



Men's Basketball | 2/26/2019 11:34:00 PM | Shawn D. Smith, Director of Athletic Communications

Minnesota Crookston Opens NSIC/Sanford Health Tournament at Augustana Wednesday



Minnesota Crookston Golden Eagles
Head Coach: [Dan Weisse](#)
Record at UMC: 44-97 Season at UMC: Fifth Season

UMCAUGIEZ

Augustana Vikings
Head Coach: Tom Billeter
Record at AUGIE: 305-176 Season at AUGIE: 16th Season

NSIC/Sanford Health Men's Basketball Tournament
Minnesota Crookston at Augustana

Date: Wed., Feb. 27
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Location: Sioux Falls Arena, Sioux Falls, S.D.
Video: <https://portal.stretchinternet.com/augie/>
Live Stats: <https://goaugie.com/sidearmstats/mbball/summary>
Series Record: Augustana leads 17-2
Last Meeting: Northern State won 88-75 in Crookston, Minn. Dec. 8, 2018
Trends: Augustana won the last game in the series
Last Win: Minnesota Crookston won 70-60 in Crookston, Minn. Feb. 2, 2018
Officials: Brad Yorkovich, Stacy Jameson, Reggie Jackson
Radio: 1260 KROX AM/105.7 FM (Leo Blavin, Play by Play)
Winner Advances to Play Winner of Minnesota Duluth/Winona State Sun., March 3 at 2:30 p.m. at the Sanford Pentagon in Sioux Falls, S.D.

Minnesota Crookston Projected Starters

Jr. PG 0 [Harrison Cleary](#) (6-1 180, Osk Creek, Wis.) 21.8 PPG, 3.0 RPG, 4.1 APG
R-Fr. SG 14 [Brian Sitzmann](#) (6-4 192, Savage, Minn.) 7.0 PPG, 2.4 RPG
R-Jr. SF 12 [Malcolm Cohen](#) (6-6 210, Detroit, Mich.) 8.5 PPG, 3.0 RPG
Sr. PF 30 [Josh Collins](#) (6-6 230, Minneapolis, Minn.) 8.0 PPG, 4.9 RPG
Jr. C 44 [Javier Nicolau](#) (6-10 215, Castellon, Spain) 4.3 PPG, 3.1 RPG
Top Bench Players
Sr. SF 25 [Chase Knickerbocker](#) (6-7 210, Annandale, Minn.) 11.6 PPG, 4.1 RPG
R-Sr. C 24 [Cable Smith](#) (6-7 225, Lodi, Wis.) 4.9 PPG, 4.5 RPG, 1.9 BPG
So. SG 7 [Ben Juhl](#) (6-1 186, Clive, Iowa) 8.0 PPG, 2.0 RPG
Sr. G 13 [Darin Viken](#) (6-1 200, Fosston, Minn.) 2.6 PPG, 2.0 RPG
R-So. F 21 [Chase Johnson](#) (6-8 240, La Crosse, Wis.) 3.6 PPG, 4.1 RPG

Augustana Projected Starters

Fr. PG 21 A.J. Plitzuweit (6-2 165, Vermillion, S.D.) 14.6 PPG, 3.1 RPG, 4.2 APG
So. SG 23 Matt Cartwright (6-4 180, Sioux Falls, S.D.) 16.0 PPG, 4.3 RPG
Fr. SG 1 Dylan LeBrun (6-6 190, Flandreau, S.D.) 9.0 PPG, 5.6 RPG
Fr. SF 24 Michael Schaefer (6-6 205, St. Cloud, Minn.) 13.7 PPG, 6.0 RPG
Fr. PF 33 Trevor Hanson (6-8 225, Volga, S.D.) 10.0 PPG, 4.9 RPG
Top Bench Players
So. F 25 Tyler Riemersma (6-8 215, Bloomington, Minn.) 14.0 PPG, 8.5 RPG
So. G 10 Jameson Bryan (5-10 160, Apple Valley, Minn.) 5.6 PPG, 2.4 RPG
Fr. G 11 Eric Tiedman (6-6 195, Jordan, Minn.) 2.5 PPG, 1.6 RPG

The Minnesota Crookston men's basketball team opens up the first round of the NSIC/Sanford Health Tournament as the No. 7 seed in the NSIC North. The Golden Eagles finished the regular-season in a three-way tie for fifth place. Minnesota Crookston will take on No. 2 seed in the NSIC South Augustana University Wed., Feb. 27 at 7:30 p.m. at Sioux Falls Arena in Sioux Falls, S.D. The winner will advance to the Sanford Pentagon in Sioux Falls, S.D., to face the winner of University of Minnesota Duluth and Winona State University Sun., March 3 at 2:30 p.m. in Sioux Falls, S.D.

SENIOR-LED TEAM. The Golden Eagles have several players who have been a huge part of the journey of going from a three-win team in 2015-16 to a 16-win team in 2018-19. Minnesota Crookston has five seniors on the squad including [Chase Knickerbocker](#), [Josh Collins](#), [Darin Viken](#), [Cable Smith](#), and [Aaron Hollcraft](#). The core will be huge as Minnesota Crookston enters post-season play looking for their first trip in program history to the Sanford Pentagon. The Golden Eagles will come against a great program in Augustana, who won the NCAA Division II title for the 2015-16 season. The Vikings are a very young squad in 2018-19, as they have no seniors, and the oldest player in their rotation is a sophomore.

SIoux FALLS ALL THE WAY. If Minnesota Crookston continues to win in the tournament it will be all done in Sioux Falls, S.D., as they will play their first round at Sioux Falls Arena, and any ensuing games at the Sanford Pentagon.

BREAKING THE ROAD WOES. Minnesota Crookston has put together solid games on the road but they are looking to get over the hump and get a victory away from Lysaker Gymnasium as they open up NSIC/Sanford Health Tournament play. The Golden Eagles last won in NSIC road action Dec. 16, 2017 in Bemidji, Minn.

MISTER 2,000. [Harrison Cleary](#) became the first person in school history to score 2,000 points in a career last weekend. The best thing though is he is not done yet, as he still as one year remaining with Minnesota Crookston. Cleary currently has 2,018 career points for the Golden Eagles. The all-time record in points in NCAA Division II is held by Travis Grant from Kentucky State University with 4,045 career points from 1969-72. The best output in the last 20 years was achieved by Ron Christy of Post University with 2,516 points. Cleary has a chance to surpass Christy, as he has averaged 672.7 points per season in his three years with the Golden Eagles.

MAJOR ROAD BLOCK. [Cable Smith](#) has been a blocking machine in his career with 282 blocks in his time in the Maroon and Gold. Smith has had a down year from last season with 50 blocks for the Golden Eagles, but he is still averaging 1.9 blocks per game. Smith is ranked all-time in NCAA Division II with his 282 career blocks. He is currently 21st all-time in NCAA Division II. He needs three blocks to surpass Kevin Thompson of Eckerd, who is ranked 20th all-time from 1993-96.

THE CLIMB. [Harrison Cleary](#) ended the regular season third all-time in the NSIC with 1,522 points. Cleary needs two points to move past Ryan Bruggeman of Southwest Minnesota State University, who has 1,523 career points. Cleary needs 411 points to surpass Gage Davis for the NSIC record. Davis set the mark with 1,932 career points at St. Cloud State University.

CHASING 1,000. [Chase Knickerbocker](#) could potentially become the fourth player in school history to score 1,000 points. Knickerbocker will be aided if the Golden Eagles continue their season. Knickerbocker has scored 944 career points. He needs 56 points to join [Harrison Cleary](#), Joe Hasz, and Akeem Cubie in the 1,000 points. Knickerbocker is averaging 11.6 points per game.

THAT'S SAVAGE. Minnesota Crookston redshirt freshman [Brian Sitzmann](#), a native of Savage, Minn., continues to grow as a player for the Golden Eagles. Sitzmann averaged 7.5 points and 4.0 rebounds per game last weekend. Sitzmann has tallied eight games with 10 or more points.

SPANISH SPARKPLUG. [Javier Nicolau](#), a Junior from Castellon, Spain has continued to be a big contributor for Minnesota Crookston. Nicolau is averaging 10.1 points and 5.5 rebounds per game in the last eight games. Nicolau will look to continue his strong play as of late.

MALCOLM IN THE MIDDLE. [Malcolm Cohen](#) has been a major factor for the Golden Eagles. Cohen is averaging 8.8 points per game in the last seven games for the Golden Eagles. Cohen notched 15 points against Concordia-St. Paul. He has tallied 11 games with 10 or more points this season for the Golden Eagles.

THREE BALL. The three ball has been of vital importance for the Golden Eagles as they come into the weekend in second in the NSIC in three-point shooting percentage at 40.9 percent. The Golden Eagles are averaging 9.2 three-pointers per game. Minnesota Crookston has been led by [Darin Viken](#) from beyond the arc with 52.9 percent of his three-point shots going in this season. [Harrison Cleary](#) comes in shooting 45.2 percent, while [Chase Knickerbocker](#) is hitting at a 40.1 percent clip. [Ben Juhl](#) comes in hitting at a 44.3 percent clip, while [Javier Nicolau](#) is shooting 47.1 percent.

AUGUSTANA UNIVERSITY VIKINGS. Augustana comes into the conference tournament sitting in second place in the NSIC South with an 18-10 (14-8 NSIC) record. The Vikings seem to be heating up at the right time as they have finished the season on a five game win streak. Augustana will have home court advantage and bring a 9-4 home record to the tournament. The Vikings averaged 77.8 points per game on 44.5 percent shooting during the regular season.

CARTWRIGHT FOR THREE. Matt Cartwright is a Sophomore guard that is the teams leading scorer. He has started in all 28 games and is averaging 16 points per game. Cartwright is shooting 45.6 percent from beyond the arc and 88 percent at the free throw line. Matt Cartwright had 15 points in his last time out against Southwest Minnesota State. In the conference tournament Cartwright will look to stay dominant on offense and take high percentage shots.

PLITZUWEIT A MINUTE. Is a Freshman guard who is playing like he has been in a Vikings uniform for years. Plitzuweit has played in 24 games and is averaging 14.6 points per game and a team leading 4.2 assist per game while shooting 88.9 percent from the free throw line. A.J. Plitzuweit did not play against Southwest Minnesota State but started the day before against Sioux Falls. He scored 13 points and dished out nine assist on the night. Plitzuweit will look to impact the game in more ways than one in the conference tournament like he has been doing all season long.

IN THE NAVY...PREVIOUSLY. Tyler Riemersma is transfer from United States Naval Academy and has been injured for almost half of the season but is back. Riemersma is averaging 14 points per game along with 8.5 rebounds. With Riemersma in the lineup the Vikings are at full strength. Against Minnesota Southwest State Riemersma came off the bench and scored eight points and grabbed 12 rebounds. Tyler Riemersma will look to give the Vikings another option offensively and assert himself in the low post to help the Vikings in the conference tournament.

#5StoryLines

1. Can Minnesota Crookston get their first-ever NSIC/Sanford Health Tournament win?
2. Can the Golden Eagles get a win over an NSIC foe on the road for the first time since December of 2017?
3. Can Minnesota Crookston defend the three?
4. Can the Golden Eagles be big on the glass?
5. Who will step up off the bench for Minnesota Crookston?

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

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