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Golden Eagles Wrap Up Historic Regular Season with Giant Weekend at UMD, SCSU

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MBBNOTES

The Minnesota Crookston men's basketball team will look to end their historic 2018-19 regular season on a high note. This year's Golden Eagles will no doubt go down as one of the best teams in Minnesota crookston history. So far, the Golden Eagles have set records in wins (16), conference wins (9) and wins inside Lysaker Gymnasium (13). This weekend, the Golden Eagles will look to sweep the season series from the Bulldogs and Huskies for the first time in school history. In early January, the Golden Eagles took care of the North division foes with a dominant 76-57 victory over SCSU and a 96-88 victory in a high-scoring affair over the Bulldogs. In that 19-point win over the Huskies, the Golden Eagles did an excellent job against the all-time leading scorer in the conference, Gage Davis, who was held to just 10 points, well below his season average of 25 PPG. The 10 points for Davis was his lowest scoring output of the season. In the win over UMD, the Golden Eagles made 12 threes and shot an outstanding 58.3 percent from the field, their highest total in a single game this season. The Golden Eagles will hope that the defense against one of the best players in the nation and the best shooting carries into this weekend in Duluth and St. Cloud. The Bulldogs and Golden Eagles tip-off at 7:30 p.m., Friday night. The Golden Eagles wrap up the regular season with a date with the Huskies of St. Cloud State. Tip-off is set for 5:30 p.m., Saturday night.

MOMENTUM. The four game homestand seemed to help the Golden Eagles figure out a lot of things that went missing during the previous four game road trip. After getting swept in back-to-back weeks, the Golden Eagles went 3-1 inside Lysaker Gymnasium, with the only loss coming at the hands of Minot State last Friday night. In the four games, Minnesota Crookston gave up just 65.5 PPG, while shooting 72.8 PPG, good for a +7.3 margin. The Golden Eagles seem to be playing well at the exact right time and they will look to continue that solid play this weekend.

OFFENSE WINS GAME, BUT DEFENSE WINS CHAMPIONSHIPS. The Golden Eagles are in the top ten in total team defense, giving up 72.2 PPG, good for seventh in the conference. When the Golden Eagles hold their opponents to 65 or less points, they are tough to beat. The Golden Eagles have held opponents to 65 points or less in nine games this season and they have won every game when they have played stingy defense like that. Defense is key for any team to be successful, but when the Golden Eagles allow 65 points or less, they are almost unbeatable.

LET'S CHANGE THAT. Since entering the NSIC, Minnesota Duluth and St. Cloud State has had Minnesota Crookston's number at home. The Golden Eagles have never won in Duluth and St. Cloud, but will look to change that this weekend. The Golden Eagles will also look to get their first win away from Lysaker Gymnasium this season.

HISTORIC HARRISON. *Harrison Cleary* has seen his stock rise over the course of this season. Cleary is averaging 21.5 PPG this season, good for fifth in the NSIC and has climbed his way up the NSIC and school scoring charts this season. Cleary now sits in 4th place all-time in the conference after passing Cameron McCaffery in the win on Saturday. Cleary also surpassed Joe Hazz on the schools scoring list with just 34 points away from 2,000 points in his three-year career as a Golden Eagle. Cleary is also averaging a 4.0 APG on the season, which puts him at 8th in the conference. Cleary has scored 20 points in 16 games this season, including an 11 game stretch from early December to mid-January where he scored 20 or more points in 10 of those games, which started with a 47 point game against Minnesota State University Moorhead. Cleary has had an excellent junior season and hopes to extend his third year at Minnesota Crookston with a trip to the Pentagon.

HISTORIC CLASS. This year's senior class that have worn the maroon and gold for four seasons, while *Gable Smith* has worn it five, will go down as the class that helped pave the way for future success at Minnesota Crookston. *Chase Knickerbocker*, *Aaron Hollcraft*, *Darin Viken*, *Gable Smith* and *Nate Lorenz* (All-Purpose Guy this season) went from three wins in their first season, to 16 this season. *Josh Collins*, who was a mid-year transfer from the University of North Dakota last winter has also played a huge part in helping pave the way. As these six seniors get ready for their last regular season game of their careers, they can only hope that history keeps on being made this season for Minnesota Crookston.

MR. COLLINS. No, not the famous Phil Collins, who was one of the more famous singers in the 1980's, who's hit song "In the Air Tonight," still graces the airwaves of many radio stations. Instead, Minnesota Crookston has their own Mr. Collins, Josh, who has made a huge impact this season. Collins, the Minneapolis, Minn., native, is averaging 8.1 PPG and 4.9 RPG on the season and has been matched up with some of the best players in the conference, including Gage Davis, who the Golden Eagles will see this weekend.

BUEN JUGADOR DE BALENCESTO. That's Spanish for good basketball player. *Javier Nicolau*, the native of Castellon, Spain has been a huge asset as of late for the Golden Eagles. Nicolau has used his length and athleticism on the defensive end to his advantage. Offensively might be the biggest improvement to Nicolau's impressive season so far. The junior is shooting 54.5 percent from the field on the season and is shooting 43.8 percent from behind the three point line. All of Nicolau's seven three point makes have come in the last eight games, including two makes against Sioux Falls and Concordia-St. Paul. Nicolau has been big for Minnesota Crookston and will look to continue that strong stretch this weekend in the final two games for the Golden Eagles.

FIRST TIME FOR EVERYTHING. With a split this past weekend, the Golden Eagles did something that no other team in school history has done and that is finish the season at 500 or better in the division two era. With the twelve point victory over the Marauders of UMary, the Golden Eagles moved to 16-13 on the season, and with only three guaranteed games left in the season, the Golden Eagles are guaranteed to finish at least .500. The Golden Eagles hope that there are more than three games left, but the historic season keeps getting better for Minnesota Crookston.

GIANT WEEKEND. This weekend's road games are arguably two of the biggest games in program history up to this point. The Golden Eagles are juggling for seeding heading into the final weekend. Minnesota Crookston is tied with Minot State at 9-11 in the north, but the Beavers do have the tie-breaker over the Golden Eagles by beating them twice. The Beavers are at home for the final weekend, but play two of the top three teams in the North division in Minnesota State University Moorhead.

Minnesota Crookston Golden Eagles

Head Coach: **Don Weiss**
Record at UMC: **44-95 Season at UMC: Fifth Season**

Minnesota Duluth Bulldogs

Head Coach: **Justin Wieck**
Record at UMD: **15-9 Season at UMD: First Season**

St. Cloud state huskies

Head Coach: **Matt Reimer**
Record at SCSU: **93-58 Season at SCSU: Fifth Season**

Minnesota Crookston at Minnesota Duluth

Date: **Fri., Feb. 22**
Time: **7:30 p.m.**
Video: <https://portal.stretchinternet.com/umd/>
Live Stats: <https://portal.stretchinternet.com/umd/>
Series Record: **Minnesota Duluth leads 30-5**
Last Meeting: **The Golden Eagles won the last matchup 96-88 on Jan. 5, 2019 in Crookston**
Trends: **The Golden Eagles have won two out of three in this matchup**
Refs: **Rhett Lamoreaux, Ted Krize, Darren Sheldon**

Minnesota Crookston at St. Cloud State

Date: **Sat., Feb. 123**
Time: **5:30 p.m.**
Video: <https://portal.stretchinternet.com/scsu/>
Live Stats: <https://scsubuskies.com/sidearmstats/mbball/summary>
Series Record: **SCSU leads 24-4**
Last Meeting: **The Golden Eagles won the last matchup 76-57 on Jan. 4, 2019 in Lysaker Gymnasium**
Trends: **The Huskies have won three out of the past five meetings**
Refs: **Doug Votava, Josh Klem, Travis Gardner**

Minnesota Crookston

Projected Starters
Jr. PG 0 **Harrison Cleary** (6-1 180, Oak Creek, Wis.) 21.5 PPG 3.0 RPG 4.1 APG
R-Fr. SG 14 **Brian Sitzmann** (6-4 192, Savage, Minn.) 2.7 PPG 2.3 RPG
R-Fr. G/F 12 **Malcolm Cohen** (6-6 210, Detroit, Mich.) 8.8 PPG 3.1 RPG
Sr. PF 30 **Josh Collins** (6-6 230, Minneapolis, Minn.) 8.1 PPG, 4.9 RPG
Jr. F/C 44 **Javier Nicolau** (6-10 220, Castellon, Spain) 4.3 PPG, 3.0 RPG
Top Bench Players
So. G 2 **Ben Juhl** (6-1 186, Clive, Iowa) 8.7 PPG 2.1 RPG 1.4 APG
Sr. G 13 **Darin Viken** (6-1 200, Fosston, Minn.) 2.7 PPG, 2.1 RPG
R-Sr. C 24 **Gable Smith** (6-7 225, Lodi, Wis.) 4.9 PPG, 4.8 RPG, 2.5 BPG
R-So. F 21 **Chase Johnson** (6-8 240, La Crosse, Wis.) 3.8 PPG, 4.1 RPG
Sr. SF 25 **Chase Knickerbocker** (6-7 210, Annandale, Minn.) 11.2 PPG, 4.2 RPG

Minnesota Duluth

Projected Starters
Jr. G 1 **Logan Rohrschell** (6-2 185, Eau Claire, Wis.) 11.1 PPG 1.5 RPG
Fr. G 3 **Hunter Plamann** (6-1 180, Appleton, Wis.) 6.3 PPG 2.0 RPG
Sr. G 4 **Mamadou Ngom** (6-3 170, Minneapolis, Minn.) 22.0 PPG 10.4 RPG 2.8 APG
Jr. F 10 **Brandon Myer** (6-7 195, Superior, Wis.) 15.2 PPG 10.4 RPG 2.8 APG
Top Bench Players
Sr. F 11 **Sean Burns** (6-5 213, Robbinsdale, Minn.) 15.2 PPG 7.2 RPG
Jr. G 2 **Trevor Entwisle** (5-11 170, Neenah, Wis.) 5.1 PPG 2.2 RPG
Sr. F 14 **Ryan Kaczynski** (6-4 200, Shoreview, Minn.) 2.3 PPG 2.3 RPG
Jr. G 25 **Cody Tomlinson** (6-3 180, Ashland, Wis.) 2.1 PPG
So. F 40 **Jake Paper** (6-7 225, Fargo, N.D.) 4.6 PPG 2.4 RPG
St. Cloud State
Projected Starters
Sr. G 10 **Brindley Thiesen** (6-2 190, St. Cloud, Minn.) 15.4 PPG 2.2 APG
Sr. G 12 **Adam Heede-Anderson** (6-0 190, Copenhagen, Denmark) 3.8 PPG 2.0 RPG
R-Sr. G 20 **Gage Davis** (6-4 185, Bolingbrook, Ill.) 25.1 PPG 7.7 RPG 3.0 APG
Sr. F 40 **Sean Smith** (6-8 195, Athens, Ga.) 13.5 PPG 8.0 RPG
Jr. G 42 **Diamond Onwuka** (6-8, Barcelona, Spain) 7.0 PPG 5.3 RPG
Top Bench Players
Jr. G 4 **Trevon Marshall** (6-0 160, Evanston, Ill.) 6.2 PPG 2.2 RPG
Sr. G 10 **Jace Kitchen** (6-6 200, DeKalb, Ill.) 8.8 PPG 2.9 RPG
Fr. F/C 34 **Ethan Scheumer** (6-6, Lombard, Ill.) 2.0 PPG 1.4 RPG

MINNESOTA DULUTH BULLDOGS. The Bulldog's head into this weekend's series with an overall record of 15-9 and 12-8 in the NSIC. Minnesota Duluth sits in fourth place in the North, just one spot above Minnesota Crookston. After a big win against Minnesota State Moorhead, the Bulldogs look to continue their win streak on Friday against the Golden Eagles.

HIS PLAY IS SUPERIOR. Brandon Myer, a 6'7" junior forward from Superior, Wis., has played an important role for the Bulldogs this season. Myer is averaging 22 PPG (505 this season) and 10 Reb/G (239 this season), and has had 11 double-doubles this season, the most in the NSIC. After earning a much-deserved fourth NSIC North Division Player of the Week honor, Myer will be a player to watch this weekend.

HE WILL BURN(S) YOU. Sean Burns is another key player for the Bulldogs. The 6'5" senior forward from Robbinsdale, Minn. has made 24 starts during the 2018-2019 season, is scoring 15.2 PPG, and has scored 364 points total. On defense, he has come out big, 119 of his 180 rebounds are defensive. He will be a threat to the Minnesota Crookston offense.

LEAVE IT TO LOGAN. Junior guard from Eau Claire, Wisc., Logan Rohrschell, does a little bit of everything for the Bulldogs. In 783 minutes, he has helped Minnesota Duluth with their success this season. Rohrschell is averaging 11.1 PPG (266 this season) and has had 36 assists.

ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY HUSKIES. In second place in the NSIC North, the St. Cloud State Huskies have had nothing short of a phenomenal season. They head into this weekend's games with a 19-7 overall record and 14-6 NSIC record. Coming off of a big win against Northern State, the Huskies hope to continue their win streak and defeat the Golden Eagles at home in St. Cloud, Minn.

GAGE BUCKETS. Redshirt senior from Bolingbrook, Ill., Davis Gage, has made a real name for himself on the court. He has had 653 points this season, second in the NSIC, and is averaging 25.1 PPG. He has been a key player on defense as well, 145 of his 199 rebounds are defensive. The 6'4" guard has also had 77 assists and 33 steals. Davis is also in the top ten in Division II in points per game with 25.1 PPG.

SMITH SWATS SHOTS. Leading the NSIC with 100 blocks is senior Sean Smith, from Athens, Ga. The 6'8" guard is a huge help on defense, with 161 defensive rebounds and 32 steals. He has also had 350 points this season and 85 assists. He looks to continue his strong season this weekend against Minnesota Crookston.

SHARPSHOOTER. Shooting 15.4 PPG (400 points on the season) is senior guard, Brindley Thiesen. The native from St. Cloud, Minn., has started all 26 games and has played 948 minutes. Within those minutes, he has had 25 assists, 12 steals, and 2 blocks. Thiesen is also tied for third in all of Division II with 90 three-point makes and is sixth in the nation with 3.75 three point makes per game. Thiesen is one of the best three-point shooter in the nation and will be key against Minnesota Crookston this weekend.

#5StoryLines

1. Can Minnesota Crookston get the elusive first true road win of the season?
2. Can the Golden Eagles sweep the season series against both of these teams?
3. Can the bench continue to be productive?
4. Can *Harrison Cleary* continue to climb up the NSIC scoring charts?
5. Will the defense continue to be a strong point for the second straight week?

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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 / 6' 7" / Junior
#34 Nate Lorenz F / C / 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	#12 Malcolm Cohen G / 6' 6" / Junior

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