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## Series Preview: Women's hockey hopes momentum translates to wins versus Minnesota

FEBRUARY 12, 2016 BY JIMMY GILLIGAN LEAVE A COMMENT

BY JIMMY GILLIGAN | The Statesman

The University of Minnesota Duluth women's hockey team hopes to give their trio of seniors a positive send off from Amsoil Arena against the No. 3 University of Minnesota this weekend.

The Bulldogs want to continue building momentum as they head into the final series of the season and later in the Western Collegiate Hockey Conference playoffs.

It's a small senior class for first-year head coach Maura Crowell, consisting of goaltenders Karissa Grapp and Kayla Black and forward Michela Cava. They've been integral in helping develop the majority of younger skaters that make up this team.

"Whenever you can look around the locker room and have leadership on and off the ice for the young players, I think that's extremely valuable," Crowell said. "Our young players are getting a ton of experience this year being in all types of situations and I think that only makes us better in the long run."

The Bulldogs' development has shown as of late. After enduring a seven-game losing streak in the month of January, UMD has won their last three games. It's their first winning streak of the season.

The Bulldogs have averaged four goals for each of the last four games. Much of this is attributed to junior captain Ashleigh Brykaliuk and Michela Cava, who was named WCHA offensive player of the week this week. They both had hat tricks last weekend and have been cornerstones of the offense this season, along with fellow forward Lara Stalder.

Over the past few weekends, the scoring has spread out from UMD's top three forwards, with Katherine McGovern, Morgan Morse and Catherine Daoust each finding their way into the goal column.

Even with a three-game winning streak, the Bulldogs have a tough task on tap this weekend with the No. 3 Minnesota Gophers, who swept UMD in Minneapolis in October.

"Speed, speed everywhere," Crowell said of UMN's skillset. "They attack from everywhere and have quick transitions."

With some momentum and memory (the Bulldogs held a two-goal lead into the third period in the first game of that October series against the Gophers), Crowell is confident her team can challenge the Gophers this weekend.

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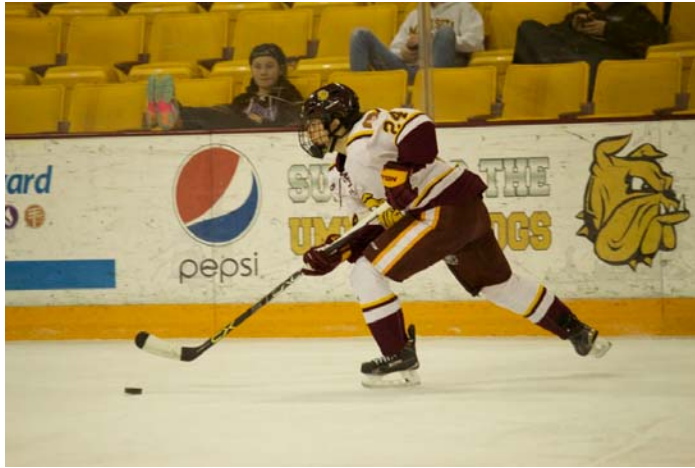
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"(Against) some of the faster, more finesse teams, I think we play better in those games so I'm expecting a good weekend for us," Crowell said.

Friday's game at Amsoil Arena is scheduled for 7:07 p.m., while Saturday's contest, which will feature a postgame ceremony honoring UMD's three seniors, will kick off at 4:07 p.m.



After recording a hat trick this past weekend, senior forward Michela Cava has had eight points in the last four games. Cava, along with fellow seniors Karissa Grapp and Kayla Black, will play her final games at Amsoil Arena this weekend. BRAD EISCHENS/STATESMAN

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