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Golden Eagles Set for Final Home Weekend of the Regular Season; Senior Night on Saturday

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By: **Hunter Plante, Assistant Director of Marketing/Communications**



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The Minnesota Crookston men's basketball team found out first-hand that sometimes, a trip out west is the best cure. The Golden Eagles played their best weekend of the season this past weekend, earning a sweep with an 8-69 win over Minot State and a 68-62 victory over UMary. The Golden Eagles had two firsts this past weekend. Their first win over Minot State since 2004 and first in the Division II era, as well as their first sweep in conference play of the season. Sometimes, all it takes is getting hot at the right time and maybe this past weekend was an indication that the Golden Eagles are playing their best ball of the season at just the right time.

PLAY OF THE SEASON? For a lot of teams that have success, there is one thing that reigns with each and every one of them: a play that propels them to future success. On Saturday night, redshirt sophomore [Brian Sitzmann](#) might have made that defining play. With the Golden Eagles leading by two, 61-59, a [Harrison Cleary](#) missed layup turned into a fastbreak attempt for the Marauders Jaylan White. Thankfully for the Golden Eagles, Sitzmann was able to swat the shot attempt right into the hands of [Malcolm Cohen](#), who then gave the ball to [Ibu Jassew Demba](#), who finished it off with a layup. It started a 7-3 run and essentially ended the game. It was a four-point swing that could change the pendulum of the Golden Eagles season.

A FIRST TIME FOR EVERYTHING. Last Friday night, the Golden Eagles faced a tough task facing Minot State. The Golden Eagles haven't beaten the Beavers in the Division II era and not since 2004. They were also going to the place where they played arguably their worst game of the season a year ago, losing to the Beavers, 92-61. On Friday, the Golden Eagles were able to erase the pain of the Beavers and defeat the Beaver, 80-69. The Golden Eagles had four players in double-figures, but held the Beavers to just 41 percent from the field. No doubt about it, it was a big win for the Golden Eagles.

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE(S). [Tyrese Shines](#), the freshman from La Grange, Ill., has been a valuable piece to the rotation for Head Coach [Dan Weisse](#) and the Golden Eagles. The former Illinois All-State performer has scored double-figures in four out of the previous seven games for the Golden Eagles, including 16 points in the historic win over Minot State last Friday. In that win over the Beavers, Shines also pulled down six rebounds, while shooting 50 percent from the field and was a perfect 8-8 from the charity stripe. The future looks to be shining bright for the Golden Eagles and Shines.

THEY CALL IT THE FREE THROW LINE FOR A REASON. Minnesota Crookston is one of the best teams not only in the conference, but the entire nation when it comes to taking advantage of the charity stripe. The Golden Eagles shoot 80.8 percent from the free throw line and were 24-32 in both games last weekend against Minot State and UMary. The Golden Eagles have six players shooting over 80 percent from the field, led by [Harrison Cleary](#), who is shooting 91.6 percent from the stripe this season, in 203 attempts. Free throws are important to any basketball game and the Golden Eagles excel at the free throw line.

FINAL FAREWELL. This weekend, it will be the final games for three Golden Eagles seniors: [Harrison Cleary](#), [Javier Nicolau](#) and [Malcolm Cohen](#). The trio has obviously been huge to the program, including setting the school record for most conference and overall wins, as well as being the first Minnesota Crookston team to advance to the NSIC Quarterfinals as juniors. Cleary, Nicolau and Cohen hope that the season is far from over, but no matter what happens the rest of the way, there's no doubt they left their mark on the program for years to come.

HOME COOKING. Honestly, it probably doesn't matter to senior [Harrison Cleary](#) where he plays basketball, but he loves to play inside of Lysaker Gymnasium. In four seasons and 54 home games, Cleary has scored exactly 1,300 points. Some of his point totals in Crookston include: 52, 47, 34 (2x), 33 (4x), 32, 31 and 30. His two highest point totals were both in wins, this year when he scored 52 on Wayne State and almost a year earlier when he did it against MSUM. Minnesota Crookston fans have seen Cleary drop about 24 points per game every time he steps on the floor inside Lysaker Gymnasium. We will see what the Oak Creek, Wis., native has in store two final times inside of Lysaker Gymnasium.

SAVE THE BEST FOR LAST. [Javier Nicolau](#) is saving some of his best performances for down the stretch. The Spaniard has scored 10 or more points in three straight games, dating back to the Concordia-St. Paul and had nine points against Minnesota State the night before. Last weekend, Nicolau averaged 10.5 points per game, including some big baskets down the stretch in both wins for the Golden Eagles. Nicolau also had two blocks against the Marauders, which is the 14th time he has had more than one block. He had a season-high five blocks in a loss to Northern State earlier this season.

PLAY THE WAITING GAME. Minnesota Crookston is currently in the sixth spot in the NSIC North, one spot ahead of UMary and two behind of Bemidji State for the five spot, although the Golden Eagles have the tiebreaker over UMary, sweeping them this season. Their opponent for the first round of the playoffs is still up in the air as well. The most likely opponents are Winona State and Minnesota State, who are tied for third in the South with a 12-8 record. The Mavericks and Winona State will play each other on Saturday in the Taylor Center. That's a game that a lot of Golden Eagle fans will have an eye on, as it could very well determine the opponent for next Wednesday.

"Look Good, Play Good"

White Jersey: 6-7

Black Jersey: 5-8

2019-20 NSIC Rankings

- Scoring Offense: 11th
- Scoring Defense: 14th
- Scoring Margin: 14th
- Free Throw Pct.: 1st
- Field Goal Pct.: 16th
- Field Goal Pct. Defense: 16th
- 3-Point Field Goal Pct.: 14th
- 3-Point Field Goal Pct. Defense: 16th
- Rebounding Offense: 16th
- Rebounding Defense: 13th
- Rebounding Margin: 16th
- Offensive Rebounds: 10th
- Defensive Rebounds: 16th
- Blocked Shots: 5th
- Assists: 15th
- Steals: 8th
- Turnover Margin: 3rd
- Assist/Turnover Ratio: 10th

Minnesota Crookston Golden Eagles

Head Coach: [Dan Weisse](#)

Record at UMC: 53-107 Season at UMC: Sixth Season

Minnesota Duluth Bulldogs

Head Coach: [Justin Wieck](#)

Record at UMD: 35-17 Season at UMD: Second Season

St. Cloud State Huskies

Head Coach: [Matt Reimer](#)

Record at SCSU: 109-73 Season at SCSU: Sixth Season

Weekly Snapshot

Minnesota Crookston

Projected Starters

- Sr. PG 0 [Harrison Cleary](#) (6-1180, Oak Creek, Wis.) 27.2 PPG, 3.2 RPG, 4.3 APG
- Rs. SG 14 [Brian Sitzmann](#) (6-4192, Savage, Minn.) 7.8 PPG, 2.7 RPG
- Rsr. SF 12 [Malcolm Cohen](#) (6-6210, Detroit, Mich.) 10.0 PPG, 3.7 RPG
- Jr. PF 10 [Ibu Jassew Demba](#) (6-7200, Birmingham, England) 5.0 PPG, 3.6 RPG
- Sr. F/C 44 [Javier Nicolau](#) (6-10220, Castellon, Spain) 7.1 PPG, 4.4 RPG

Top Bench Players

- Fr. G 13 [Tyrese Shines](#) (6-3190, La Grange, Ill.) 7.0 PPG, 2.6 RPG
- R-So. F 21 [Chase Johnson](#) (6-8240, La Crosse, Wis.) 4.2 PPG, 5.1 RPG
- R-So. G/F 25 [Zac Olson](#) (6-5225, Waterville, Minn.) 2.2 PPG
- Fr. G/F 22 [Quintin Winterfeldt](#) (6-4195, Waupun, Wis.) 2.2 PPG, 1.1 RPG

Minnesota Duluth

Projected Starters

- Sr. G 1 Logan Rohrscheib (6-2205, Eau Claire, Wis.) 10.9 PPG, 2.2 RPG
- Sr. G 2 Trevor Entwistle (5-11195, Neenah, Wis.) 6.2 PPG, 2.5 RPG
- Sr. F 10 Brandon Myer (6-8210, Superior, Wis.) 22.0 PPG, 9.2 RPG
- R/Fr. G 22 Drew Blair (6-5185, Stevens Point, Wis.) 16.0 PPG, 4.4 RPG
- Sr. G 24 Alex Illikainen (6-9235, Grand Rapids, Minn.) 14.0 PPG, 6.4 RPG

Top Bench Players

- So. G 3 Hunter Plamann (6-1190, Appleton, Wis.) 4.1 PPG, 1.6 RPG
- Fr. G 4 Jack Middleton (6-4175, Edina, Minn.) 4.7 PPG, 1.8 RPG

St. Cloud State

Projected Starters

- Sr. G 4 Trevon Marshall (6-0160, Evanston, Ill.) 21.0 PPG, 4.0 RPG
- Fr. G 20 Caleb Donaldson (6-3, Bloomington, Ill.) 8.8 PPG, 2.5 RPG
- Fr. G 22 Anthony Roberts (6-4, Chicago, Ill.) 14.3 PPG, 6.4 RPG
- Jr. G 30 Ilya Tyrtshnik (6-3, Kyiv, Ukraine) 10.4 PPG, 3.4 RPG
- Sr. F 42 Dlamond Onwuka (6-8, Barcelona, Spain) 5.8 PPG, 4.5 RPG

Top Bench Players

- Rsr. F 14 Jake Mussman (6-6205, St. Cloud, Minn.) 2.8 PPG, 1.7 RPG
- Sr. F 24 Oliver Ehrnwall (6-8, Uppsala, Sweden) 4.1 PPG, 2.3 RPG
- Sr. G 10 Andrija Blaticancic (6-7, Bergen, Norway) 9.4 PPG, 3.8 RPG

#Titbits

MINNESOTA DULUTH. Justin Wieck is in his second season at Minnesota Duluth, already building the Bulldogs into one of the NSIC's best. A season ago, UMD finished 18-11, but fell in the first round at home to Winona State. This season, the Bulldogs are 19-7 (14-6 NSIC), as they head into their final regular season series of the season. The Bulldogs looked primed to make a deep run into the postseason.

STAR-STUDDED AFFAIR. Minnesota Duluth's Brandon Myer is a tough guard for anyone, which is evident by winning his fourth NSIC North Player of the Week this past weekend, after averaging 38 points per game. On the season, Myer is averaging 22 points per game and 9.3 rebounds per game, including scoring 31 points in the loss to Northern State and 45 the very next night in a win over MSUM. Fans in Crookston will get a treat this weekend watching Myer and [Harrison Cleary](#) do battle.

GUARD THE ARC. When playing Minnesota Duluth, you always have to be aware of Myer, but you also better be on the lookout for Drew Blair and Logan Rohrscheib. The two have combined to make 114 threes on the season. Rohrscheib leads the team with 61.3-point makes, while Blair, a Northwest Missouri State transfer, is second on the team with 53 makes from deep.

HEALTHY AND CONSISTENT. The Bulldogs have done something that is very rare this late in the season: Starting the same five every game. Myer, Rohrscheib, Blair, Alex Illikainen and Trevor Entwistle have started in every game this season. All but Entwistle average over double-figures.

ST. CLOUD STATE. St. Cloud State comes into Crookston for the regular season finale in the midst of a three-game losing streak. The Huskies got swept last weekend at home at the hands of MSUM and Northern State, but will look to sweep the season series with Minnesota Crookston if they can get a win this Saturday.

NO ADJUSTMENT HERE. Freshman guard Anthony Edwards has wasted no time letting Husky fans know who he is. The Chicago, Ill., native had a stretch of 17-straight games where he scored 10 or more points, which was halted in last Saturday's loss to Northern State. Edwards scored a career-high 29 points against Minnesota State earlier this year.

INTERNATIONAL STANDOUTS. The Huskies have had to replace a lot of offense from last years team who made the NCAA Tournament. Two of those guys looking to replace the offensive output come from overseas. Junior Ilya Tyrtshnik from Ukraine, and Andrija Blaticancic are averaging more than 20 points per game as a duo. Tyrtshnik leads the team in 3-point makes with 55, while Blaticancic shoots more than 60 percent from the field and has attempted just four shots from behind the arc. They are very different players for the Huskies, but both are equally effective for St. Cloud State.

FM THE GUY. Trevon Marshall is enjoying a fantastic final season as a member of the Huskies. Previously, Marshall was playing behind star Cage Davis, but now that's the guy, he's making it known. Marshall leads the team with 21 points per game and assists with 128. The Evanston, Ill., native has just three games on the season where he has scored less than 10 points.

WHAT TO WATCH

- Can Minnesota Crookston end the regular season on a high note?
- Can the Golden Eagles continue to shoot the ball well?
- Senior Night for [Harrison Cleary](#), [Javier Nicolau](#) & [Malcolm Cohen](#)
- Seeding still up for grabs in the NSIC North.
- Minnesota Crookston has double-digit wins in three-straight years for first time in school history.

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