

Sports

Distinguished Alum Bob Mikkelson visits campus to share his birds-eye view of "College GameDay"

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MSUM Students Jared Eischen and Thor Thompson met with Mikkelson in Fargo to see his plane before taking off for College GameDay Coverage.

It's not every day you get to meet a legend.

For those in the mass communications department that legend is Bob Mikkelson. Mikkelson, who attended MSUM from 1968-1972, owns his own business, Winged Vision. Winged Vision is a company that Mikkelson started in the '80s through which he uses military equipment to help control the stability of his cameras.

"My claim to fame within the business was [that] I was the first one who really brought to the industry a successful, reliable, stabilized camera platform," he said.

Mikkelson has been in the business ever since, shooting video for golf, soccer, skiing, football, and even the olympics. His planes can do what no others can - get those hard to reach spots all while staying steady and focused. He is the guy who shot the overhead moving shot for ESPN's "College GameDay" last year in Fargo.

"You don't realize how lucky you are until you see what being unlucky is. I have lived unlucky and I prefer lucky better," Mikkelson said about his past experiences.

Mikkelson started out after college as a political appointee for the Federal Aviation Association, and worked with Hubert Humphrey in Washington D.C. He would work during the day at the office and then go to grad school at night. This led him to making many contacts, ultimately leading to him finding out about the military equipment.

"I got a call from a guy at the FAA. So I became a special assistant to the administrator for the FAA, and the two of us traveled all over the United States and Europe together in a private government plane."

When Mikkelson started his company back in 1983, he said it was successful because of the equipment and because of his education.

"When I started my own deal, I had credibility. I have a degree in communications, so I was able to talk about it."

For now, Mikkelson spends almost half the year on the road, doing something he always dreamed about. For example, on Saturday Mikkelson was in Fargo shooting aerial shots for ESPN. On Sunday he was in Denver, providing coverage for the Kansas City Chiefs vs Denver Broncos football game.



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Mikkelson shared his wisdom and a laugh before takeoff.

"I'm on the road 150-160 days a year, that is just normal to me."

Mikkelson said he appreciates coming back to the university, adding that support from the school and students is what brings him back.

"I still come back, I enjoy coming back to the school. I have great memories, I enjoy talking to you guys."

For Martin Grindelund, a mass communications professor at MSUM, seeing Mikkelson again is something he is thankful for, citing his time, money, and energy and for students, someone they can look up to.

"Bob has shared so many things with students over the years. He also has given us equipment which is something we find invaluable."

Dragon volleyball leans on experience

BY MEG KEIM
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The MSUM volleyball team is back and ready to roll. With the new NSIC conference season starting Tuesday, the women finished up the pre-season in Sioux Falls this weekend going 1 for 2 beating Northwest Missouri State and falling to Missouri Western.

The team is excited to finally get to play in their own gym after traveling to South Dakota and Colorado in recent weeks.

"We know these teams now," said center Sam Sullivan, a senior at MSUM. "We know how they play and though we have a tough schedule to start the season with, it's going to be fun."

Getting back into it and coming out on top is important to right side hitter Abby Wolpern, a junior at MSUM.

"I'm excited for rematches with Minot and Sioux Falls for sure," Wolpern explained.

Sullivan laughed and agreed saying, "we might still be a little bit bitter about those."

As a senior, Sullivan is very excited for her last chance and final year as a Dragon. At the end of her 11-year career she is ready to "leave it all on the court and make the most of her last year." She is excited to play with this group of girls and thinks that there is definitely something special about this group.

"Our ability to play as a team and play all of the positions really is cool," Sullivan explained.

Wolpern agrees with Sullivan about the team being special.

"The thing about our team is that there isn't just one stud. We are very versatile; it could be anyone, any night," she explained.

The junior hitter knows first-hand that being able to excel at every position is important.

"We get to play all the way around which makes it easier to be a leader on the court when you're in all of the rotations," said Wolpern. She is only in her third year of the team but is a natural leader and is "excited about being older on the court with experience and being able to step up as a leader."

Becoming leaders on the team is one of the goals the girls have for the season. While hoping to get redemption against a few teams in the NSIC, the Dragons hope to make the conference tournament and think a season of second chances is on the horizon for the Dragons this year.

"Outside of the win/lose record we hope to keep improving every day," Sullivan said.

Wolpern is focused on making the conference tournament and explains that they "miss it every year by one or two slots" and hopefully this year, they make it.

The players are not the only ones with goals, however. One of Coach Tammy Blake's goals is to get some more students to the matches and said she "would love to see more people come out and have some fun."

In her 20 years of coaching volleyball Blake still loves to coach and would love future support for the Dragons.



Photos credit msundragons.com

Sam Sullivan (left) and Abby Wolpern (right) look to lead from experience.

"The thing about our team is that there isn't just one stud. We are very versatile; it could be anyone, any night."

-Abby Wolpern, MSUM Junior, Middle Blocker

Sports

Dragons can't slow down Mavericks in home opener

BY TURNER BLAUFUSS
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With the Dragon offense putting up circus numbers in their season opener, many were anxious to see how they'd fare against the Minnesota State University Mankato Mavericks and their highly touted defense.

The Dragons couldn't repeat their offensive showing and were dominated in every facet of the game in a 69-13 home loss to the number four nationally ranked Mavericks. In Coach Steve Laqua's fourth year holding the Dragons' reigns, this is the highest ranked team MSUM has faced.

"Obviously we had higher expectations than what we showed today. This is a very good football team we're playing on both sides of the ball," Laqua said.

The Mavericks started the game with the wind at their back and used a balanced attack to put up 20 points in the opening quarter. The wind was a major factor disrupting the pass game for the Dragons as well as their punting.

"Wind was huge to the start of the game. That's where our special teams was really exposed," Laqua said. "The wind was critical and kept us from getting the start we needed. It was a big factor."

The Dragons put together an efficient drive with a steady run game with Jake Hodge hooking up with Cory Ambrose on three plays. MSUM got on the board with Ambrose running a corner route and creating separation making the Hodge pass a 15-yard score.

"Cory didn't quite have the game he wanted to have last week so I thought it was nice to have them find a rhythm," Laqua said.

The Mavericks' wide receiver Dorian Buford had a field day with the Dragon defense and scored three of his four touchdowns after the Dragons took the goose egg off the board.

"Obviously a great game. (Buford) made some phenomenal catches. He had a good day and that whole offense was having a great game," Laqua said.

MSUM's final touchdown was a fade route from two yards out from Hodge to Adam Jiskra. The Mavericks secondary had Jiskra on an island all game, limiting the star receiver to three catches and 20 yards.

The Dragons were missing the big play ability of Preston Prince, who has been a productive player for the Dragons in the past.

"Hopefully we get him back in the next couple weeks. He's a playmaker and as dynamic as Cory (Ambrose) is," Laqua said.

Hodge lead the shaky Dragon ground game with 75 yards on 12 carries. The Dragons fumbled six times and only landed on two of them.

"We called a spade a spade and acknowledged we played a team that hasn't lost a conference game in three years. They're a great football team and we didn't play like a great football team," Laqua said.

The Dragons' (0-2) next opponent is a road matchup with Wayne State, Neb., and kickoff is set for 1 p.m. Laqua stressed the importance of a short memory and turning their focus to Wayne State.

"The Mankato game is done and we need to start focusing on Wayne State as fast as we can," Laqua said. "We need to move on and pick ourselves up, dust off and get ready to compete again next week."



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Junior Quarterback Jake Hodge takes off from the pocket.

MSUM homecoming: Aiming to be best yet

BY KENNY BUCK
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With homecoming just under a week away, the MSUM homecoming crew has high expectations for this year's festivities.

MSUM student athlete Jamison Gehrig is one of two homecoming coordinators hired for event planning and asks students to prepare for a week of events like they've never seen before.

"It's going to be the best homecoming in MSUM history," Gehrig said.

Being a member of the cross-country team, Gehrig knows how important the student body is to supporting athletics.

"It's real motivation to see a lot of people get involved and to see people pumped up for the games," Gehrig said. "It's always nice to see as much support as possible."

There is much to support with over 40 events lined up, ranging from the ribbon cutting ceremony at the Livingston Lord Library to a Glow in the Dark Fun Run, which has never been done in past homecomings.

MSUM is kicking off homecoming week with the Dragon Blood Drive starting at 10 a.m. Monday and will end the day with a pep rally at 8 p.m. in Nemzek followed by Dragons Royale Casino Night.

Tuesday will be the start of a week's slate of games as the Dragon volleyball team takes on Minot State University in Nemzek. Dragon volleyball will take to the courts again Friday night at 7 p.m. preceding Coronation, the burning of the M, and fireworks starting at 9 p.m.

MSUM President Anne Blackhurst has her inauguration ceremony to prepare for on Friday, but for a warm up on Wednesday, the avid runner will be doing Laps for the Long Run at Nemzek Stadium. President Blackhurst plans to run 50 laps and pledge \$1000 for each lap towards scholarships.

The Johnny Holm Band will be performing Thursday night of homecoming week at 8 p.m. in the CMU ballroom. Students can spend their Friday morning recovering from Thursday night's concert until 2 p.m. when President Blackhurst, fresh off her 50 lap performance, attends her official presidential inauguration at the Hansen Theatre in the Roland Dille Center for the Arts.

Saturday will mark the busiest day for Gehrig and the homecoming crew with nine events leading up to three games for Dragon Athletics.

Dragon Soccer starts at noon and will be followed by Dragon Football when they'll take on the Wayne State Wildcats.

MSUM football player Wade Youngblom says they need more students to come support the Dragon football team.

"It definitely gives us an advantage," Youngblom said. "It's usually where we have the most attendance."

As for why students should come to support the team, Youngblom believes the way they play is enough for fellow Dragons to fill the bleachers at Nemzek Stadium.

"Our team is different," Youngblom said, "We're fun to watch and we put on a good show."

Students can pregame at Dragon Zone tailgating outside Nemzek from 11:30 a.m. all the way up to game time starting at 2 p.m.

Dragon volleyball and soccer will round out the weekend's games as Youngblom says students should be prepared to attend anything and everything during homecoming week.

"It's a fun atmosphere and everyone seems to enjoy it."



Dragon Pride on display at this past week's football game against Mankato.

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