

# Minnesota State vs. Lake Superior State



## Max Coatta

The 20th-ranked Mavericks (11-8-5, 10-3-5 in WCHA) return home to face the Lakers (9-13-4, 6-6-4), a team it went 6-0-0 against last season, including the first round of the WCHA playoffs. MSU is 8-0-0 in the all-time series. Minnesota State is coming off a one-point weekend at Michigan Tech and has one win in its last four games. Lake Superior State is 2-2-0 in its last four, splitting a pair of home series with Bowling Green and Alaska Anchorage.

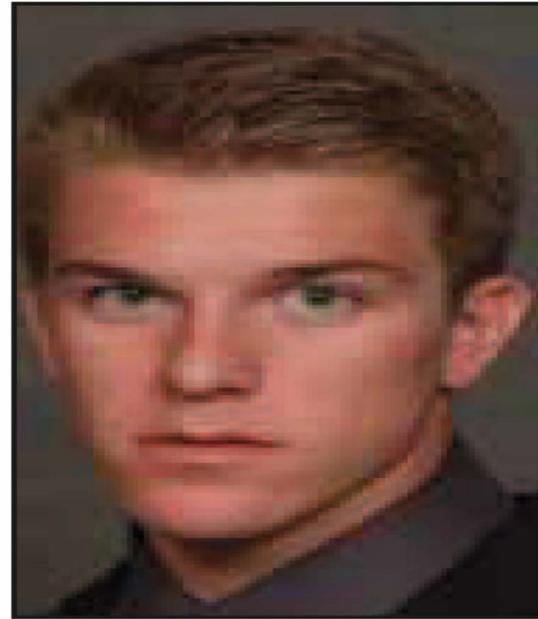
### The 5-hole

Five things to know about the matchup:

#### 1. Mix and match:

Don't be surprised to see a shakeup on the Mavericks' line chart tonight, as Mike Hastings tries to jumpstart an offense averaging 2.21 goals per game. "There's going to be some opportunities for guys that they haven't had before," the coach said. "Minutes are earned." In the four games since their three-week break, MSU is 1-2-1 with just seven goals — none by a top-six forward.

**2. Offense from defense:** Hastings is counting on his defensemen to contribute to the offense. Four blueliners have points in the last four games, including junior Casey Nelson (4-9—13), who is tied for second on the team in scoring, and senior Jon Jutzi (4-4—8) with goals. Juniors Sean Flanagan (2-5—7) and Carter Foguth (0-3—3) have assists. Jutzi has three power-play goals, but the Mavericks haven't scored with the man advantage since Dec. 5.



## Casey Nelson

**3. Freshmen find ways:** Other than goalie Jason Pawloski (.908, 1.72), MSU's rookies haven't made major impacts, but they are contributing. The versatile Ryan Schwalbe (0-3—3) has played forward and defense in 23 games, more than any other freshman. Forward Max Coatta (2-4—6) and defenseman Daniel Brickley (0-5—5) are the top scorers in the group, playing 19 games each. Chandler Madry (2-1—3) and Steen Cooper (1-0—1) and defenseman Alec Vanko (0-3—3) have played less than 10 games each.

**4. Much improved:** Lake Superior State is very much in the thick of the race for home ice in the WCHA playoffs. Sitting three points out of fourth place with two games in hand, the Lakers need one win to reach their total from last season, Damon Whitten's first as head coach. This year, Whitten's Lakers have made big strides, especially on the road where they are 3-0-3 in opposing WCHA barns.

**5. Scouting the Lakers:** Sophomore forward J.T. Henke (6-8—14) leads the Lakers' offense, followed by freshman Mitch Hults (6-6—12). There are eight rookies among the team's top 12 scorers, including Gage Torrel (5-6—11) and Anthony Nellis (3-8—11). A big reason for their improvement this season is the goaltending tandem of sophomore Gordon Defiel (.924, 2.45) and freshman Nick Kossoff (.929, 1.90). Kossoff has three shutouts.

### Around the rinks

**Minnesota State women:** The Mavericks (3-19-2, 0-17-1 in WCHA) will host Ohio State (7-17-0, 3-15-0) in a league series at the Verizon Wireless Center. Games are at 2:07 p.m. today and Saturday. In their last meeting Oct. 23-24 in Columbus, the Buckeyes won 5-3 and 4-0, although the Mavericks were without veteran leaders Katie Johnson (3-13—16) and Anna-Maria Fiegert (2-4—6) that weekend. Ohio State has won just three times in 16 games since.



Max Coatta

Casey Nelson

### This weekend's series

7:07 p.m. today and Saturday

Verizon Wireless Center

TV: Charter 826, 191 (today and Saturday); Comcast 999 (today only)

Radio: KTOE 1420 AM

Streaming: WCHA.tv

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