

From its modest origin as a six-team alliance nearly eight decades ago, the Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference has matured into a 14-team union of upper Midwest colleges and universities to form arguably the strongest affiliation in NCAA Division II.

The NSIC can trace its roots to 1932 when six schools, including Bemidji State University, Minnesota State University, Mankato, Minnesota State University Moorhead, St. Cloud State University, University of Minnesota Duluth and Winona State University signed on as charter members. All remain active subscribers of the league today.

Southwest Minnesota State University was added in 1969, followed by Northern State University in 1978, Wayne State College (NE) in 1998, Concordia University-St. Paul and the University of Minnesota, Crookston in 1999, the University of Mary and Upper Iowa University in 2006, and Augustana College, in 2008.

Minnesota State, St. Cloud State and Minnesota Duluth later left the league to join the North Central Conference but returned to the NSIC in 2008. University of Minnesota, Morris and Michigan Tech University were once part of the NSIC family as well. In July of 2012, the NSIC will again expand with the addition of Minot State University and the University of Sioux Falls, bring the league to 16 members for the 2012-13 academic season.

In 1992 the NSIC became a true athletic showcase for both men and women with the merger of the traditional Northern Intercollegiate Conference (NIC) and the Northern Sun Conference (NSC), the home of women's athletics since 1979.

Before NSIC affiliates became certified for championship competition in the National Collegiate Athletic Association in 1995, its member institutions filled prominent roles in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). NIC and NSC clubs annually dispatched qualified student-athletes to national tournaments and captured several NAIA teams and individual championships.

The NSIC celebrates its 80th season this year and clearly continues to make a major imprint nationally, winning nine national titles in the last six years. Winona State men claimed NCAA II Basketball Championships in 2006 and 2008 and narrowly missed a third crown, falling in a last second shot in 2007. In addition, the Warriors established a NCAA II record of 57 consecutive victories. Concordia University launched an ongoing streak of four consecutive NCAA II Volleyball Championships in 2007. In 2008 the Golden Bears won 37 straight matches after a season opening loss on their way to a second consecutive title and scripted a marvelous encore in 2009 with a perfect 37-0 finish, a third straight national crown and a winning streak of 74 straight matches. In 2010 the Golden Bear extended that win streak to 75 before dropping their second match of the season. They started 2010 with a 10-4 record before ripping off 22 straight wins on their way to their fourth straight national title.

In a most surprising run, Minnesota Duluth completed a perfect 15-0 season by winning the 2008 NCAA Division II Football Championship. The Bulldogs, limited to only 24 scholarships by league rule, swept a field of fully-funded teams, including top ranked Grand Valley State and number three Northwest Missouri State. Two years later in 2010 the Bulldogs repeated that feat, going 15-0 again to win the national championship. The Bulldogs became the first NCAA DII football squad to win two national championships with undefeated records.

Minnesota State added more luster to the league by finishing 32-2 and claiming the 2008-09 NCAA II Women's Basketball Championship. The Mavericks rolled to a wild 103-94 victory over Franklin Pierce to set a NCAA record for total points in the title game.

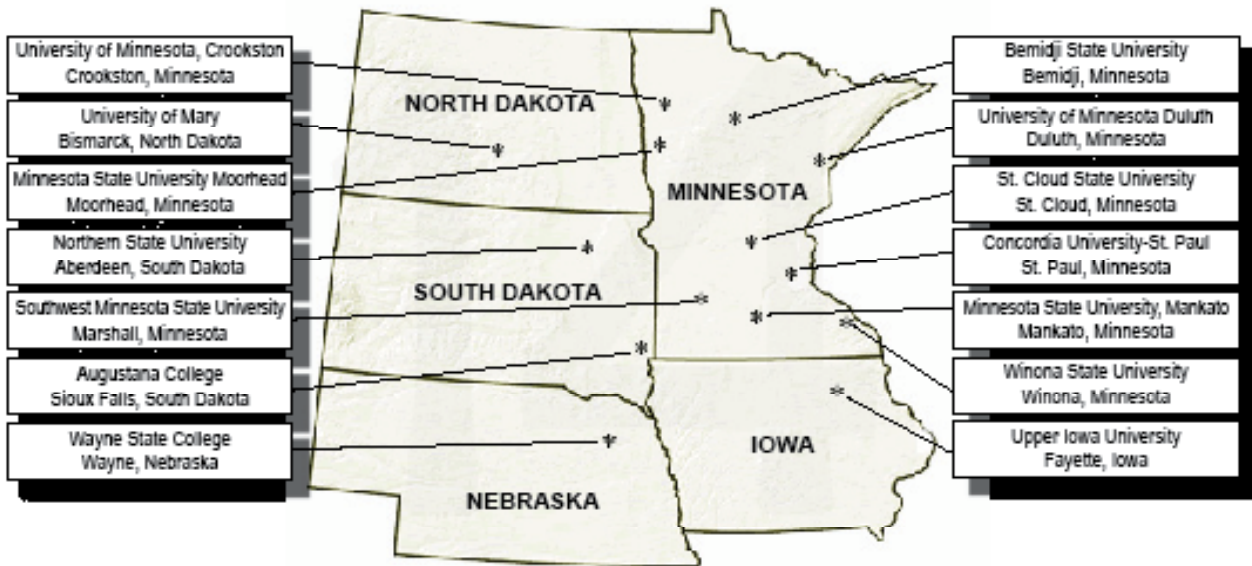
Since 2000, the NSIC has also participated in Mineral Water Bowl. Hosted by the Quarterback Club of Excelsior Springs, Mo., the Mineral Water Bowl matches the highest-finishing teams from the NSIC and the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association (MIAA) not selected for the NCAA Division II football playoffs. Winona State defeated Missouri Western State, 43-41, in triple overtime, the Warriors, first-ever NCAA II post-season win in 2000.

In addition, NSIC student-athletes have made a major splash nationally as well, collecting a batch of individual titles. Concordia setter Maggie McNamara was honored as the NCAA Division II Honda Women's Athlete of the Year, the latest NSIC representative decorated with national Player of the Year honors.

The NSIC has also had three athletes awarded with the NCAA Elite 88 Award, which is presented to the student-athlete with the highest cumulative grade-point average participating at the finals site for each of the NCAA's 88 championships. Earning the award were Kendra Huettl (Minnesota State, Softball, 2011), Matt Braithwaite (Augustana College, Cross Country, 2010) and Lauren Brown (Winona State, Outdoor Track and Field, 2010).

Member schools continue to emphasize the educational, entertainment and unifying value of sports while pointing with pride to the many advantages to be gained by attending these colleges and universities. The NSIC is committed to providing rewarding experiences for its student-athletes, and while the challenges that loom are sizable, indeed, the NSIC is surely well positioned for the future.





- AUGUSTANA COLLEGE • BEMIDJI STATE UNIVERSITY • CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY-ST. PAUL •**
• UNIVERSITY OF MARY • UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, CROOKSTON •
• UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA DULUTH • MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO •
• MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY MOORHEAD • NORTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY •
• SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY • ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY •
• UPPER IOWA UNIVERSITY • WAYNE STATE COLLEGE • WINONA STATE UNIVERSITY •