohen](#) (R-Jr., G/F, Detroit, Mich.), [Brian Sitzmann](#) (R-Fr., G, Savage, Minn.) and [Joey Meyer](#) (R-Fr., F/C, Shullsburg, Wis.) will all look to make their impact on the lineup.

The Golden Eagles have added [Demarion Bariffe-Smith](#) (Fr., G, Skokie, Ill.), [Zach Westphal](#) (Fr., G, West Fargo, N.D.) and [Sergio Nanu](#) (Fr., F, Kenosha, Wis.) to the roster. Westphal and Nanu are expected to redshirt, while Bariffe-Smith will be eligible to play in 2018-19.

Minnesota Crookston averaged 74.8 points per game last season and allowed 75.5 points per contest to their opponents. The Golden Eagles shot 45.0 percent from the field and 38.2 percent from beyond the arc. Minnesota Crookston was outrebounded last season 36.1 to 32.7.

Northwestern-St. Paul Preview

The University of Northwestern returns four starters off a team that went 14-13 (11-5 UMAC). The Eagles are paced by Caleb Hageman, who tallied 14.4 points and 4.3 rebounds per game last season. Hageman shoots at a 38.2 percent clip from behind the three-point line. In addition, Tanner Youngberg is back after notching 12.9 points and 8.0 rebounds per game last season. Brady Bellefeuille is also back after tallying 8.1 points and 3.8 rebounds last season. He shot 41.9 percent from beyond the arc. Anderson Bazile, Jr. is also back after tallying 8.0 points per game last season.

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Colton Simmer also earned starting time last season with 15.5 minutes per game. Simmer averaged 4.9 points and 3.0 rebounds per game last season. John Erickson is the only other player from last year's roster that played in a game that returns for the Eagles. He tallied 1.9 points per game last season.

Northwestern-St. Paul averaged 73.1 points per game and allowed 71.6 points per contest to their opponents last season. The Eagles shot 45.6 percent from the field and 35.3 percent from beyond the arc. Northwestern outrebounded teams 34.4 to 32.0 on the 2017-18 season.

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PLAYERS MENTIONED ▾	
#0 Harrison Cleary G / 6' 1" / Sophomore	#22 Aaron Hollcraft G / 6' 0" / Junior
#21 Chase Johnson F / 6' 8" / Sophomore	#25 Chase Knickerbocker G/F / 6' 7" / Junior
#24 Gable Smith F / 6' 7" / Redshirt Junior	#13 Darin Viken G / 6' 1" / Junior
#2 Ben Juhl G / 6' 1" / Freshman	#14 Brian Sitzmann G / 6' 4" / Freshman
#20 Joey Meyer F/C / 6' 8" / Freshman	#12 Malcolm Cohen G/F / 6' 6" / Junior




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