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Sports

Pepsi Tip-Off Tournament

Minnesota State women clobber Crookston

Unselfish Mavericks dish out 26 assists in 89-45 blowout

By Denny Weller
Special to The Free Press

MANKATO — Minnesota State University women's basketball coach Lori Fish knew she had plenty of depth heading into Friday's opening game of the Pepsi Tip-Off Tournament at Bresnan Arena.

Not only did the Mavericks show of a wealth of talent in an 89-45 rout of Minnesota-Crookston, they did it in a very unselfish manner in front of a crowd of 1,378. Twelve different players dished out assists as the Mavericks totaled 26 assists on 36 field goals.

"We feel pretty good about tonight," Fish said. "We played hard, we played together and everyone got to play. I think our work in the preseason really paid off. We've got great depth and I feel comfortable with that because if some-

one is not on one night, we have people that can step up and I think that is what is going to carry us through the year.

"We're going to see teams where we have to have depth night in and night out. They've done what they've needed to do to get to this point. We do a great job in transition of finding that open player. They're not worried about who's scoring, they're just trying to make each other look good. They're very unselfish."

Minnesota State (1-0) traded baskets with the Golden Eagles through the first three minutes before freshman Liz Trauger's layup ignited a 13-0 run which put the Mavericks in front 19-6 on Alex Andrews, powerful follow-up basket with 13:21 left in the half. Jamie Kienitz added a left-side 3-pointer in the surge while Trauger, Flecia Foster and

Anna Voltmer each got a bucket.

The Mavericks, who shot 61.1 percent from the field in the first half, continued to run the floor with ease in building a 53-23 lead at the break. Teresa Parker, a 6-foot-1 sophomore post from Pequot Lakes and transfer from Southern Illinois, put through 10 first-half points while sophomore guard Joanne Noreen chipped in nine points.

"We just wanted to come out and establish our depth and show that everyone can score," Parker, who had seven rebounds to go along with her 10 points, said. "We wanted to establish a home-court pride right away. We were really anxious to get the season started and we all have a lot of confidence. We just came out on fire."

Foster buried a 17-footer to start the second half and quickly the lead ballooned to

62-23 when Kienitz hit a 3-pointer with 15:40 remaining. Foster finished with 11 points, four rebounds and two assists in 15 minutes of action. No Maverick played more than 18 minutes and all 14 players logged at least 13 minutes of playing time.

Trauger, who led the state of Iowa in scoring last season at 30 points per game, connected on 7 of 8 shots in leading the Mavericks with 17 points and six rebounds. Noreen had 11 points while Andrews chipped in nine points and seven rebounds. Kienitz collected a team-best five assists.

"I thought we did a great job of pushing the ball," Trauger said. "One of our goals was to come out and play right away. We didn't want to be nervous, we wanted to have fun and just play. I think our depth is a key. We like to play at a fast pace and

get up and down the floor so the more players you can put in the better the team is going to be.

"Everybody did a great job of getting the ball to the open player. We were very unselfish and executed the coaches' game plan almost to a T. It was fun, everybody was into it and we played good defense, too."

In Fish's first two seasons the Mavericks would seem to sputter a bit in games against weaker competition — not this time.

"In the past we've struggled at times but tonight we put together two very good halves," Fish said. "This is a confidence builder to get the season off on a good note."

Kelsey VanAckeren knocked down three 3-pointers in leading the Golden Eagles (0-1) with 18 points.

Minnesota State faces Bemidji State today at 6 p.m.

MINNESOTA CROOKSTON 45
Van Ackeren 6-10 9-5 18, Grano 0-2 1-2 1, Clemons 0-2 1-2 1, Milne 0-4 0-0 0, Clayton 3-15 0-0 7, Hulst 0-1 0-0 0, Davis 1-7 0-0 3, Artise 3-9 0-0 9, Chelme 0-4 0-0 0, Fitzgerald 0-2 3-4 3, Vigness 1-2 1-3 3.

MINNESOTA STATE 89
Andrews 4-4 1-3 9, Parker 5-9 0-0 10, Moe 0-0 0-0 0, Walt 2-3 0-0 4, Foster 4-9 2-2 11, Stank 0-1 0-0 0, Kortan 3-2 2-3 8, Nygaard 0-6 0-0 0, Kienitz 2-5 2-3 6, Trauger 7-8 3-4 17, Voltmer 4-10 0-0 8. Totals:

HalfTime: Minnesota State 53, Minnesota Crookston 23. 3-point shooting: Minnesota Crookston 8-24 (Van Ackeren 3-4, Clayton 1-5, Artise 2-3, Chelme 0-1, Milne 0-2, Hulst 0-1, Davis 1-3), Minnesota State 4-14 (Walt 0-1, Foster 1-2, Johnson 1-2, Nygaard 0-3, Larimer 0-2, Kienitz 2-2, Voltmer 0-1). Rebounds: Minnesota Crookston 37 (Vigness 8), Minnesota State 52 (Andrews, Parker, Kortan 7). Assists: Minnesota Crookston 10 (Grano 3), Minnesota State 26 (Kienitz 5). Steals: Minnesota Crookston 5 (Artise 3), Minnesota State 10 (Noreen 2). Turnovers: Minnesota Crookston 24, Minnesota State 15. Fouls out: Minnesota Crookston 17, Minnesota State 14. Fouled out: none. Attendance: 1,378.

Augustana 92, Bemidji State 76

In Friday's other game, Augustana had seven players score in double figures in a 92-76 win over Bemidji State. Amy Puhoff led the Vikings (3-2) with 15 points while Alison Adamson (14), Whitney Hofer (13), Amy Eckstaine (13), Ashley Holiday (13), Chelsea DeVille (12) and Amanda Ahrendt followed. Stephanie Peterson scored a game-high 16 points for the Beavers (0-1).