

Joey Long, Saint John's

Belvidere, Ill. / Rockford Boylan
Week of: 2012-05-14



In the postseason, every successful team usually leans on a good bullpen and a reliable closer to come through in big spots. That was the case for Saint John's this weekend as it claimed the 2012 MIAC Baseball Playoff championship, with **Joey Long** (Belvidere, Ill./Rockford Boylan) giving the Johnnies a near-perfect performance out of the pen. The SJU closer allowed just one hit and one walk in three appearances (4.0 innings) without allowing a run, striking out three and holding opposing hitters to a batting average of .077. For his postseason performance, Long has been named the final MIAC Baseball Pitcher-of-the-Week for the 2012 season.

In actuality, Long didn't really "come out of the bullpen" for SJU, as he is also the team's starting second baseman. It was from that spot that he moved to the mound for perhaps his biggest outing of the weekend. Long was summoned from second with two on and no outs in the eighth inning of the final game of the championship, and he proceeded to maneuver out of it brilliantly, working two scoreless innings, allowing just one walk and striking out one to preserve the Johnnies' championship win. He also threw a perfect inning against Bethel Friday and allowed his only hit of the weekend while striking out one as he earned the save in Saturday's 4-2 win over Saint Mary's. This season, Long is 1-0 with 10 saves in 19 appearances this spring. The SJU career saves leader has a 2.22 ERA.

With the tournament title, Saint John's improved to 29-14 this season, and added the MIAC Playoff Championship to its second-place regular-season finish. The postseason crown also gave SJU the MIAC's automatic bid to the 2012 NCAA Division III Baseball Tournament. The Johnnies were assigned to a six-team regional in McMinnville, Ore., hosted by Linfield. SJU is the No. 6 seed, and will join No. 1 Concorida-Texas, No. 2 Trinity, No. 3 Whitworth, No. 4 La Verne and No. 5 Coe in the double-elimination regional.

Matt Rowley, Bethel

Minnetonka, Minn. / Hopkins
Week of: 2012-05-08



Bethel emerged from a crowded race for the final two MIAC Baseball Playoff spots at the top of the pack to grab the tournament's No. 3 seed thanks to a 3-1 record in the final week of conference play. Left-handed pitcher **Matt Rowley** (Minnetonka, Minn./Hopkins) played a huge part in the clutch wins, as he threw 10 shutout innings in two of the three wins, allowing just six hits and two walks against 10 strikeouts. For his performance, Rowley has been named the MIAC Baseball Pitcher-of-the-Week.

Rowley's week starting with a surprise relief appearance out of necessity, as Bethel and Carleton battled Wednesday for 13 innings. The junior entered in the ninth, and kept the Royals' hopes alive for a win with four sparkling innings of relief, allowing just two hits and a walk with two strikeouts in a game Bethel eventually won 4-3. He also helped the Royals' score a crucial sweep of Concordia - another team in contention for the postseason - Monday by throwing six scoreless innings in game two, allowing four hits and one walk while striking out eight Cobber hitters. This season, Rowley has been stingy against MIAC opponents with an ERA of 1.91 in conference play to go along with a 33-6 strikeout-to-walk ratio. The versatile Bethel star is also hitting .493 with 18 RBI and 18 runs scored against conference foes.

Thanks to its three wins last week, Bethel reached the 20-win plateau at 20-18 overall, and its 11-9 MIAC record was good for third place in the final conference standings and the Playoffs' No. 3 seed. The Royals open the 2012 MIAC Baseball Playoffs with a first-round game against second-seeded Saint John's Friday at Veteran's Field in Minnetonka at 7 p.m. Bethel will play again Saturday in the double elimination tournament, at 11 a.m. if it loses against the Johnnies, or at 2 p.m. if it wins. The tournament runs through Sunday afternoon.

Teddy VanRanst, Saint Mary's

St. Paul, Minn. / Highland Park

Week of: 2012-04-30



The Saint Mary's baseball team turned in one of its best weeks of the season, going 3-1 against a pair of good MIAC opponents, with starting pitcher **Teddy VanRanst** (St. Paul, Minn./Highland Park) delivering the team's top highlight. VanRanst flirted with perfection in a complete-game, two-hit shutout of then-third place Augsburg Sunday to give the Cardinals a 2-0 victory in the pitcher's duel and start a big sweep of the Auggies. For his performance, VanRanst has been named the MIAC Baseball Pitcher-of-the-Week.

VanRanst was brilliant against Augsburg Sunday, taking a perfect game into the fifth inning. The Auggies managed to break up his no-hit bid with a pair of hits in that inning, but VanRanst kept them off the scoreboard and closed out the game with two more zeros. The SMU starter struck out four and walked just one in the game, which was his first career shutout. The lefty lowered his ERA to 3.06 with his team-leading fourth complete game. He also leads SMU in innings pitched (53.0) and had gone four or more innings in each of his nine starts in 2012. VanRanst is 5-4, and tied for sixth in the MIAC in wins and complete games.

The three wins helped Saint Mary's even their conference record at 8-8 and improve to 19-16 overall. The Cardinals are now in a tie with Bethel for fourth place and are in the thick of a heated race for a spot in the four-team MIAC Playoff field. SMU closes the regular season this week with a pair of MIAC doubleheaders. Wednesday it travels to Hamline with first pitch set for 2:30 p.m. and Saturday the Cardinals host Carleton for Parents and Senior Day with a 1 p.m. start time.

Zach Frappier, Concordia

Fargo, N.D. / Oak Grove

Week of: 2012-04-23



The Concordia baseball team needed to fare well against a tough Macalester team Saturday to get back in postseason contention, so it handed the ball to starter **Zach Frappier** (Fargo, N.D./Oak Grove). The senior lefty was up to the task, pitching a three-hit shutout gem in a big 4-0 victory for the Cobbers. For his performance, Frappier was named the MIAC Baseball Pitcher-of-the-Week.

Frappier's gem included all seven innings of work, with just three hits allowed and three strikeouts. He didn't walk any Macalester hitters in the win, and just one runner reached via error. None of the four Scots to reach advanced past second base, and Frappier enjoyed three 1-2-3 innings. It was the first time Macalester had been shut out in 2012, and just the second time the Scots were blanked in the past two seasons. With the win, the Cobber southpaw improved to 3-5 with a very good 2.25 ERA this season. He has 24 strikeouts against just 12 walks in 48.0 innings of work. His ERA is fourth-best in the MIAC this season, with six complete games in eight starts.

The four wins last week helped Concordia get back to even with a 16-14 overall record and a 7-7 mark in conference play. Currently, the Cobbers are tied for fifth place, just one spot out of the MIAC playoffs at this point. Concordia will try to continue its playoff push with six games on the schedule this week. Tuesday, the Cobbers host Dakota Wesleyan in a nonconference doubleheader at 2:30 p.m. and Wednesday they travel to Mayville State for another twin bill outside the league. Saturday, Concordia hosts Hamline for a key 1 p.m. MIAC series.

Dylan Thomas, St. Thomas

Lakeville, Minn. / North

Week of: 2012-04-16



The St. Thomas baseball team continued its terrific season and impressive winning streak last week thanks to continued excellence on the mound. In its four wins, St. Thomas hurlers allowed just four runs, with the most impressive performance courtesy of junior **Dylan Thomas** (Lakeville, Minn./North). The right-handed starter threw a complete-game, one-hit shutout against rival Saint John's to set the tone for UST's great week on the mound. For his performance, Thomas has been named the MIAC Baseball Pitcher-of-the-Week.

Thomas came up with a big pitching performance when St. Thomas needed it in the 3-0 win over the Johnnies. The Tommie starter took a perfect game into the fifth and a no-hitter into the sixth and faced just 23 hitters in the complete-game shutout. Thomas allowed one hit, hit one batter and struck out 11 with no walks while throwing a first-pitch strike to 22 of the 23 batters he faced. The pitcher's duel was scoreless into the bottom of the fifth inning. This season, Thomas is 3-2 with a 3.75 ERA. He leads the MIAC and is among the nation's leaders in strikeouts per nine innings (12.0) with 48 strikeouts against just nine walks in 36 innings of work.

St. Thomas - now ranked fifth in Division III - pushed its impressive winning streak to 13 in a row with the four wins last week. Now the Tommies are 22-4 overall and a perfect 10-0 atop the MIAC standings. UST has a big week ahead, hosting Macalester for a MIAC doubleheader Wednesday at 2:30 p.m. The Tommies and Scots shared the conference regular season title a year ago. UST will have the weekend off before facing Bethany Lutheran next Monday and returning to conference play next Tuesday.

Buddy Flaherty, Bethel

Victoria, Minn. / Southwest Christian
Week of: 2012-04-09



A good bullpen is essential for baseball success at any level, and Bethel went 4-1 last week - 3-1 against MIAC opponents - with the bullpen playing a big role in the wins. Leading the relief corps was senior closer **Buddy Flaherty** (Victoria, Minn./Southwest Christian), who had a hand in three of the four wins. Flaherty nailed down two saves - including 3.1 hitless innings in a 5-3 win over St. Olaf - and he received the win in his other outing with a perfect 0.00 ERA over the course of the week. For his performance, Flaherty has been named the MIAC Baseball Pitcher-of-the-Week.

Flaherty started the week by closing a 10-8 nonconference win against North Central on Tuesday with two strikeouts and just one hit allowed to earn the save. He also worked a scoreless eighth inning to earn a win over Hamline Wednesday as Bethel claimed a 4-3 walk-off win. Flaherty saved his best performance for last, striking out three Oles with no hits and no walks in 3.1 innings for his second save of the week Saturday. Thus far in 2012, Flaherty leads the MIAC with six saves and 12 appearances, and he has a miniscule 1.00 ERA in 18 innings of work to establish himself as one of the league's top relievers.

With Flaherty consistently closing the door, Bethel continues to be one of the MIAC's success stories in the early going with a 14-7 record and a 5-1 MIAC mark, as the Royals currently sit alone in third place. Bethel can continue to establish itself as a contender with a big week of conference games. Wednesday, the Royals travel across the metro to face defending conference co-champion Macalester in a doubleheader at 2:30 p.m., and Saturday Bethel travels to Collegeville to face one of the teams its chasing in the standings as it squares off with Saint John's at 1 p.m.

Ryan Mestnik, Augsburg

Prior Lake, Minn. / Prior Lake
Week of: 2012-04-02



The Augsburg baseball team is off to a terrific start this season behind a pitching staff that is both very young, and very good. Leading the way in a pair of wins this week was freshman **Ryan Mestnik** (Prior Lake, Minn.), earning two wins with eight scoreless innings of work to add a few more sparking stat lines to his tremendous rookie season. Mestnik only allowed three hits and one walk while striking out four this week, including a complete-game shutout in his first career MIAC start. For his performance, Mestnik has been named the MIAC Baseball Pitcher-of-the-Week.

Mestnik's week started with one perfect inning and a win in a 5-1 nonconference victory over Viterbo Wednesday. He struck out one and didn't allow a winner as the Auggies used 14 pitchers for one inning apiece to score the nonconference sweep. He was stellar again Saturday, throwing a three-hit, complete-game shutout in a 1-0 win over Gustavus to earn a split of the doubleheader in his conference

debut. Mestnik struck out three and walked just one to add another highlight to his outstanding season thus far. The Auggie rookie right-hander is now 6-0 with ERA of 0.77. In 35 innings of work, he's allowed just 18 hits and three runs with 16 strikeouts and just six walks. He has three complete-game shutouts in his first seven collegiate starts.

Augsburg's 3-1 record last week helped the team continue its hot start with a 15-5 overall record and a 1-1 mark to start conference play. Augsburg will learn a lot about its MIAC title hopes this week, as it takes on both of last year's conference co-champions in league doubleheaders. Wednesday, the Auggies host St. Thomas at Parade Stadium at 2:30 p.m., and they're home again Saturday to face Macalester with first pitch set for 1 p.m.

Steve Maher, St. Thomas

Burnsville, Minn. / Holy Angels

Week of: 2012-03-26



The University of St. Thomas baseball team is off to a hot start in 2012, thanks largely to a new ace that has emerged over the season's opening weeks. Sophomore hurler **Steve Maher** (Burnsville, Minn./Holy Angels) has been dominant thus far, winning all five starts and putting up stellar numbers across the board against some good nonconference competition. For his strong start to the season, Maher has been named the first MIAC Baseball Pitcher-of-the-Week for the 2012 season.

Maher's 5-0 record features wins against St. Scholastica, UW-Whitewater, UW-Oshkosh, UW-Steven Point and the University of Chicago. Thus far, he has a miniscule 1.11 ERA in 32.1 innings of work, with better than a 6-to-1 strikeout-to-walk ratio and almost a strikeout per inning. Opposing hitters have mustered just a .188 average against Maher to this point, and he has 31 strikeouts and just five walks. Maher anchors an excellent overall pitching staff that has a combined 2.45 ERA and a 5-to-1 strikeout-to-walk ratio.

St. Thomas - which shared the MIAC regular season title a year ago and earned a bid to the NCAA Division III Baseball Tournament - is off to a 12-4 start this year behind Maher and his fellow pitchers, and the Tommies are ranked in the top 20 nationally in two different Division III polls. This week, UST opens conference play with a 7 p.m. doubleheader against Hamline in the Metrodome Saturday.

Dylan Graves, Saint John's

Mora, Minn. / Mora

Week of: 2012-05-14



Saint John's claimed its first MIAC Baseball Playoff title over the weekend with sophomore **Dylan Graves** (Mora, Minn.) leaving his mark on the Johnnies' tournament championship. The centerfielder batted in the neighborhood of .400 over SJU's four tournament games (3-1 record), had a two-homer game to start the postseason run and played sparkling defense in centerfield without an error all weekend. For the tournament, Graves hit .389 (7-for-18) with four runs, four RBI, two home runs, a .722 slugging percentage and a perfect 1.000 fielding percentage on 10 chances. For his clutch Playoff performance, Graves has been named the final MIAC Baseball Player-of-the-Week for the 2012 season.

Graves was the driving force in SJU's tournament-opening win over Bethel, going 2-for-4 with two home runs and four RBI in the 7-3 win. He followed with another tremendous performance in a narrow 4-2 win over Saint Mary's in the second round. Graves was 4-for-5 against the Cardinals with a run scored and a hit in the Johnnies' eighth-inning rally that won the game. He added a big hit and scored a run in SJU's seven-run inning that blew open Sunday's championship game, and he halted St. Thomas' comeback attempt with a big double play from centerfield later in the game, catching an apparent sacrifice fly for one out and cutting down a Tommie runner at third before the run crossed the plate to end the innings.

With the tournament title, Saint John's improved to 29-14 this season, and added the MIAC Playoff Championship to its second-place regular-season finish. The postseason crown also gave SJU the MIAC's automatic bid to the 2012 NCAA Division III Baseball Tournament. The Johnnies were assigned to a six-team regional in McMinnville, Ore., hosted by Linfield. SJU is the No. 6 seed, and will join No. 1 Concorida-Texas, No. 2 Trinity, No. 3 Whitworth, No. 4 La Verne and No. 5 Coe in the double-elimination regional.

Jordan Buck, Hamline

Apple Valley, Minn. / DMACC

Week of: 2012-05-08



Both the Hamline baseball team and junior **Jordan Buck** (Apple Valley, Minn./DMACC) finished the 2012 season on a high note last week. The Pipers went 3-1 in its final four conference games, splitting a pair of one-run games with Saint Mary's and sweeping St. Olaf with Buck providing a major offensive lift. The outfielder hit .615 (8-for-13) with and .818 slugging percentage and four runs, three doubles, two RBI and a pair of walks. For his season-ending hot streak, Buck has been named the MIAC Baseball Player-of-the-Week.

Buck's big week started with a 3-for-6 performance against the Cardinals, in which Hamline won the first game 4-3, then suffered its only setback of the week in a 6-5 loss. The Pipers closed the season sweeping the Oles by the scores 1-0 and 13-3 with Buck going 5-for-7 at the plate over the course of the two wins. With a hit in each game, Buck ended the 2012 on a seven-game hitting streak where he hit .500 (13-for-26) and lifted his average from .260 to a season-high .333. Buck's 29 walks led Hamline this season, and he also racked up 33 hits, 19 runs, nine doubles and a .493 on-base percentage.

The three final-week wins helped Hamline improve to 18-22 overall and 8-12 in conference play, which put them in eighth place in the final MIAC standings. However, six of the Pipers' losses came by a single run, and they finished just two games behind the fourth and final team in the 2012 MIAC Playoff Field.

Dylan Thomas, St. Thomas

Lakeville, Minn. / North
Week of: 2012-04-30



The St. Thomas baseball team had quite the week, going 4-0 against MIAC teams to clinch the regular-season conference title and No. 1 seed in the postseason while setting a new school record by extending its winning streak to 19 in a row. **Dylan Thomas** (Lakeville, Minn./North) had his fingerprints all over the Tommies' four victories with both his arm and his bat, as he batted over .500, got both the game-winning hit and the save in one game, and added a complete-game shutout on the mound in another. For his outstanding all-around performance, Thomas has been named the MIAC Baseball Player-of-the-Week - his second weekly honor in three weeks after earning the MIAC Pitcher-of-the-Week honor on April 16.

Thomas continued his amazing season on the mound going 1-0 with a save in two appearances without allowing a run. He retired Carleton in order in the seventh to save an 8-7 St. Thomas win, and he threw a four-hit, complete-game shutout in a 2-0 win over Bethel. Against the Royals, Thomas struck out six, walked three and got three ground-ball double plays to keep Bethel off the scoreboard. At the plate, he was 7-for-13 with six RBI and an .846 slugging percentage, and he drove in the go-ahead run in the same 8-7 win over the Knights that he finished on the mound. This season, Thomas is 4-0 with a save and an 0.96 ERA in five conference appearances and his 11.05 strikeouts per game leads the MIAC. Thomas is hitting .452 (14-for-31) with 13 RBI this year as well.

With the four wins, St. Thomas has now won 19 games in a row, and it locked up the conference title with a perfect 16-0 record in the MIAC thus far. The Tommies - 28-4 overall - are ranked No. 2 and No. 4 in the two Division III baseball national polls. This week, UST will try for a perfect 20-0 conference record when it travels to Moorhead Monday to face Concordia and Gustavus Saturday for MIAC doubleheaders. The Tommies also face Division I Minnesota Tuesday and St. Scholastica Sunday as it wraps up the 2012 regular season.

Jeff Dsida, Carleton

Winnetka, Ill. / New Trier
Week of: 2012-04-23



Carleton had perhaps its best week of the 2012 baseball season with a 4-2 record and a big MIAC sweep over a five-day span last week. Leading the charge for the Knights was sophomore **Jeff Dsida** (Winnetka, Ill./New Trier), who hit nearly .500 for the week with great on-base and slugging percentages to pace the Carleton offense that scored at least five runs in each of its four wins. For his performance, Dsida has been named the MIAC Baseball Co-Player-of-the-Week.

Dsida and the Knights got off to a great start Tuesday, sweeping Crown in a nonconference doubleheader, 5-0 and 7-4. Wednesday's MIAC twin bill vs. Augsburg is where the catcher/DH really caught fire. Over the two wins (9-3, 8-2) against one of the conference playoff contenders, Dsida was 5-for-6 with four RBI, three runs, a pair of extra-base hits and he also reached via a walk and a hit by pitch. He added a 3-for-3 performance with two doubles and a pair of RBI in a narrow 4-3 loss to St. Olaf Sunday. This season, Dsida's .351 batting average ranks third among MIAC catchers and in conference-only games he ranks 13th in hitting (.389) and 10th in slugging (.583).

The four-win week helped the Knights improve to 12-17 overall and 4-8 in conference play, where they're currently tied for eighth place. Carleton hopes to keep its recent success rolling against a tough schedule this week. The Knights take on both of last season's conference co-champs in MIAC doubleheaders, with a trip to St. Paul to face St. Thomas Tuesday at 2:30 p.m. and Saturday they host Macalester with first pitch set for 1 p.m.

Braden Rahman, Concordia

Moorhead, Minn. / Moorhead

Week of: 2012-04-23



The Concordia baseball team used a big week to get back into contention for a spot in the 2012 MIAC Playoffs behind the bat of sophomore **Braden Rahman** (Moorhead, Minn.). The Cobber shortstop led his team to five wins in six games - including a sweep of defending MIAC co-champion Macalester - by hitting .500 with a slugging percentage of nearly 1.000 and an eighth-inning walk-off home run in Concordia's final win of the week. For his performance, Rahman has been named the MIAC Baseball Co-Player-of-the-Week.

Rahman's big week resulted in a .500 batting average, a .944 slugging percentage and a .591 on-base percentage with two doubles, two homers and six RBI. Concordia started with a split against Gustavus and an 11-4 win over Valley City State before its big sweep of the Scots (4-0, 3-1). Rahman was particularly good against Macalester. He was 3-for-3 with a run in the first win, and in the second he capped a 2-for-4 performance with a run and all three Cobber RBI with his two-out, two-run game-winning home run in the bottom of the eighth. This season, Rahman is second in the MIAC in batting (.413) and on-base percentage (.486), fourth in slugging percentage (.620), fifth in hits (38) and home runs (three) and sixth in doubles (10).

The four wins last week helped Concordia get back to even with a 16-14 overall record and a 7-7 mark in conference play. Currently, the Cobbers are tied for fifth place, just one spot out of the MIAC playoffs at this point. Concordia will try to continue its playoff push with six games on the schedule this week. Tuesday, the Cobbers host Dakota Wesleyan in a nonconference doubleheader at 2:30 p.m. and Wednesday they travel to Mayville State for another twin bill outside the league. Saturday, Concordia hosts Hamline for a key 1 p.m. MIAC series.

Adam Carl, Augsburg

Eagan, Minn. / Eagan

Week of: 2012-04-16



The Augsburg baseball team has been one of the hottest teams in the MIAC at the start of conference play, with four more wins last week to run its winning streak to six in a row. Leading the charge was sophomore shortstop **Adam Carl** (Eagan, Minn.), who hit nearly .600 and slugged nearly 1.000 for the week with five RBI, three runs, three doubles and a stolen base in MIAC sweeps of St. Olaf and Concordia. For his performance, Carl has been named the MIAC Baseball Player-of-the-Week.

Carl got off to a hot start last week in Tuesday's doubleheader sweep of the Oles (7-5, 4-3) - Augsburg's first since 1987. The Auggie sophomore went 4-for-6 with two doubles, two RBI and three runs scored in the two games. For an encore, Carl went 5-for-7 with a double and three RBI in a pair of wins (5-4, 4-1) over Concordia Saturday to finish the week with a .692 batting and on-base percentage and a .923 slugging percentage. This season, Carl is hitting .352 with 24 RBI, 24 runs scored, eight doubles and two home runs.

The four wins helped Augsburg improve to 21-8 overall and move up into second place in the MIAC standings with a 7-3 conference mark. The 21-8 record is the Auggies' best 29-game start since 1987, and they'll try to extend their six-game winning streak this week with two more conference doubleheaders on the docket. Augsburg travels to Northfield to face Carleton in a 2:30 p.m. twin bill Wednesday, and Saturday the Auggies head to Arden Hills to play two with Bethel at 1 p.m.

Connor Cline, Saint John's

Bloomington, Minn. / Jefferson
Week of: 2012-04-09



Saint John's got off to a scorching start with wins in each of its first four MIAC games last week, with first baseman **Connor Cline** (Bloomington, Minn./Jefferson) playing the hero. Not only did the Johnnies' junior hit .538 for the week in doubleheader sweeps of Carleton and Concordia with three runs, three RBI and a home run, but he also came up huge in the clutch with a game-winning walk-off home run in the 12th inning of SJU's fourth win of the week. Cline also earned a win on the mound last week and, for his performance, he has been named the MIAC Baseball Player-of-the-Week.

Cline started the week with a 3-for-4 performance with an RBI in a 7-5 win over Carleton Wednesday as the team's designated hitter, and he picked up the win in a 3-2 pitcher's duel in the second game, allowing two runs on six hits with five strikeouts. He continued to swing a hot bat in Saturday's sweep of the Cobbers, going 4-for-9 with three runs and two RBI in the two victories. His biggest swing came in the 12th inning of game two with the score deadlocked at 6-6. With two outs and a full count, Cline launched his game-winner over the fence to give SJU its first 4-0 MIAC start since 2007. So far this season, Cline is hitting .341 with 15 runs and six RBI and a .979 fielding percentage.

The Johnnies 4-0 week helped them improve to 16-6 overall and, at 4-0, become one of just two teams to escape the first week of conference play without a loss along with defending conference co-champ St. Thomas. The Johnnies and Tommies will square off in a matchup of unbeatens Tuesday in St. Paul with their MIAC doubleheader set to start at 2:30 p.m. SJU will be home Saturday to host Bethel for another conference twin bill with a 1 p.m. start time.

Robert Williams, Macalester

West Covina, Calif. / Northview
Week of: 2012-04-02



Last season, the Macalester baseball team was the surprise of the MIAC as it earned a share of the regular season title. The Scots picked up where they left off with a sweep in its first conference series of the season and a nonconference sweep as well behind a big week from senior **Robert Williams** (West Covina, Calif./Northview). The Macalester catcher/DH batted an incredible .727 (8-for-11) last week with a 1.273 slugging percentage and a .769 on-base percentage with six runs, six RBI and two home runs. For his performance, Williams has been named the MIAC Baseball Player-of-the-Week.

Williams' big week started Monday as the Scots swept Northwestern in a nonconference twin bill, 9-0 and 5-2. He went 3-for-5 with an RBI and a run in the two wins, but it turns out that was just the start of his monster week at the plate. Williams was even better Saturday as Macalester scored a 9-2, 7-6, sweep of St. Olaf with a home run in each game and a 5-for-6 overall performance with five RBI and five runs scored. His home run in game one gave the Oles a 2-0 lead and, in the second, his two-run shot helped to start a Macalester comeback from a 6-0 first-inning deficit. He also started the game-winning rally with a single in the seventh. This season, Williams is hitting .471 with 23 RBI to lead the Scots in both categories.

The four wins last week helped Macalester climb above the .500 mark with a 12-9 overall record, and the Scots opened conference play with a 2-0 record against a good St. Olaf squad. Macalester will continue its MIAC title defense with a pair of conference doubleheaders this week. Wednesday, the Scots host Gustavus at 2:30 p.m. and Saturday they travel across town to face Augsburg at Parade Stadium at 1 p.m.

David Freed, Bethel



The Bethel baseball team has started strong this season, and its offense - especially lately - has been putting up big numbers. A lot of the Royals' success at the plate thus far can be credited to the man setting the tone, leadoff hitter **David Freed** (North Oaks, Minn./Mounds View). The junior is batting nearly .500 thus far with an even higher on-base percentage, and he has accounted for more than two runs per game over the team's first 14 contests. For his performance in the top spot in the Bethel lineup, Freed has been named the inaugural MIAC Baseball Player-of-the-Week for the 2012 season.

So far in 2012, Freed has been sensational setting the table for Bethel with a .478 batting average, a .567 on-base percentage and a .609 slugging percentage. He's scored 18 runs and driven in 12 more in 14 games with 22 hits in 46 at bats, including four for extra bases (two doubles, two triples). The Royals' first baseman has led his team to notable nonconference victories over the likes of UW-Whitewater, Grandview and SUNY-Oneota thus far in 2012 while starting each of the 14 games and adding five pitching appearances.

Thanks to Freed and his teammates', the Royals are above .500 heading into conference play with an overall record of 8-6, which doesn't include an exhibition win over the Minnesota Twins' rookie team on their spring break trip. Bethel opens the MIAC portion of its schedule Saturday, as it heads to Winona for a 1 p.m. doubleheader at Saint Mary's.