

# University of Minnesota **Athletic Communications**



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## **Expanded Gopher Road Trip Hits the Road Starting this May**

*The Gopher Road Trip will visit more Minnesota towns this summer than it has in any year since 2013*

The 2017 Gopher Road Trip, the latest in the annual tradition that brings Gopher coaches and administrators around Gold Country to meet with fans, will be bigger than many of its predecessors. This summer's adventure will pack in the most dates and most stops of any Gopher Road Trip since 2013.

The 2017 edition of the road trip will still be a two-leg trip – labeled “Maroon” and “Gold” – but this year each leg will include a third day. These extra days allow for 14 total events outside the Twin Cities, nearly double the eight events that were typical in recent years. This year's trip will also include a kickoff event at TCF Bank Stadium for fans in the metro area, a first for the road trip.

“I promised at my introductory press conference that we would do a better job of investing in our fans, who we ask to invest in us and our students,” said Athletics Director Mark Coyle. “A lot goes into fulfilling that promise, but the Gopher Road Trip is certainly one piece of it. We need to invest time connecting with our fans face-to-face, wherever they are. By doing more events this year than almost any previous road trip, we'll have more of those opportunities to get around the state and meet with fans who have supported our teams for so long”

This year's trip will head south for its first leg, which will run from Monday, May 22 through Wednesday, May 24. Before the first event in greater Minnesota, the road trip will begin with a kickoff event on the Tribal Nations Plaza at TCF Bank Stadium on Monday morning. It will be the first ever, Twin Cities-based event as part of the road trip, a way to send off the bus in style. After leaving Minneapolis, this leg will head southeast to Winona and then west to Rochester on its first day, before a three-event day with stops in Owatonna, Fairmont and New Ulm. The trip will return to the Twin Cities with stops in Redwood Falls and Hutchinson along the way.

After a short break, the bus will hit the road again on Monday June 5, touring the state until Wednesday, June 7. The group on this leg will travel west, visiting Spicer, and then turn north to Perham on that first day. The following day will start in Park Rapids, followed by stops in Bagley (just outside Bemidji) and Coleraine. The final day of the 2017 Gopher Road Trip will visit Hibbing and Sartell.

The 14 host cities for this year's road trip events are a blend of previously visited stops and first-time visits. Five locations hosted events last year (Spicer, Perham, Rochester, Owatonna and Hutchinson) and six are returning to the road trip after multiple-year absences (Winona, New Ulm, Redwood Falls, Park Rapids, Coleraine and Hibbing). In addition to a first-time event in the Twin Cities, there will be three greater Minnesota stops making their first appearance on the road trip: Bagley, Sartell and Fairmont.

“On my very first day as the new athletics director last May, I hopped on the Gopher Road Trip bus, headed out into greater Minnesota and met hundreds of Gopher fans. It was an unforgettable day,” added Coyle. “I can't

wait to get back to some of those communities and see familiar faces, but I'm most excited to visit new stops and meet more Gopher fans."

With additional events, it seems likely the Gopher Road Trip will set new records for attendance this year, which would be the fifth straight year of record crowds. More than 6,000 fans have attended Gopher Road Trip events the past four years.

Every event on the Gopher Road Trip is completely free to attend and open to the public, but space is limited, especially at smaller venues. Fans are encouraged to secure their spot in advance by registering online to attend events.

For full details and registration information for the 2017 Gopher Road Trip and all the events on the trip, please visit [MyGopherSports.com](http://MyGopherSports.com).

### **2017 Gopher Road Trip Schedule:**

<b>City</b>	<b>Date / Time</b>	<b>Event Location</b>
Minneapolis	May 22 – 8 a.m.	Tribal Nations Plaza at TCF Bank Stadium
Winona	May 22 – 12:00 p.m.	Elks Lodge
Rochester	May 22 – 4:30 p.m.	Somerby Golf Club and Community
Owatonna	May 23 – 8:00 a.m.	Holiday Inn (Owatonna)
Fairmont	May 23 – 12:00 p.m.	Holiday Inn (Fairmont)
New Ulm	May 23 – 4:30 p.m.	Turner Hall
Redwood Falls	May 24 – 8:30 a.m.	Redwood Area Community Center
Hutchinson	May 24 – 12:00 p.m.	Crow River Golf Club
Spicer	June 5 – 11:30 a.m.	Johnny O'Neil's Green Lake Social
Perham	June 5 – 4:30 p.m.	Perham Lakeside Golf Club
Park Rapids	June 6 – 8:00 a.m.	Blueberry Pines Golf Course
Bagley	June 6 – 11:30 a.m.	Timber Events Center
Coleraine	June 6 – 4:30 p.m.	Eagle Ridge Golf Course
Hibbing	June 7 – 7:30 a.m.	Mesaba Country Club
Sartell	June 7 – 12:30 p.m.	The Grands at Mulligan

***-Gopher Athletics-***