



FOOTBALL



PRESEASON RELEASE
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www.northernsun.org

#NSICFB

Nick Kornder • Asst. Commissioner for Media Relations • 2999 County Road 42 West • Burnsville, MN 55306 • P: 651.288.4017 • Kornder@northernsun.org

Minnesota State University, Mankato Tabbed NSIC Preseason Coaches' Favorite



BURNSVILLE, Minn. - Minnesota State University, Mankato was selected by the league coaches as the overall and south division preseason favorite in the NSIC for 2018. The Mavericks received all 15 first place votes (coaches cannot vote for their own team) and amassed 225 points, 28 points ahead of Winona State (197), which garnered the other first place vote. Sioux Falls was a close third with 195 points while Minnesota Duluth was picked fourth overall with 194 points and was the unanimous choice in the north division.

The NSIC football schedule will be broken into two divisions (north/south). Each team will play 11 conference games that will count towards the NSIC Overall Championship as well as seven divisional games that will count towards the NSIC North/South Division Championships. In all, three league champions will be awarded (Overall Champion, North Division Champion, South Division Champion). Ties will not be broken for overall or division champions. New for the 2018 season, the four non-division games will be moved to weeks five through eight and divisional games will be weeks one through four and nine through 11.

MidcoSN will continue its partnership in 2018 as the "NSIC Thursday Night Game of the Week", will air live the first four weeks of the season from August 30 through September 20. The live football broadcast schedule will also include four Saturday games during the season.

PRESEASON NSIC FOOTBALL COACHES POLL

| Overall | Points |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Minnesota State (15) | 225 |
| 2. Winona State (1)..... | 197 |
| 3. Sioux Falls..... | 195 |
| 4. Minnesota Duluth..... | 194 |
| 5. Bemidji State | 165 |
| 6. Augustana | 148 |
| 7. St. Cloud State..... | 133 |
| 8. Northern State..... | 114 |
| 9. Wayne State | 111 |
| 10. MSU Moorhead..... | 99 |
| 11. Upper Iowa | 96 |
| 12. Southwest Minnesota State | 69 |
| 13. Minot State | 63 |
| 14. Concordia-St. Paul..... | 62 |
| 15. University of Mary | 34 |
| 16. Minnesota Crookston | 15 |

first place votes in ()

PRESEASON NSIC FOOTBALL COACHES POLL

| North Division | Points |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Minnesota Duluth (7) | 49 |
| 2. Bemidji State | 42 |
| 3. St. Cloud State (1)..... | 33 |
| 4. Northern State..... | 32 |
| 5. MSU Moorhead..... | 26 |
| 6. Minot State | 20 |
| 7. University of Mary | 15 |
| 8. Minnesota Crookston | 7 |

first place votes in ()

PRESEASON NSIC FOOTBALL COACHES POLL

| South Division | Points |
|------------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Minnesota State (7) | 49 |
| 2. Winona State (1)..... | 43 |
| 3. Sioux Falls..... | 37 |
| 4. Augustana | 28 |
| 5. Wayne State | 25 |
| 6. Upper Iowa | 18 |
| 7. Concordia- St. Paul..... | 14 |
| 8. Southwest Minnesota State | 10 |

first place votes in ()

The NSIC is a 16-team, 18-sport, NCAA Division II Conference with teams located in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota.



• Augustana • Bemidji State • Concordia -St. Paul • University of Mary • Minnesota Crookston • Minnesota Duluth • Minnesota State University, Mankato • MSU Moorhead • Minot State • Northern State • Sioux Falls • Southwest Minnesota State • St. Cloud State • Upper Iowa • Wayne State • Winona State

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Preseason Offensive
North DivisionNSIC
Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference

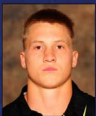
Player of the Year

NSIC NORTH DIVISION PRESEASON CO-OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR**#13 Jason Balts (WR, 5'11, 190, Sr., Barron, Wis. / Barron HS) - Minnesota Duluth**

- All-NSIC first team in 2017 and honorable mention in 2016

- Set or equaled career highs for pass receptions (57), receiving yards (a league-best 1,003) and touchdown catches (eight) in 2017
- Just the sixth Bulldog to ever eclipse the 1,000-receiving yard mark in a single season
- His 112 career catches are the eighth most in program history
- Earned the NSIC Elite 18 Award for football in 2017 and was a CoSIDA Academic All-American first team

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Preseason Defensive
North DivisionNSIC
Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference

Player of the Year

NSIC NORTH DIVISION PRESEASON DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR**#36 Gunnar Olszewski (CB, 5'10, 175, Sr., Alvin, Texas / Alvin HS) - Bemidji State**

- Three-time NSIC North Division All-Conference First Team Defense selection

- 2017 NSIC North Division All-Conference Second Team Special Teams selection
- Totaled 67 tackles (36 solo), seven pass break ups, two forced fumbles and one interception in 2017
- Ranks second in BSU history with 654 career punt return yards and fifth with 147 solo tackles

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Preseason Offensive
South DivisionNSIC
Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference

Player of the Year

NSIC SOUTH DIVISION PRESEASON OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR**#84 Shane Zylstra (WR, 6'5, 220, Jr., Spicer, Minn. / New London-Spicer HS) - Minnesota State**

- Led Maverick receiving corps with 51 catches, 861 receiving yards and 15 touchdown catches in 2017

- Tallied more than 100 receiving yards in three games last season, including a season-high 204 yards against Minnesota Duluth
- Caught at least two touchdown passes in four games, including a season-best three touchdown catches against Minnesota Duluth and Augustana
- His 15 touchdown catches last season matched the MSU single-season record

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Preseason Defensive
South DivisionNSIC
Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference

Player of the Year

NSIC NORTH DIVISION PRESEASON DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR**#90 Zach Dodge (DT, 5'10, 290, Sr., Salem, Wis. / Wilmot HS) - Minnesota State**

- Finished second on the team in tackles for loss (8.0) and sacks (4.0) in 2017

- Recorded two sacks against Northern State and Winona State last season
- Claimed All-NSIC First Team honors for the second straight season in 2017
- Posted at least three tackles in nine games during the 2017 season

For Updated Info Visit: www.northernsun.org

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|------|----------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------|
| 8/30 | *SMSU at Minnesota State | 6 p.m. | 10/13 | Winona State at Minnesota Crookston | 1 p.m. |
| 8/30 | Minnesota Duluth at Minot State | 6 p.m. | 10/13 | St. Cloud State at Sioux Falls | 1 p.m. |
| 8/30 | Northern State at Bemidji State | 6 p.m. | 10/13 | MSU Moorhead at Wayne State | 1 p.m. |
| 8/30 | University of Mary at St. Cloud State | 6 p.m. | 10/13 | Minot State at Minnesota State | 1 p.m. |
| 8/30 | Winona State at Wayne State | 6 p.m. | 10/13 | Augustana at Northern State | 1 p.m. |
| 8/30 | Minnesota Crookston at MSU Moorhead | 6:30 p.m. | 10/13 | SMSU at Minnesota Duluth | 1 p.m. |
| 8/30 | Concordia-St. Paul at Sioux Falls | 7 p.m. | 10/13 | Concordia-St. Paul at U-Mary | 2 p.m. |
| 9/1 | Augustana at Upper Iowa | 6 p.m. | 10/13 | Bemidji State at Upper Iowa | 2 p.m. |
| 9/6 | *Minot State at Northern State | 7 p.m. | 10/20 | Minnesota Crookston at Concordia-St. Paul | 12 p.m. |
| 9/8 | Upper Iowa at Concordia-St. Paul | 12 p.m. | 10/20 | U-Mary at Augustana | 1 p.m. |
| 9/8 | Sioux Falls at Winona State | 1 p.m. | 10/20 | *Minnesota State at Bemidji State | 1 p.m. |
| 9/8 | St. Cloud State at Minnesota Crookston | 1 p.m. | 10/20 | Wayne State at Minot State | 1 p.m. |
| 9/8 | Minnesota State at Augustana | 1 p.m. | 10/20 | Minnesota Duluth at Winona State | 1 p.m. |
| 9/8 | Bemidji State at U-Mary | 2 p.m. | 10/20 | Upper Iowa at St. Cloud State | 2 p.m. |
| 9/8 | Wayne State at SMSU | 6 p.m. | 10/20 | Sioux Falls at MSU Moorhead | 2 p.m. |
| 9/8 | MSU Moorhead at Minnesota Duluth | 6 p.m. | 10/20 | Northern State at SMSU | 5 p.m. |
| 9/13 | *Minnesota Duluth at St. Cloud State | 6 p.m. | 10/27 | Augustana at Concordia-St. Paul | 12 p.m. |
| 9/15 | Concordia-St. Paul at Minnesota State | 1 p.m. | 10/27 | Minnesota State at Wayne State | 1 p.m. |
| 9/15 | Northern State at MSU Moorhead | 3 p.m. | 10/27 | SMSU at Winona State | 1 p.m. |
| 9/15 | U-Mary at Minot State | 3 p.m. | 10/27 | Bemidji State at St. Cloud State | 1 p.m. |
| 9/15 | Minnesota Crookston at Bemidji State | 4 p.m. | 10/27 | Upper Iowa at Sioux Falls | 1 p.m. |
| 9/15 | Augustana at Wayne State | 6 p.m. | 10/27 | Minnesota Duluth at Minnesota Crookston | 1 p.m. |
| 9/15 | *SMSU at Sioux Falls | 6 p.m. | 10/27 | Minot State at MSU Moorhead | 1 p.m. |
| 9/15 | Winona State at Upper Iowa | 6 p.m. | 10/27 | Northern State at U-Mary | 2 p.m. |
| 9/20 | *Wayne State at Concordia-St. Paul | 6 p.m. | 11/3 | Sioux Falls at Minnesota State | 12 p.m. |
| 9/22 | *Sioux Falls at Augustana | 1 p.m. | 11/3 | Wayne State at Upper Iowa | 12 p.m. |
| 9/22 | Minnesota State at Winona State | 1 p.m. | 11/3 | Winona State at Augustana | 1 p.m. |
| 9/22 | Upper Iowa at SMSU | 1 p.m. | 11/3 | MSU Moorhead at Bemidji State | 1 p.m. |
| 9/22 | St. Cloud State at Northern State | 1 p.m. | 11/3 | Minnesota Crookston at Northern State | 1 p.m. |
| 9/22 | Minnesota Crookston at Minot State | 2 p.m. | 11/3 | Concordia-St. Paul at SMSU | 1 p.m. |
| 9/22 | MSU Moorhead at U-Mary | 6 p.m. | 11/3 | U-Mary at Minnesota Duluth | 1 p.m. |
| 9/22 | Bemidji State at Minnesota Duluth | 6 p.m. | 11/3 | St. Cloud State at Minot State | 1 p.m. |
| 9/29 | Bemidji State at Wayne State | 1 p.m. | 11/10 | Upper Iowa at Minnesota State | 12 p.m. |
| 9/29 | Minot State at Sioux Falls | 1 p.m. | 11/10 | Wayne State at Sioux Falls | 1 p.m. |
| 9/29 | Augustana at Minnesota Crookston | 1 p.m. | 11/10 | Minot State at Bemidji State | 1 p.m. |
| 9/29 | Concordia-St. Paul at Minnesota Duluth | 1 p.m. | 11/10 | Concordia-St. Paul at Winona State | 1 p.m. |
| 9/29 | SMSU at U-Mary | 2 p.m. | 11/10 | Northern State at Minnesota Duluth | 1 p.m. |
| 9/29 | St. Cloud State at Minnesota State | 2 p.m. | 11/10 | U-Mary at Minnesota Crookston | 1 p.m. |
| 9/29 | *Winona State at Northern State | 2:30 p.m. | 11/10 | St. Cloud State at MSU Moorhead | 1 p.m. |
| 9/29 | MSU Moorhead at Upper Iowa | 6 p.m. | 11/10 | Augustana at SMSU | 1 p.m. |
| 10/6 | Northern State at Concordia-St. Paul | 12 p.m. | Postseason Schedule | | |
| 10/6 | Upper Iowa at Minot State | 1 p.m. | 11/17 | NCAA Playoff 1st Round | |
| 10/6 | Wayne State at St. Cloud State | 1 p.m. | 11/24 | NCAA Playoff 2nd Round | |
| 10/6 | Minnesota Duluth at Augustana | 1 p.m. | 12/01 | 53rd Mineral Water Bowl | |
| 10/6 | U-Mary at Winona State | 2 p.m. | 12/01 | Super Region Championship | |
| 10/6 | Sioux Falls at Bemidji State | 2 p.m. | 12/08 | NCAA Semifinals | |
| 10/6 | Minnesota State at MSU Moorhead | 2 p.m. | 12/15 | NCAA Championship | |
| 10/6 | Minnesota Crookston at SMSU | 5 p.m. | | | |

^ All times and date subject to change
*Aired live on MidcoSN

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