



Golden Eagles Back at Home for Second Straight Week; Cleary Needs Just 29 Points to Become All-Time NSIC Scoring Leader

1/30/2020 10:10:00 AM

By: Hunter Plante, Assistant Director of Marketing/Communications



Golden Eagles Back at Home for Second Straight Week; Cleary Needs Just 29 Points to Become All-Time NSIC Scoring Leader

- HIBNOTES1920
- SIoux FALLS PREVIEW
- SMSU GAME NOTES
- LIVE VIDEO
- LIVE STATS

The Minnesota Crookston men's basketball team is back at home for the second-straight weekend hosting Southwest Minnesota State on Friday night and the University of Sioux Falls on Saturday. Although they didn't earn a sweep this past weekend, the Golden Eagles got a giant win on Friday night against UMary, building a 37-25 lead and holding on at the end. Minnesota Crookston fell on Saturday night to Minot State, which means that the Golden Eagles are now in a three-way tie for fifth in the NSIC North, along with Bemidji State and UMary. The games will keep on getting bigger as we get into February.

CALL THE FIRE DEPARTMENT. Senior forward [Malcolm Cohen](#) has had struggles this season shooting the basketball, but on Friday night, Cohen reversed the trend and shot lights out. Cohen scored eight out of the first 10 Golden Eagle points, including two of his career-high eight 3-point makes in the first two minutes. Cohen had seven 3-point makes in the first half, including a stretch where he buried five in a matter of seven minutes. The final 3-point make of the half for Cohen brought the Golden Eagle lead to 17 and Lysaker Gymnasium into a frenzy. It was a great atmosphere on Friday night inside of Lysaker Gymnasium and Cohen's hot shooting was a big reason why.

KEEP ON SHINING. Head Coach [Dan Weisse](#) is excited about all three freshmen on the roster, but guard [Tyrese Shines](#) might be shining brightest of them all (pun intended). The freshman from La Grange, Ill., has scored more than 10 points in four of the Golden Eagles six games and has raised his average by almost four points in the previous five games. After the Northern State game on Jan. 10, Shines sat at 3.8 points per game. After the Minot State game last Saturday, Shines is averaging 6.6 points per game and 2.4 rebounds. The lefty is coming into his own and Golden Eagle fans are seeing glimpses of the future after Shines started his first two games of his Golden Eagle career last weekend.

DONT PUT US ON THE LINE. Minnesota Crookston is helped by the fact that they have one of the best free throw shooters in the country, but as a team, Minnesota Crookston is the only team in the NSIC to shoot more than 80 percent from the charity stripe. The Golden Eagles shoot 81.1 percent from the free throw line, helped by Cleary's 91.8 percent from the stripe, missing just 14 out of 171 attempts. [Malcolm Cohen](#) is 79.2 percent from the field, while [Brian Sitzmann](#) has missed just four out of 34 attempts, good for 88.2 percent. The Golden Eagles are second in the nation in free throw percentage, trailing Cedarville (OH). Free throw shooting is an important part of a basketball game and it's a part Minnesota Crookston excels at.

FOLLOW THE PLAN. Minnesota Crookston made a statement the last time they played the University of Sioux Falls. The Golden Eagles made 11 3-point field goals and were led by three double-figure scorers, including [Harrison Cleary's](#) 40 and [Brian Sitzmann's](#) 20. Defensively, Minnesota Crookston held the Cougars to just 40 percent shooting from the field. It was the Golden Eagles biggest win of the season in terms of quality of win, and the Golden Eagles will hope for much of the same this weekend, this time inside of Lysaker Gymnasium.

BETTER FINISH. In Friday night's win over the Marauders of UMary, the Golden Eagles arguably played their best half of the season, holding the Marauders to just 34.5 percent shooting from the field, including just 1-6 from behind the arc. On the flip-side of things, Minnesota Crookston shot 43.5 percent from the field, including 8-18 from the 3-point line, with the help from Cohen's career-high seven 3-point makes. In the second half, the Marauders missed just 12 shots, compared to the Golden Eagles missing 24 shots on the offensive end. The big difference was Minnesota Crookston making six 3-point field goals in the second half, compared to just one for UMary. The Marauders shot 58.6 percent from the field in the second half, which cut a once 18-point Golden Eagle lead to just two at one point. The big emphasis for Minnesota Crookston will continue to be to play a full 40 minutes.

HISTORY IN THE MAKING. In the past 3 1/2 seasons, [Harrison Cleary](#), has given Golden Eagle fans many things to cheer for and at times, as made fans jaws drop. This weekend, Cleary could make some more history and even more jaws drop. With 46 points in two games last weekend, including 27 against Minot State, Cleary is now just 29 points away from becoming the all-time conference leader in points scored in conference games. The senior set the scoring record for college basketball players in the state of Minnesota as well last Friday night. It is also a longshot, but Cleary has an outside shot of becoming the first Golden Eagle ever to reach 3,000 points. In every season at Crookston, H has had at least one game with 40 or more points, including this season where he has three, including that record-setting 52-point output in the win over Wayne State College on December 14.

NICE TO SEE YOU, IBU. [Ibu Jassey Demba](#) is starting to fit right in at Crookston. The junior college transfer from Monroe College and native of Birmingham, England is starting to find his niche and is playing a huge role for the Golden Eagles. On Friday night, with the Golden Eagles short-handed, Jassey Demba collected his first career double-double in the win over the Marauders, with 11 points and 11 rebounds, on 3-5 shooting from the field and 3-4 from the 3-point line. Jassey Demba also pulled down a career-high 11 boards, which was important with the Golden Eagles lead rebounder, [Javier Nicolau](#) out during the weekend.

BACK-TO-BACK. Last weekend, the Golden Eagles split at home with a nice win over UMary and then struggled from the field in a loss to Minot State. This weekend, the Golden Eagles are back at home for their penultimate home weekend of the season. Much like every weekend in NSIC play, it doesn't get easier for Minnesota Crookston, who plays Southwest Minnesota State on Friday night and the NSIC South leaders, Sioux Falls on Saturday.

"Look Good, Play Good"

White Jersey: 5-5
Black Jersey: 4-6

2019-20 NSIC Rankings

- Scoring Offense: 10th
- Scoring Defense: 15th
- Scoring Margin: 16th
- Free Throw Pct.: 1st
- Field Goal Pct.: 10th
- Field Goal Pct. Defense: 16th
- 3-Point Field Goal Pct.: 14th
- 3-Point Field Goal Pct. Defense: 16th
- Rebounding Offense: 16th
- Rebounding Defense: 14th
- Rebounding Margin: 16th
- Offensive Rebounds: 15th
- Defensive Rebounds: 16th
- Blocked Shots: 5th
- Assists: 16th
- Steals: 9th
- Turnover Margin: 3rd
- Assist/Turnover Ratio: 11th

Minnesota Crookston Golden Eagles

Head Coach: [Dan Weisse](#)
Record at UMC: 53-108 Season at UMC: Sixth Season

Southwest Minnesota State University Mustangs

Head Coach: [Brad Bigler](#)
Record at SMSU: 185-138 Season at SMSU: 11th Season

University of Sioux Falls Cougars

Head Coach: [Chris Johnson](#)
Record at USF: 223-151 Season at USF: 12th Season

Weekly Snapshot

Minnesota Crookston

Projected Starters

- Sr. PG 0 [Harrison Cleary](#) (6-1180, Oak Creek, Wis.) 27.7 PPG, 3.2 RPG, 4.3 APG
- RSo. SG 14 [Brian Sitzmann](#) (6-4 192, Savage, Minn.) 8.7 PPG, 2.6 RPG
- RSr. SF 12 [Malcolm Cohen](#) (6-6 210, Detroit, Mich.) 9.7 PPG, 3.2 RPG
- Jr. PF 10 [Ibu Jassey Demba](#) (6-7 200, Birmingham, England) 4.7 PPG, 3.7 RPG
- Sr. F/C 44 [Javier Nicolau](#) (6-10 220, Castellon, Spain) 6.7 PPG, 4.9 RPG

Top Bench Players

- Fr. F 20 [Drew Miller](#) (6-4 205, Appleton, Wis.) 3.3 PPG, 2.9 RPG
- Fr. C 13 [Tyrese Shines](#) (6-3 190, La Grange, Ill.) 6.6 PPG, 2.4 RPG
- R-So. F 21 [Chase Johnson](#) (6-8 240, La Crosse, Wis.) 4.4 PPG, 5.1 RPG
- R-So. G/F 25 [Zac Olson](#) (6-5 225, Waterville, Minn.) 2.3 PPG

Southwest Minnesota State

Projected Starters

- Jr. C 0 Weston Baker Magrath (6-8 237, Marshall, Minn.) 6.8 PPG, 3.8 RPG
- Fr. C 2 Cliff McCray (6-2 190, Sioux City, Iowa) 9.0 PPG, 4.4 RPG
- Jr. C 12 Nick Dufault (5-11 198, Waseca, Minn.) 12.0 PPG, 1.7 RPG, 41 3FGM
- Jr. G 13 Kenny Byers (6-4 194, Olathe, Kan.) 17.5 PPG, 7.7 RPG, 3.2 APG
- R-Fr. F 30 Brian Dayman (6-6 205, Bettendorf, Iowa) 4.2 PPG, 4.6 RPG

Top Bench Players

- Fr. F 10 Andy Stafford (6-5 189, Minnetonka, Minn.) 6.7 PPG, 2.9 RPG
- R-Fr. C 42 Jake Phipps (6-9 251, Anoka, Minn.) 5.3 PPG, 3.0 RPG
- R-Jr. F 1 Braedon Hanson (6-7 231, Grand Forks, N.D.) 3.7 PPG, 3.1 RPG

University of Sioux Falls

Projected Starters

- Fr. C 2 Jack Thompson (6-11 175, Eagon, Minn.) 9.8 PPG, 3.2 RPG
- R-Jr. F 5 Teathloach Pal (6-8 200, Fridley, Minn.) 11.1 PPG, 9.0 RPG
- R-So. C 14 Chase Grinde (6-4 200, Spring Grove, Minn.) 11.6 PPG, 5.1 RPG
- So. G 0 Troy Houghton (6-4 190, Council Bluffs, Iowa) 5.4 PPG, 2.7 RPG
- R-Jr. F 10 Austin Slater (6-9 220, Wayzata, Minn.) 10.2 PPG, 7.2 RPG

Top Bench Players

- Sr. G 11 William Lybaek (6-3 190, Trondheim, Norway) 4.5 PPG
- Jr. C 12 Trevon Adams (6-2 175, Kansas City, Mo.) 4.1 PPG, 1.3 RPG
- Sr. C 25 Devin Green (6-7 240, Cascade, Iowa) 7.9 PPG, 3.2 RPG
- Sr. G 4 Milan Surlic (6-2 175, Nis, Serbia) 5.1 PPG

#Titbits

SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA STATE. After making the NSIC Championship a season ago, the Mustangs have struggled this season. SMSU is currently 6-14 overall on the season and 3-11 in the NSIC, which is last in the NSIC South. Although the Mustangs have struggled, they do have a very nice win in triple-overtime over NSIC North leaders Minnesota Duluth. SMSU was swept at home last weekend, falling to both Winona State and Upper Iowa.

STAFFORD & SONS. Freshman guard Andy Stafford is having a solid first season as a Mustang. The Minnetonka, Minn., native is averaging 6.7 points per game on 45.3 percent shooting from the field. Stafford scored 10 points a piece in both games last weekend, both in losses to Winona State and Upper Iowa. The freshman scored a season-high 15 points in his third career start against Concordia-St. Paul.

TALE OF TWO TEAMS. When the Golden Eagles and Mustangs meet this weekend, it will be the best free throw shooting team in the conference against the worse. Statistically, the Mustangs shoot 64.3 percent from the charity strip, compared to 73.6 percent for their opponents. The Mustangs don't get to the free throw line very often, shooting just 283, compared to 409 free throw attempts for their opponents. Success at the free throw line could go a long way into determining the winner on Friday night.

LEADER OF THE HERD. Quite frankly, when Kenny Byers goes, so do the Mustangs. The junior from Olathe, Kan., leads the team in points per game with 17.5 and rebounds per game with 7.1. Byers has had 16 straight games where he has scored in double-figures, including a seven game stretch where the junior scored 20 or more points. Byers also leads the team in field goals made and field goals attempted. There's no doubt that Byers has the keys to the Mustangs' car and more often than not, he's putting the keys in the ignition and driving the car.

SIoux FALLS. After losing Drew Guebert and Trevon Evans to graduation, you would think the Cougars would struggle a little bit right? So far, the answer is no. The Cougars split last weekend, falling to Upper Iowa on Friday night, but coming back and earning a tough-earned overtime win over Winona State at home. This will be the second time this season the Golden Eagles and Cougars have met. Minnesota Crookston dominated the last meeting, defeating the Cougars by 25 in non-conference play the Tuesday before Thanksgiving.

BALANCE. Sioux Falls doesn't have a player averaging over 12 points per game. In fact, the Cougars are the only team in the conference to not have a player in the top-20 in scoring. However, the reason the Cougars have been so successful has been their balance. Chase Grinde (11), Teathloach Pal (11) and Austin Slater (10) are each averaging 10 points per game, followed by Jack Thompson's 9.8 points per game. The Cougars don't have a star offensively, but they do have balance.

SECOND CHANCES. A thing the Cougars do well is offensive rebound. Pal, Grinde and Slater each have over 30 offensive rebounds, led by Pal's 71 rebounds that have led to many second chances for the Cougars. Pal is second in the conference in offensive rebounding, trailing Augustana's Tyler Riemersma 92 offensive rebounds. The last time these two teams met, Sioux Falls had 16 offensive rebounds, leading to 17 points.

PAINT THE TOWN GREEN. Devin Green is in his final season in Sioux Falls. The senior from Cascade, Iowa is averaging 7.9 points per game on 53.8 percent shooting from the field. Green has eight games this season with 10 points or more, including 16 points against Minnesota Crookston the last time these two teams played, which at the time, was a season-high. In the win over Winona State last Saturday, Green topped that season-high, by scoring 18 points on 6-10 shooting from the field and made his only shot attempt from behind the 3-point line.

WHAT TO WATCH

1. Can Minnesota Crookston get a much-needed sweep?
2. Can [Malcolm Cohen](#) shoot the ball like he did last Friday night?
3. [Harrison Cleary](#) is just 29 points away from being the NSIC's all-time leading scorer.
4. Can Minnesota Crookston get back into the NSIC North race?
5. Will Minnesota Crookston defend the home floor?

Related Stories

Minnesota Crookston Men's Basketball Adds Versatility and Size with Signings of Landon Dimler From Mankato and Brayden Carlson From Woodbury

04.10.24

Minnesota Crookston Has Six Named to NSIC Winter All-Academic Teams

03.29.24

Hoverson Named CSC Academic All-District

03.27.24

Blaize Sagna Named to All-NSIC Second Team After Finishing Season Fifth in Conference in Points Per Game

02.29.24