



Baseball | 2/10/2015 2:47:00 PM | Shawn Smith, Sports Information Director

2015 UMC Baseball Preview



CROOKSTON, Minn. - The University of Minnesota Crookston baseball program will open up a new era this week as they get under way in their first season under new Head Coach [Steve Gust](#). An East Grand Forks, Minn. native, Gust will look to resurrect a program that has gone 2-89 in the last two seasons. Gust comes over from Dakota Wesleyan University, where he helped lead the NAIA program to over 150 wins in his six seasons, including capturing the 2009 Great Plains Athletic Conference (GPAC) Tournament Championship and a NAIA National Tournament spot. During his time with the Tigers, four of his six squads placed in the top four of the GPAC.

Gust will look to help UMC make the same transformation beginning in 2015, with former DWU player [Michael Lukkason](#), a fellow East Grand Forks product, by his side as an assistant. Lukkason was an NAIA Honorable Mention All-American in 2013 as a short stop and an All-GPAC selection as a junior and senior. Lukkason will serve as the team's hitting and infield coach, while Gust will coach the pitchers.

[Alex Sumner](#), another former player for Dakota Wesleyan, will serve as a volunteer assistant coach.

Catchers

[Cotton Haight](#) (Jr., C, Buffalo, Minn./Sports and Rec Management), a two-year starter at catcher who has caught almost every game of his collegiate career, returns behind the plate for the Golden Eagles in 2015. Haight will be a leader for the Golden Eagles, helping mentor UMC's pitchers. Haight hit .227 in 42 games played last season with eight doubles, 12 runs batted in and eight runs scored.

[Zach Frazier](#) (R-Fr., C, Grand Rapids, Minn./Natural Resources) will back up Haight at catcher after redshirting his first season in the Maroon and Gold.

First Base

[Ryan Haggstrom](#) (Jr., 1B/P, Apple Valley, Minn./Finance) returns as a starter at first base for the Golden Eagles. Haggstrom will be a leader for the Golden Eagles in the infield after starting 48 games last season with a .266 batting average. Haggstrom also had a breakout year at the plate, hitting .359 with 28 runs scored, seven doubles, four triples and 20 RBI's with a .449 slugging percentage.

[Kenny Perez](#) (Jr., DH/1B, Orlando, Fla.) comes in from Riverland Community College, where he hit .315 with four home runs and 40 runs batted in last season. [Brandon Kresl](#) (So., 1B, Crookston, Minn./Management) also returns for depth at first. Kresl appeared in nine games as a freshman.

Middle Infield

The Golden Eagles have three new players in the middle infield for the 2015 season. UMC will utilize two transfers from Dakota Wesleyan University, where Gust was previously the head coach. [Patrick Amerson](#) (So., 2B/SS, Eloy, Ariz./Management) and [David Anaya](#) (So., IF, Tucson, Ariz./Health Science) will play key roles, as will local product [Ethan Mushitz](#) (Fr., IF, East Grand Forks, Minn./Criminal Justice). [Cody Magsam](#) (Fr., Crookston, Minn./Management), another local product, will redshirt his initial season with the Golden Eagles.

Third Base

Junior college transfers [Thomas Kinsella](#) (Jr., IF, North Branch, Minn.), an Anoka Ramsey Community College product, and [Colt Trebesch](#) (Jr., IF, Glencoe, Minn./Elementary Education), a Mesabi Range Community College product, will battle for time at third base.

Outfield

Returnees [Patrick Higgins](#) (So., OF, Eagan, Minn./Criminal Justice) and [Jesse Jennings](#) (Sr., OF, Robbinsdale, Minn./Criminal Justice) will lead the outfield corps for UMC. Higgins looks to man left field, again for UMC. The sophomore started 43 of 44 games as a freshman and was second on the team with a .266 batting average. He had four doubles, 20 runs scored and 10 RBI's. Jennings has been a three-year contributor for the Golden Eagles, starting all 46 games as a junior. Jennings hit .223 with 14 runs scored, seven doubles, two triples and one home run last season.

Brown Mackie College transfer [Dalton Parks](#) (Jr., OF, West Valley City, Utah/Sports and Rec Management) will man center field for the Golden Eagles.

Senior [Travis Magdzas](#) (OF/DH, Duluth, Minn./Criminal Justice) and freshman [Riley Thompson](#) (OF, Owatonna, Minn./Criminal Justice) will also see significant time in the outfield for the Golden Eagles. Magdzas appeared in 40 games last season, batting .230 with seven runs scored, three doubles and eight runs batted in.

Junior college transfer [Timothy Scott Jr.](#) (Jr., OF, Macon, Ga./Elementary Education), freshman [Mitchell Bornhouser](#) (Fr., OF, Northfield, Minn./Sports and Rec Management) and [Marcus Campbell](#) (Jr., OF, St. Croix Falls, Wis./Golf and Turf Management) will provide depth in the outfield.

Designated Hitter

[Kenny Perez](#) (Jr., DH/1B, Orlando, Fla.) and [Travis Magdzas](#) (Sr., OF/DH, Duluth, Minn./Criminal Justice) will battle for the designated hitter spot for the Golden Eagles. [Matt Nelson](#) (Fr., UT, Lakeville, Minn./Sports and Rec Management) will provide depth at designated hitter. Perez hit .315 with four home runs and 40 runs batted in last season at Riverland Community College. Magdzas appeared in 40 games last season, batting .230 with seven runs scored, three doubles and eight runs batted in.

Starting Pitchers

The Golden Eagles will be led by innings-eater [Pichie Navratil](#) (Sr., RHP, Blansko, Czech Republic/Management) who set the school record for innings pitched with 67 last season. Navratil made a lot of strides last season, keeping UMC in a lot of games. Navratil led the team with 30 strikeouts last season in 10 starts. The Golden Eagles also return [Trevor Buttermore](#) (Jr., RHP, North St. Paul, Minn./Criminal Justice). Buttermore picked up UMC's one win on the mound last season and pitched 54.1 innings with 26 strikeouts.

UMC welcomes back [Alan Frank](#) (Sr., LHP, St. Michael, Minn./Applied Studies) to their rotation. Frank played at UMC as a freshman in 2011 with 42.1 innings pitched and 20 strikeouts. Frank gives UMC a lefty starter. The Golden Eagle rotation will also utilize junior college transfers [Nolan Wahlberg](#) (Jr., RHP, Blaine, Minn./Criminal Justice), [Luke Thoma](#) (Jr., RHP, Little Falls, Minn./Natural Resources) and [Jarad Nelson](#) (Jr., RHP, Karlstad, Minn./Elementary Education).

Bulpen

UMC's bullpen will be led by [Cody Pamperin](#) (So., RHP, Shakopee, Minn./Golf and Turf Management), who looks to be the stopper out of the pen. Pamperin went 0-1 with a 6.70 earned runs average in 41.2 innings pitched with 27 strikeouts as a freshman. Pamperin made two quality starts for UMC late, keeping the Golden Eagles in games against Bemidji State University and Minot State University. Against BSU, Pamperin went eight innings and gave up three earned runs on eight hits with two strikeouts. Against Minot State, he went 7.1 innings with five earned runs on 10 hits with seven strikeouts.

In addition to Pamperin, UMC will also utilize [Cayden Barta](#) (So., RHP, Fargo, N.D./Criminal Justice) and [Wyatt Huso](#) (R-Fr., Eagan, Minn./Agricultural Systems Management) out of the pen. Barta appeared in 14-2 innings in 10 appearances with six strikeouts as a freshman, while Huso redshirted.

Campbell, Thompson, Haggstrom and Trebesch are position players who will also have an impact out of the pen for the Golden Eagles.

Non-Conference

The Golden Eagles will open up their non-conference schedule against Washburn University Feb. 15 with games at 12 and 2 p.m. The game were moved from Sat., Feb. 14 due to weather. Washburn went 26-24 in 2014. UMC will then play Bethany College and Benedictine University at Springfield Feb. 22 at a pair of games in Lindsborg, Kan. Bethany went 23-31 in 2014. Benedictine was 23-18 during the 2014 season. Both schools are NAIA affiliates.

UMC will then head to play Dickinson State University in five games Feb. 27 through March 1 either in Beatrice, Neb. or Dickinson, N.D. based on weather. Dickinson State, a NAIA affiliate, posted a 12-40 record in 2014.

The Golden Eagles will then head to Clearwater, Fla. for their Spring Break trip from March 13 through March 17. UMC will open up against Kentucky Wesleyan College March 13 at 1 p.m. Kentucky Wesleyan, an NCAA Division II school, was 31-16 during the 2014 season. The Golden Eagles will battle Ohio Valley University, an NCAA Division II school, later that day at 5 p.m. Ohio Valley was 19-31 during the 2014 season.

UMC will take on NSIC school Upper Iowa University March 14 at 9 a.m. Upper Iowa was 11-30 on the 2014 season. The Golden Eagles will take on Saint Michaels College March 16 with games at 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. Saint Michaels, a NCAA Division II affiliate, went 7-25 in 2014.

The Golden Eagles will finish up their Florida trip against Clearwater Christian College at 5 p.m. March 17.

UMC will also take on NCAA Division I opponent University of North Dakota in non-conference play April 6 at 2 p.m. in Grand Forks, N.D.

Conference

The Golden Eagles will open up conference play right as they get back from Florida, as they take on Concordia University, St. Paul March 21 and 22 in four games in St. Paul, Minn. The Golden Bears went 28-14 in 2014. UMC will then take on Upper Iowa, again, March 28 and 29 in Fayette, Iowa in four games. They will stay on the road March 31 for a two-game mid-week series against University of Sioux Falls. The Cougars went 12-24 in 2014.

The Golden Eagles will host their home opener April 3 and April 4 with four games against Winona State University. The Warriors went 27-22 in 2014.

UMC will get back to conference play after playing North Dakota, hosting Bemidji State University in a mid-week two-game series April 8. Bemidji State went 21-22 in 2014. The Golden Eagles will remain at home, hosting Wayne State College (Neb.) in a four-game series April 11 and 12. The Wildcats were 27-24 in 2014. The Golden Eagles' home stand will continue with mid-week games April 15 against University of Minnesota Duluth. The Bulldogs were 18-23 in 2014. They will wrap up their home stretch against University of Mary April 18 and 19. The Marauders were 15-35 in 2014.

UMC will hit the road for the final time on the year, taking on Augustana College (S.D.) in two games April 22, before battling Northern State University in four games April 25 and 26. Augustana was 41-16 in 2014, while Northern State was 28-19.

The Golden Eagles will conclude their season at home against 2014 NSIC Champion Minnesota State University, Mankato, who went 48-11 on the season.

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

Follow the Golden Eagles on Facebook at Golden Eagle Sports and on Twitter at @UMCAthletics.

The University of Minnesota, Crookston is an NCAA Division II Institution and a member of the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference (NSIC). The Golden Eagle Equestrian team is a member of the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association (IHSA).

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PLAYERS MENTIONED

#24 Cayden Barta P / 6' 3" / Sophomore / R	#14 Trevor Buttermore P / 6' 2" / Junior / R
#15 Marcus "Soup" Campbell P / 6' 2" / Junior / R	#7 Zach Frazier C / 6' 3" / Redshirt Freshman / R
#8 Ryan Haggstrom 1B/P / 6' 5" / Junior / R	#18 Colton Haight C/OF / 6' 0" / Junior / R
#11 Patrick Higgins OF / 5' 10" / Sophomore / R	#17 Wyatt Huso P / 6' 2" / Redshirt Freshman / R
#2 Jesse Jennings OF / 5' 11" / Senior / R	#21 Brandon Kresl 1B / 6' 1" / Sophomore / R

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