

# Big wins and rising stars for the Golden Gophers

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Emmett Laurent and Champ Howard cover Gophers football recent victories, the soccer team's strong start, volleyball's rising momentum and exciting outlooks for the Timberwolves and Vikings.

**CHAMP HOWARD:** My name is Champ Howard and I'm with Emmett Laurent.

**EMMETT LAURENT:** Welcome back guys to the Gold Standard, really excited to be here today. And first off we're gonna start with football. So the Golden Gophers just beat Nevada 27-0 in a win this past weekend in a game where we saw Darius Taylor have over a hundred rushing yards on 11 attempts. And we saw the second shutout in a row from the Gophers. How do you feel about that Champ?

**HOWARD:** I was feeling great after that Darius Taylor run. Oh my goodness. When he cut back inside I just knew he was gone. It was beautiful.

**LAURENT:** I think he, he like used all his juice there at the end. He was really getting tired at the end there, but he put it through.

**HOWARD:** He did. The defense has been great, too.

**LAURENT:** Yeah, they had that game winning, or game sealing interception at the end there from, they had a couple interceptions, too, both weeks. Two shutouts in a row, I think, for the first time in, like, over 50 years, which is awesome.

**HOWARD:** Great to hear. I'm liking PJ a little bit more. He's been better, throwing the ball. I like it a lot.

**LAURENT:** They've been able to mix it up a little bit. Max Brosmer's kind of opened it up. He's getting a little less scared, I think, and he's just letting it go.

**HOWARD:** It does suck. I feel like we could be 3-0 right now, one field goal away. But, going into Big Ten play soon, it's gonna be pretty rough in the new Big Ten.

**LAURENT:** They play Iowa this week, so it is here. A sold out crowd, I'm pretty sure, so that's gonna be exciting. How do you feel about that game, what do you think?

**HOWARD:** I'm excited, I think Iowa's been a lot better this year, too. I mean, they had that 40 point game to start the year. I don't remember the last time Iowa did that so like, it's gonna be a lot of defense being played. I think that if we can score a couple times then we definitely have a chance to win.

**LAURENT:** Yeah, I think in that 40 point game they had three touchdowns to receivers in the game, and all of last year they had three touchdowns to receivers. So they opened it up a little bit, but they still, it's Iowa. I mean, it's gonna be it's Big Ten football. It's gonna be ground and pound. I'm probably Darius Taylor 15 plus rushes, which is expected.

**HOWARD:** Exactly, I'm excited. Should we get into a little bit of soccer too? Different kind of football? Gophers women's team has been absolutely amazing this year. 7-0-1. Their best start since 2013, when they started the year 6-0.

But it's been weird. The offense has mostly been led by Khyah Harper, who has had nine goals this season. But she didn't play the first three years of her career pretty much. Not didn't play, but she was hurt a lot. So she didn't really get to be on the field as much as she wanted to.

So she's been healthy all year, and they're finally looking really, really good. They just had their first Big Ten game. They won in the 88 minute, on a penalty kick. It was nice to see. But, going into Big Ten play, I think it's going to be really good to see what they can do, you know, we never really, we haven't really seen this out of the Gopher soccer team in a long time.

**LAURENT:** What kind of sense are you getting for what they're going to look to capitalize on in these games? What they're looking to improve on in these games?

**HOWARD:** I think that they still need to get a little bit better defensively. They're letting teams get back, but Sarah Martin, who's, she's a sophomore, but playing her first year for real. She just had, she's allowed one goal in the last four games. So with the offense being better, I think the defense definitely needs to just get a little bit better to make it against these great Big Ten teams.

**LAURENT:** I mean Big Ten play and no matter what sport Big Ten play is pretty tough, so every team's kind of getting into it. We can go to the Gophers volleyball team who is four and three right now after a, kind of interesting start to the season I would say. They went and played Stanford at the time was ranked number five. They lost in five sets.

Then they played number one Texas at the time, and they won in five sets, which was an amazing game. They battled back and forth and then they ended up losing their next couple of games to some more ranked opponents. And then they came home for their first homestand of the year, they played St. Thomas. They swept them.

Then they played Long Island University. They swept them as well. And then they finished off with Auburn and they swept them. So they have a lot of forward momentum going to Wisconsin to play in the Capital Credit Union Classic. And they play Green Bay, North Dakota and Chicago State before they come home to play number seven Wisconsin, now. And then number six Purdue, two days later.

**HOWARD:** How's the Wisconsin team been looking this year? Do you think it'll be a great game?

**LAURENT:** They started off pretty hot from the year, so they were the number three team last week, and then the new rankings came out in they're number six. They did lose a few games, but it's Wisconsin. I mean, they're always gonna be good. It's the same thing with like them and Nebraska, which they play in a couple weeks, too. It's just, it's Big Ten volleyball.

**HOWARD:** How were the girls looking in those two ranked losses?

**LAURENT:** Yeah, so in the first one versus Stanford, they had 23 service errors, which isn't great. That kind of just was the Achilles heel of the game and it automatically made them lose. Like you can't have 23 service errors and win the game.

One of the players on the team, Melani Shaffmaster was just talking about that. They recognized that after the game that there was like the game was there for us. They were up two-one actually after three sets and ended up losing.

And then in the Texas game, that was a full team effort. They all were just excited to be there. And I don't think I've ever seen them celebrate bigger after a game. They dumped water on coach Keegan Cook. They were really excited.

And then they came home and they didn't play great against St. Thomas. They won in three sets, so it's a little bit deceiving, but they kind of let them back in. And I think coach Keegan Cook was just stressing that like this is not the excellent standard that they are usually up to.

So and then they came back out versus LIU and just they kicked some butt. And they won that game. Did exactly what they're supposed to do, same thing with Auburn. And they've just had a few players, specifically Julia Hanson, who's just had an amazing start to the season.

She leads the team in kills at 97 and the next person is Lydia Grote at 68. And Julia actually didn't play very much in these last few years, so she's a junior, but she's really ready to play and I think she's excited to be able to lead the team, and just be super aggressive on the floor.

**HOWARD:** How do you think Cook's been doing in his, what second year?

**LAURENT:** Yeah, second year I mean, you know I think he's got the, he's got the team together. I think from what I, the vibe that I've gotten from the team is they are really trusting in each other and they know that last year was disappointing. Like no way to sugarcoat it. Like they started the year ranked super high and finished the season unranked before losing in the tournament.

And I think they came into the year knowing that people were going to be doubting them. But they just had to keep their head down and grind, and they scheduled those ranked games on purpose. They scheduled them to prove that what they could do, and even though they lost that first one, I think they proved that they're a great team that can compete against anyone, especially beating Texas. Because Texas was the back to back national champions.

**HOWARD:** It also helps to get those quality losses.

**LAURENT:** Yeah for sure. I mean there's no shame in losing to a fifth ranked team. And when you sweep three times at home and then you get these three next games, that I don't want to say should win, but they're the better team. Like they are, they're just better than them.

And then if they can win two or three of those games and come home and play Wisconsin, they're going to have all the confidence in the world. And then they should have all the confidence. It's a sold out arena already at Maturi. So if you want to come, you can't anymore. So there's going to be no room for anyone that's going to be electric there. And I think they're really excited for that.

**HOWARD:** That's awesome. Should we get into the NFL? Let's talk about Sam Darnold, man. I mean, he's looking amazing. Vikings are 2-0. What do you think of the season so far?

**LAURENT:** Man, I, people were picking them to win three games this year. And you know, there's obviously bias, we're from Minnesota. I was like, three games is crazy. And, I mean, Sam Darnold has looked as good as we could have hoped for him to look. Specifically, I'm

just thinking about that one throw to Jalen Nailor from the slot where he put it on his back hip.

No one else can catch that ball. The guts to throw that ball against arguably the best defense in the NFL. I couldn't be, I couldn't be more excited for what they can keep doing. And they got some tough opponents coming up, but what do you think?

**HOWARD:** I think, what if, just what if Sam Darnold wasn't the problem? I mean, what if Carolina and New York just kind of didn't give him the right options? And now he's got Justin Jefferson. What if he's the guy like for two, three, four more years? Yeah. It could be great.

**LAURENT:** Matt Rhule, Adam Gase, where his coaches come on. We got to get a better chance than that.

**HOWARD:** What did you expect from him? But, I did hear some good news on Jefferson's injury, day to day. So that's nice to hear.

**LAURENT:** Quad contusion, I think it was. He was in good spirits, but, I mean, you usually are as a player but.

**HOWARD:** But yeah, I just, after week one, I wasn't too sure. I mean, it was the Giants, you never really know. But after beating the Niners at home, it was a great game.

**LAURENT:** They honestly beat the Niners at their own game, like they did exactly and the Niners didn't play like terrible for a lot of that. I mean, Jordan Mason rushed the ball really well. They had some good plays to Kittle, but at the end of the day, they got turnovers, and they were able to get to the quarterback. I mean, I think they had that fumble, interception weird thing to the linemen.

And at that point, I was like, I think this team can really do something. Brian Flores is a crazy man. I think Brock Purdy said it to him after the game. He was like, your defensive scheme is crazy. When, like, a player's admitting that to a coach. I mean, I think you're doing something right.

**HOWARD:** Yeah. Mason might not be on Minnesota, but dang has he been good this year. Yeah, I mean never even heard of him.

**LAURENT:** Christian McCaffrey, who needs him?

**HOWARD:** Yeah, who needs him? I feel bad for the people that drafted him first overall.

**LAURENT:** Yeah, and that's why you had to that's where you had to take both of them. You just know Christian McCaffrey was gonna get hurt.

**HOWARD:** Exactly at some point. Did you hear CBS just dropped their top 100 NBA players heading into next season?

**LAURENT:** No, you got to fill me in.

**HOWARD:** For the Timberwolves Ant at number ten, they got KAT at 38, Rudy Gobert at 39, Jaden McDaniels at 62, Naz Reid at 75 and Mike Conley at 85. Six Timberwolves made the top 100.

**LAURENT:** Wow. Anthony Edwards at ten, you said.

**HOWARD:** Yep.

**LAURENT:** What do you think about that?

**HOWARD:** I don't think it's crazy. I mean what he did in the playoffs last year, he's between that nine to 13 range. Do you think the Timberwolves are real contenders this year?

**LAURENT:** Yeah, I think, I really like what they did. They got Joe Ingles, who's a, they lost Kyle Anderson, which sucks. He was a very good kind of facilitator from a big man position, but I think Joe Ingles does a lot of that and he can shoot the ball well. Kyle Anderson could not shoot the ball well. And I think just another year of continuity is going to help them even more.

I mean, I think what they said at the end of the year was they just weren't ready to play that long, which I don't know how much I buy that of Anthony Edwards being like "I'm tired." Like yeah, okay, you're 22 years old.

I think there's gonna have a different mindset this year and I think even more urgency, especially from someone like Mike Conley who knows he has three years left. And they drafted Rob Dillingham. They drafted Terrence Shannon, two guys who can score. I think Shannon might have a better year technically than Rob because he's, what, Shannon's 23? He's ready to score.

Rob's gonna be a learning curve, but when you can set the building blocks for a future point guard in Rob Dillingham and also get a player that can impact scoring. Because that's what the Timberwolves needed, I think, was scoring mostly. They just couldn't get it from anywhere when Anthony Edwards is off the floor.

**HOWARD:** Yeah, the defense is always there. I'm excited. I'm really excited for Shannon and Rob. I think that Rob with Mike Conley, one of the best things that happened in the draft was that trade. Give Rob a real mentor, one of the best mentors in the league.

**LAURENT:** I think at Kentucky, that was his biggest issue was just, maturity. I mean, I think Kentucky runs a very interesting offense. So he was bound to throw a lot of turnovers, toss the ball out of bounds. But I think Conley can help him kind of learn the actual point guard aspect. Because I think honestly the NBA is kind of coming back to the true point guard like they kind of went away from for a while.

You know, James Harden was playing point guard, shooting guard, scoring 40 points a game. But now they're kind of getting back to that true point guard if Rob Dillingham can just hone his skills playmaking I think the sky's the limit for him for sure.

**HOWARD:** Like if he can run in real offense, which I think he can. He looks like a hard worker.

**LAURENT:** I mean, I think he wants it. Yeah I mean, that's what everyone says when you get drafted that it is gonna work on his defense. But I mean, I think what the Timberwolves skill on defense they can hide him really well.

I think Tim Connelly said they can't hide him, but you can have that many good defenders from Nickeil, Jaden, Rudy. I mean even, I'll say KAT's a good defender. I mean, when he wants to be a good defender, he is a good defender. So are you in or out on Karl Anthony Towns?

**HOWARD:** I'm definitely in, definitely in like he's can be a great defender. We can, they could really have five guys that could be, if there's all defensive third team, five guys that could be in the top 15, all defensive.

**LAURENT:** They have like a scary potential lineup of like Nikeil Alexander-Walker, Terrance Shannon, Jaden McDaniels, Karl Anthony Towns, Rudy Gobert. Like that, if those all dudes buy in that's it's scary defensive lineup.

**HOWARD:** And we also just have to bring up, every Kentucky guard seems to work out. It feels like.

**LAURENT:** I mean Shai, come on.

**HOWARD:** Shai, Devin Booker, Jamal Murray, Tyrese Maxey, John Wall.

**LAURENT:** There's something going on there. I mean Coach Cal's gone, but there was something going on there.

**HOWARD:** But Rob, he's gonna be great. At his worst I think he's just gonna be a great scorer off the bench.

**LAURENT:** Like almost like a Jamal Crawford type. Like in the worst, not worst, because obviously you could bust, but in like a average scenario, he gives you 15 off the bench, which is again what they need next to like Naz Reid. There's someone off the bench to just score the ball.

**HOWARD:** Malik Monk too, that's another name. A guy just comes off the bench, went to Kentucky and gets buckets.

**LAURENT:** He's good.

**HOWARD:** All the time.

**LAURENT:** Probably should have won Sixth Man of the Year.

**HOWARD:** But I agree.

**LAURENT:** We're happy with Naz Reid.

**HOWARD:** This episode of The Gold Standard was written by Champ Howard and Emmett Laurent, and produced by Kaylie Sirovy and Ceci Heinen. Thanks for giving us a listen.

As always, feel free to send me a message to the email inbox at [akarwowski@mndaily.com](mailto:akarwowski@mndaily.com) with any questions, comments, or hot takes. Once again, I'm Champ Howard here with Emmett Laurent, and this has been the Gold Standard.