

2012 MIAC Football Preview and Preseason Coaches' Poll

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ST. PAUL, Minn. -- Football is annually one of the most-anticipated seasons in the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC), and last year's rendition only elevated the attention to a new level. Not only did St. Thomas complete the first back-to-back 10-0 regular seasons in the storied history of the league and reach the national semifinals, but competition throughout the conference was fierce, leading to close games and unforgettable finishes throughout the season.

With kickoff of the 2012 football season drawing near, the anticipation is already building throughout the conference and the entire state. In a little more than a week, the nine MIAC football campuses will begin their weekend transformations from highly respected academic institutions to hotbeds of football fanaticism.

The national spotlight has already begun to shine on the MIAC, with as many as four teams receiving votes in the various national preseason polls. The Tommies again lead the way, ranked in the top 10 of a trio of polls and 13th in the fourth, while Bethel, Saint John's and St. Olaf also appear in the rankings.

Lindy's Sports Magazine has three MIAC teams in its top 15 to open 2012. UST is No. 4, Saint John's is 14th and Bethel is a spot behind at No. 15. The D3football.com Top 25 features St. Thomas at No. 8, Bethel at No. 17 and both St. Olaf and Saint John's in the "Others receiving votes" category. Bethel leads at No. 12, while St. Thomas checks in at No. 13 followed by Saint John's at No. 20 in the Compughter Rankings.com preseason rankings, and the Tommies are ranked No. 7 in the USA Today Division III Top 10.

Just as the leaves change throughout every Minnesota fall season, there will be plenty of change throughout the MIAC as well. Can St. Thomas extend its dominance into a third-straight season under the direction of two-time National Coach-of-the-Year Glenn Caruso? Will Steve Johnson's Bethel team control the line of scrimmage and close the gap? After a surprising 6-4 season in Collegeville, will legendary coach John Gagliardi get the Johnnies back in contention in his remarkable 60th season at the school (and 64th overall as a head coach) as he nears the unprecedented 500-win milestone (484-133-11 overall, 460-127-10 at SJU). Or will Jerry Olszewski's St. Olaf team or Terry Horan's Concordia squad continue the climb into the league's upper echelon?

Thankfully, those questions and more will start to be answered very soon.

Coaches say St. Thomas

Caruso's St. Thomas team has won back-to-back MIAC titles, and in 2012 the conference coaches predict the Tommies' reign will continue. UST was the unanimous pick to capture its third-straight championship, receiving eight of nine first-place votes (coaches cannot vote for their own team) and a perfect total score of 64 points. The last team to win a share of the MIAC title three seasons in a row was the Saint John's squad of 2001-2003, while the last team to claim an outright three-peat was also the Jonnies, back in 1975-77.

Bethel - the Tommies biggest threat over the past two seasons - received the other first-place vote and topped a group of extremely close competitors for the No. 2 spot in the poll with 52 points. Just six points separated the Royals, third-place St. Olaf (48) and fourth-place Saint John's (46), meaning that all three are expected to provide Caruso's crew with a legitimate threat and the trio could be jockeying for position near the top of the standings all season.

Concordia is also a team to watch after winning four of its final six games a year ago, and the Cobbers check in at No. 5 with 37 points. Gustavus just barely edged Augsburg, 28-26, for the sixth spot in the coaches' poll, and Carleton (15) and Hamline (8) rounded out the final two spots in the rankings.

Awards watch

Leading up to the season, there were numerous MIAC football student-athletes nominated for prestigious honors, including the AFCA Good Works team, All-American status and the Fred Mitchell Award Watch List. Bethel's Erik Smith, Saint John's Stephen Johnson and St. Thomas' Michael Valesano were all selected as nominees for the 2012 Allstate American Football Coaches' Association (AFCA) Good Work Team, which recognizes players committed to making a difference in their communities.

Meanwhile, St. Thomas' Curtis James, Riley Dombek, Chinni Oji, Harry Pitera and Garrett Maloney, Augsburg's Adam Carl, Saint John's Bobby Fischer, Bethel's Josh Wolfe and Concordia's Tom Knowlton were all named Preseason Division III All-Americans by various publications, including D3football.com, Lindy's Sports Magazine and Beyond Sports Network. In addition, Saint John's kicker Jimmie Mattson was named to the Fred Mitchell Award Watch List for the second consecutive season. The Fred Mitchell Award is annually presented to the nation's top collegiate kicker, regardless of division.

What's new?

There was one coaching change following the 2011 season, and Bob Pagel takes over as Carleton's new head coach in an interim capacity for the 2012 season. However, most of the prominent new faces in the MIAC will be under center this season. St. Thomas, Bethel, Augsburg, Concordia, Gustavus and Hamline all graduated their starting quarterbacks and will have new signal-callers leading their respective offenses. The changes at one of the most important positions on the field could certainly impact the conference standings, and how quick the new starters adjust to their new roles could very well be the difference in deciding the MIAC champion and potential NCAA playoff bids.

Who's back?

Despite the graduation of some of the MIAC's most decorated QBs and Fritz Waldvogel - a two-time MIAC MVP as a dynamic receiver and returner, there are still a ton of talented players back on gridiron in 2012. The defending champs lost Waldvogel and QB Dakota Tracy, but have an extremely solid foundation back. All-American center Curtis James returns for Caruso, as do Preseason All-American punter Garrett Maloney and All-MIAC linebacker Harry Pitera, just to name a few.

Bethel's strength will continue to be its ground game and stout defense, with returners in place to solidify both aspects once again. Offensive lineman Josh Wolfe - a Preseason All-American and All-MIAC selection - is back to lead the line, while All-MIAC defenders Seth Mathis and Erik Smith are back to anchor the Royals' front seven.

Meanwhile, one of the league's most potent passing attacks is also back intact. St. Olaf QB Dan Dobson returns for his senior season after All-MIAC Second Team honors in 2011 and the league lead in total offense (249.4 ypg). His top two targets also return - All-MIAC WR Stephen Asp and All-MIAC Second Team WR Jake Schmeising - who combined for nearly 1,400 yards and 16 TDs last season.

The Johnnies will look to bounce back from an unusual season in Collegeville, starting with one of the MIAC's top returning defenders. Senior CB Bobby Fischer was an All-American a year ago in addition to his All-MIAC selection, and he's been tabbed as a Preseason All-American heading into this season. Senior RB Stephen Johnson will again anchor SJU's ground game after earning All-MIAC Second Team honors, and Connor Bruns emerged as the Johnnies' starter at quarterback a year ago and will look for an expanded role this year.

A trio of All-MIAC selections return for Concordia, as the Cobber look to carry momentum over from the 2011 season. Senior OT Tom Knowlton anchors a strong offensive line, and the All-MIAC selection has been named a Preseason All-American this year. Juniors Mark Wychor (nose guard) and Bryce Hentges (safety) were among the best in the league at their positions last year, earning All-MIAC honors and returning to lead the defense.

Augsburg said goodbye to standout QB Marcus Brumm, but bring back two of his top weapons. Adam Carl was an All-MIAC and All-Region Second Team tight end last season, and is a Preseason All-American choice in 2012. Also back is standout RB Tyler Maxwell, who was the only freshman to earn All-MIAC honors last season thanks to 121.3 yards per game and a school-record 13 TDs. Second Team All-MIAC LB Bryce Vee is back to lead the Auggie defense.

Gustavus will count on senior OL Brian Grundmeyer to build on his All-MIAC Second Team selection from a year ago to make life a little easier for senior QB Mureuk Mena, who moves to a new position after playing well at wideout in 2011. Carleton will be led on defense and special teams by safety Paul Hoffer, who made 69 tackles and blocked three kicks a year ago. Hamline also has a star back in the defense backfield, as John-Michael Vandenberg returns after leading the Pipers in tackles en route to 2011 All-MIAC Second Team honors.

Circle these dates

The 2012 MIAC football season kicks off in just nine days, with seven of the nine teams opening their season with nonconference games on Saturday, Sept. 1. The first two Saturdays will be devoted exclusively to nonconference competition, with MIAC play starting on Saturday, Sept. 15. The season runs through Saturday, Nov. 10 and the battle for the MIAC title and positioning in the standings could come down to the final slate of games.

Each season, one of the hottest tickets is the annual contest between St. Thomas and Saint John's. This year should be no different, and fans won't have to wait long for the latest chapter in this storied rivalry. The Tommies travel to Collegeville on Sept. 15 to kick off conference play, with a 1 p.m. scheduled start time. In another game becoming an annual event, St. Thomas will host Bethel on Oct. 13 at 1:10 p.m. in St. Paul.

Bethel's schedule ends with a flourish, as the Royals travel to Northfield for a rematch of one of last season's unforgettable finishes with a Nov. 3 game at St. Olaf, and then Bethel hosts SJU in the season finale in Arden Hills on Nov. 10. The Johnnies host the Oles in another rematch of a last-second finish on Sept. 29, and SJU will travel to Augsburg on Oct. 6 in a replay of what was possibly the most exciting finish in all of Division III a year ago when the Auggies completed a long pass for the win with no time remaining. The Johnnies also needed overtime to score a win at Concordia, and the rematch of that classic game will take place in Moorhead on Sept. 22.

Augsburg will travel across town to face Hamline in a rare night game on Sept. 22 with kickoff set for 7 p.m. under the lights in St. Paul. Carleton squares off against cross-town rival St. Olaf on Oct. 20 on the Knights' home field, and another final-day matchup of teams looking to work their way up the standings will take place in St. Peter when Gustavus hosts Concordia on Nov. 10.

A closer look

The rest of the 2012 MIAC Football Preview contains more details and information about each team to provide a closer look at each MIAC squad as the season draws near. Scroll down to see complete results from the 2012 MIAC Football Preseason Poll, helpful links and team-by-team previews along with links to each team's football home page. This season, the team previews - provided by each school's sports information director - received a facelift to give fans a more user-friendly way to prepare for the upcoming season.

Continue to visit the MIAC Web site throughout the season for updated scores, standings, stats and more, and for additional updates and interaction connect to the MIAC on its social media pages, including [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

2012 MIAC Football Preseason Coaches' Poll

Coaches voted for every team in the conference except their own team. Points were assigned for each vote (eight for first, seven for

second, etc.) Teams are ranked in order of highest point total to lowest with vote totals listed and first-place votes shown in parentheses.

2012 MIAC Football Preseason Coaches' Poll		
Rank	Institution	Total
1	St. Thomas (8)	64
2	Bethel (1)	52
3	St. Olaf	48
4	Saint John's	46
5	Concordia	37
6	Gustavus	28
7	Augsburg	26
8	Carleton	15
9	Hamline	8

MIAC Football Links

| [2012 MIAC Schedule](#) | [2011 MIAC Statistics](#) | [MIAC Recordbook](#) | [MIAC Archives](#)



AUGSBURG | [Auggies' football home page](#) |

Head Coach

- Frank Haege (Eighth season)

A Year Ago

- 4-4 MIAC | 6-4 Overall

Top Returners

- Adam Carl (JR, TE | 58 receptions, 616 yards, 5 TDs in 2011 – totals tops among all MIAC tight ends, All-MIAC 1st team, D3football.com All-West Region 2nd team in 2011; D3football.com Preseason All-America 2nd team, Lindy's Preseason All-Division III team in 2012)
- Tyler Maxwell (SO, RB | 169 carries for 849 yards and 14 TDs (13 rushing, 1 receiving) in 2011, led MIAC overall stats in rushing yards per-game (121.3); single-season school record 13 rushing TDs; Lone first-year player named to 35-member All-MIAC team in 2011, 1st-team recipient)
- Bryce Vee (SR, LB | 108 tackles (27 solo), 5.0 TFL, 2.0 sacks, 1 INT in 2011, 194 tackles (55 solo), 6.5 TFL, 2.0 sacks, 1 INT in career; All-MIAC 2nd team and All-MIAC Sportsmanship Team in 2011)

Key Losses

- Marcus Brumm (QB | 196-of-340 passing, 2,295 yards, 15 TDs in 2011; 2nd in school history in every career passing category – 607-for-1,102 passing, 6,974 yards, 46 TDs; All-MIAC 2nd team in 2011 and 2010, All-MIAC 1st team in 2009)
- Edmond Smith (DL | 90 tackles (31 solo), 10.5 TFL, 5.5 sacks in 2011, 150 tackles (63 solo), 17.5 TFL, 6.0 sacks in career; All-MIAC 2nd team and D3football.com All-West Region 3rd team in 2011)
- Tyler Phillips (DB | 79 tackles (42 solo), 2 INT, 5 pass breakups, 4.0 TFL in 2011; 193 tackles (117 solo), 5 INT, 13 pass breakups, 7.0 TFL in career; All-MIAC 2nd team in 2011, played in 2011 Aztec Bowl all-star game)

By the Numbers

- 849: Rushing yards on 169 carries for Augsburg's Tyler Maxwell in 2011, the most rushing yards for an Auggie since Marcus LeVesseur rushed for school records of 256 carries for 1,024 yards in 2004. Maxwell's 121.3 rushing yards per-game (7 games) was tops among MIAC players in overall statistics.
- 14: Sacks allowed by Augsburg in 2011, the second-lowest overall total among MIAC teams (Bethel's 9 was fewest). Three offensive line starters return to the Auggie lineup – Eric Dooley, Chad Thompson and Brian Rud.
- 108: Tackles recorded by Augsburg linebacker Bryce Vee (31 solo) in 2011, tied with Bethel's Billy Morgan for tops among MIAC players in overall statistics.

Did You Know?

- Augsburg will be looking for a quarterback to replace the top two passers in school history, who occupied the starting spot for the last six seasons – both transfers who played three seasons each at Augsburg. Jordan Berg, who played for the Auggies from 2006-08, holds every

school career passing record – 798-for-1,350 passing for 8,777 yards and 72 TDs. Marcus Brumm, who played for the Auggies from 2008-11, is second in each category – 607-for-1,102 passing for 6,974 yards and 46 TDs (tied with Derrin Lamker, 1993-97, for 2nd in TDs).

Off the Field

• Augsburg had eight players named to the Academic All-MIAC squad in 2011 – Marcus Brumm, Adam Carl, Eric Dooley, Chris Osborn, Tony Rickoff, Brian Rud, Chad Thompson and Bryce Vee.



BETHEL | [Royals' football home page](#) |

Head coach

• Steve Johnson (24th season)

A Year Ago

• 6-2 MIAC | 8-2 Overall

Top Returners

• Josh Wolfe, OL: 2012 Beyond Sports Network Preseason All-American Third Team, 2011 MIAC All-Conference First Team
• Seth Mathis, ILB: Second-leading tackler for Bethel in 2011 (76), 4.5 tackles for loss, 1 sack, 1 int., 2 forced fumbles, 2011 MIAC All-Conference First Team
• Erik Smith: Fourth-leading tackler (54) for Bethel (15th in MIAC) in 2011, 8 tackles for loss, 3 sacks, 4 hurries 2011 MIAC All-Conference First Team

Key Losses?

• Josh Aakre, QB: Passing: comp-att: 90-157 | 1363 yards passing | 16 touchdowns | Eff. of 158.78
Rushing: att-net: 141-841 | avg.: 6.0 | 14 touchdowns, MIAC All-Conference First Team, player of the week, CoSIDA Academic All-American
• Billy Morgan, LB: Led the team and conference in tackles (108), 1 sack, 1 interception, MIAC All-Conference First Team, D3PRODAY.com All-American First Team Defense, D3Football.com All West Region Third Team, 2-time Athlete of the Week
• Mitch Elliott, OL: MIAC All-Conference First Team, D3Football.com All-American Honorable Mention, D3football.com All-West Region Second Team

By the Numbers

• 7: After allowing just 16 touchdowns and an average of 242 yards per game to opposing offenses following the 2011 season, Bethel's defense was ranked No. 7 in the nation. Additionally, BU's defense allowed a mere 2.80 yard/carry and 13.80 points per game.
• 3.30: One key to the Royals success in 2011 was its ability to minimize mistakes. Bethel did this exceptionally well by averaging 3.30 penalties per game, which was ranked No. 2 among all Division III institutions and No. 5 among all NCAA institutions (FBS, FCS, Div. II, and Div. III).
• 282.4: BU continued to showcase its dominance on the ground in 2011, finishing last year's season with the best rushing offense in the MIAC and the tenth best among all Division III institutions. The Royals boasted three of the conference's Top 10 rushers and averaged 282.40 yards per game. Bethel tallied 492 rushing attempts over the 10 contests and averaged 5.74 yards per carry.

Did You Know?

• Bethel University's football program has amassed 19 consecutive winning seasons. Over that period of time, the Royals have captured four Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic titles, advanced to the NCAA Playoffs six times, and have been NCAA West Region Champions twice.

Off the Field

• Every-other year head coach Steve Johnson and associate head coach Jimmy Miller lead a class over the J-Term period that takes students to the same locations that "Easy Company" (part of the 2nd Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment), assigned to the 101st Airborne Division of the United States Army went during World War 2. Similar to the stories captured in literature and film, these students will study and witness a number of battles that the "Band of Brothers" endured. This year's trip scheduled in January will be the third of its kind.



CARLETON | [Knights' football home page](#) |

Head coach

- Bob Pagel (First season)

A Year Ago

- 1-7 MIAC | 2-8 Overall

Top Returners

- Paul Hoffer (Sr., Safety | Last year ranked third on squad with 69 tackles, including team-best 37 assists; tied for MIAC lead with 3 blocked kicks)
- Conor Lynch (Jr., Quarterback | Played four games at QB last year, incl. one start; also paced receivers with 177 yards and 2 touchdowns)
- Brian Frett (Jr., Tight End | Averaged 16.7 yards/reception over his first two seasons, last year 12 rec., 139 yards, 1 TD)

Key Losses

- Jon Lien (Running Back | Two-time All-MIAC first team; 20 career touchdowns, finished third all-time at Carleton with 2,390 rushing yards; set Carleton single-game rushing record with 259 yards against Macalester on Oct. 22, 2011)
- Mark Skoglund (Linebacker | Led team in tackles his last three seasons; finished 2011 schedule with 88 stops—sixth in the MIAC—and 55 solo tackles; All-MAIC second team in 2010)
- Brad Eckelman (Offensive Tackle | All-MIAC recognition three times, All-Region twice)

By the Numbers

- 6: Carleton blocked a MIAC-best six kicks last season (3 FG's, 2 PAT 1 punt)
- 17: Bob Pagel is the 17th head coach in the 129-year history of Carleton football.
- 154: Carleton was second among MIAC teams last season, surrendering only 154.0 passing yards per game.

Did You Know?

- Keenan Hartert had six sacks last year, the fifth-best total in the MIAC.

Off the Field

- Carleton had four football student-athletes named to the 2012 NFF Hampshire Honor Society



CONCORDIA | [Cobbers' football home page](#) |

Head coach

- Terry Horan (12th season)

A Year Ago

- 4-4 MIAC | 6-4 Overall

Top Returners

- Tom Knowlton (Sr., OT, 2012 BSN Preseason All-American, 2011 MIAC All-Conference First Team)
- Mark Wychor (Jr., NG, 2011 MIAC All-Conference First Team)
- Bryce Hentges (Jr., S, 2011 MIAC All-Conference First Team)

Key Losses

- Michael Dunham (QB, 2011 MIAC All-Conference Second Team, Concordia all-time passing yardage and completions record holder)
- Bronson Shepherd (WR, 2011 MIAC All-Conference First Team)

By the Numbers

- 4: Concordia won four of their final six games of the 2011 season
- 9: The Cobber defense returns nine of their 11 starters from last year's squad that finished third in the MIAC in rush defense
- 13: Cobber fullback Brett Baune needs 13 more TD's to break head coach Terry Horan's school record of 33 career TD's

Did You Know?

- Concordia has been in the top 10 of Division III in attendance in six of the past seven seasons. The Cobbers averaged 4,685 fans for their five home games in 2011,

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GUSTAVUS | [Gusties' football home page](#) |

Head coach

- Peter Haugen (Fourth season)

A Year Ago

- 2-6 MIAC | 2-8 Overall

Top Returners

- Brian Grundmeyer (Sr., Offensive Line, Inver Grove Heights, Minn.) - 2011 All-Conference Second Team...Left tackle, played in 22 straight games.
- Muresuk Mena (Sr., Quarterback, Inver Grove Heights, Minn.) - Slot receiver who brought in 32 catches for 307 yards last season...Ranks eighth in Gustavus history with 104 career receptions.
- Joe Haas (Jr., Middle Linebacker, Mission, Kan.) - Led Gustavus with 82 tackles (35 solo, 47 asst.) last season...Recorded 7.5 tackles for loss and two sacks...His 8.2 tackles per game ranked 11th in the MIAC.

Key Losses

- Brad Kruckeberg (Safety, Ellendale, Minn.) - All-MIAC Second Team defense in 2010 and 2011...Started in 30 consecutive games...Made 143 tackles and intercepted 10 passes over his four-year career.
- Elliott Herdina (Wide Receiver, Blooming Prairie, Minn.) - Gustavus' top slot receiver the past four seasons...Sits among the great Gustie receivers, ranking sixth in yards (1,461) and fourth in receptions (134).
- Logan Becker (Quarterback, Blue Earth, Minn.) - Starting quarterback the past two seasons, totaling over 1,900 yards of total offense both years...Completed 314 passes for 3,182 yards in his career...Ranks second all-time at Gustavus with a .587 completion percentage.

By the Numbers

- 1,295: The number of rushing yards junior running back Jeffrey Dubose (St. Paul, Minn.) has accumulated after two seasons in the Gustie backfield. Dubose has 11 career touchdowns and averages 4.9 yards per carry heading into the season.
- 322.1: The number of yards per game allowed by the Gustavus defense last season. The Gusties ranked third in the MIAC in total defense, allowing 5.0 yards per play and 158.1 yards per game (3rd/MIAC) through the air.
- 10: Gustavus' number of returning starters on both the offensive and defensive sides of the ball.

Did You Know?

- Former Gustie football standout Brian Brekke '95 will enter the Gustavus Athletics Hall of Fame this September. A three-year starting running back, Brekke was a two-time MVP and was the first Gustavus player to surpass 2,000 all-purpose yards in a season.

Off the Field

- Former safety Brad Kruckeberg '12 was named to the 2011 CoSIDA Academic All-America First Team. He later received an NCAA Post-Graduate Scholarship and was the recipient of the Bob Stein College Scholar Athlete Award presented by the Minnesota Chapter of the National Football Foundation.



HAMLIN | [Pipers' football home page](#) |

Head coach

- John Pate (Second season)

A Year Ago

- 0-8 MIAC | 0-10 Overall

Top Returners

- John-Michael Vandenberg (Sr., DB, Bothel, Wash.), Second Team All-MIAC pick who led HU in 2011 with 86 tackles
- Marc McDonald (Sr., DB, Portland, Ore.), led team with 47 solo tackles
- Stephen Girard (Sr., OL, Milaca, Minn.), has 20 career starts on offensive line

Key Losses

- Connor Sathre (QB, led team in passing and rushing yards)
- Tim Queck (WR, led team in Receptions and Punt Return Yards)
- Terry Schwartz (WR, scored both receiving TDs in 2011)

By the Numbers

- 158.6: Average Passing Yards HU allowed last season. That ranked 4th in the MIAC, ahead of, among others, St. Thomas, St. John's and St. Olaf
- 27: Returning Players from 2011
- 3: Former Piper football players who are assistant coaches this season (Jim Honsa, Cory Olsen, Tim Queck)

Did You Know?

- When Hamline hosts Augsburg on September 22, it will mark just the second night home game in Klas Field history. The other HU night game came on Aug. 31, 2006, when the Pipers defeated Mayville State, 38-7.

Off the Field

- In 2011, LB Josh Bain was a semifinalist for the Maxwell Award.
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SAINT JOHN'S | [Johnnies' football home page](#) |

Head coach

- John Gagliardi (60th season at SJU, 64th overall)

A Year Ago

- 5-3 MIAC | 6-4 Overall

Top Returners

- Bobby Fischer (Sr., CB, 5-11, 185 | led the MIAC in interceptions (7), interception return yards (243) and passes defended (17), 2011 All-MIAC first team, 2011 BSN All-America, 2012 Lindy's Preseason All-America second team)
- Stephen Johnson (Sr., RB, 6-0, 195 | led team in rushing attempts (167), rushing yards (745), all-purpose yards (887) and touchdowns (7) last fall, has started each of the last 22 games for SJU, 2011 All-MIAC second team)
- Connor Bruns (Jr., QB, 6-3, 215 | 65 of 115 passing for 952 yards and 9 touchdowns in nine games (4 starts) last fall, averaged 14.6 yards per completion)

Key Losses

- Brent Graboski (WR | 44 receptions for 702 yards and six touchdowns in 2011, career average of 16.2 yards per catch, 2011 All-MIAC second team)
- Sam Pederson (WR | 25 receptions for 468 yards and six touchdowns in 2011, career average of 18.0 yards per catch, 2010 All-MIAC second team)
- Evan Cobb (DL | 24 tackles and six tackles for loss with four sacks in 2011, 2011 All-MIAC second team)

By the Numbers

- 60: The 2012 season is the 60th for head coach John Gagliardi at SJU, and his 64th overall. College football's all-time wins leader, Gagliardi begins the season with a 484-133-11 (.779) career record and a 460-127-10 (.779) record at SJU. Three of his grandsons are on the 2012 roster.
- 7: Senior cornerback Bobby Fischer (Plymouth, Minn./Osseo) accounted for seven of the Johnnies' eight interceptions last season. His seven picks were the most by a Johnnie since 2002.
- 25.8 and 172.4: SJU allowed a program-worst (101 seasons, known statistics) 25.8 points and 172.4 rushing yards per game last fall. Despite the statistical anomalies, the Johnnies finished 6-4 and were 0.6 seconds away from being 7-3. Eight starters return on defense and three others (Nate Blenker, Alex Powell, Joe Zrust) rejoin the ranks after missing most of the 2011 season due to injury.

Did You Know?

- Senior defensive back Max Forster (Minnetonka, Minn./Hopkins) started all 45 games at shortstop and led, or tied for the team-lead, in runs (28), hits (46), doubles (10, triples (3) and slugging percentage (.538) as the Johnnies won the MIAC Playoff Championship and earned a trip to the NCAA Tournament this past spring. He also clubbed five home runs and drove in 26. Forster converted to cornerback from wide receiver halfway through the 2011 season and made 26 tackles (17 solo) with four pass breakups. The possible two-way player is expected to start at either safety or cornerback for the Johnnies this fall, and may also see time back at wideout, where he has 10 career receptions for 225 yards and a touchdown. His grandfather, Bob Forster '54, was a senior on Gagliardi's first team at SJU in 1953.

Off the Field

- Senior running back Stephen Johnson (Mahtomedi, Minn.), SJU's AFCA Good Works Team nominee, worked on the plans to build a water transport system and greenhouse in Yambiro, Ecuador, during spring semester 2012. This past June, he completed the internship by implementing the water transport system and greenhouse in Yambiro, and taught children of the village art and science. Johnson is also involved in the construction of a winter-vegetable greenhouse on the SJU campus, which will supply dining services with fresh vegetables throughout the year beginning this winter.
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ST. OLAF | [Oles' football home page](#) |

Head coach

- Jerry Olszewski (5th season)

A Year Ago

- 6-2 MIAC | 8-2 Overall

Top Returners

- Dan Dobson (QB, Sr. | 2nd team All-MIAC, 2,063 yards, 18 TDs, 9 Ints, led MIAC in total offense, 14-6 as a starter in two seasons)
- Stephen Asp (WR, Jr. | 1st team All-MIAC, 36 receptions, 9 TDs)
- Jake Schmiesing (WR, Jr. | 2nd team All-MIAC, 37 receptions, 7 TDs)

Key Losses

- Leon Clark (RB | 1st team All-MIAC, 1,008 rushing yards, 11 TDs, 31 receptions)
- Garrett Dick (OL | 1st team All-MIAC)
- Nick Brandjord (DB | 1st team All-MIAC, 51 tackles, three interceptions)

By the Numbers

- 17: St. Olaf has won 17 straight non-conference games, dating to 2003.
- 2,000: Senior quarterback Dan Dobson threw for over 2,000 yards in each of his first two seasons at St. Olaf - 2,051 in 2010 and 2,063 in 2011.
- 8: St. Olaf has finished at or above .500 in each of the last eight seasons (56-24) and 11 of the past 12 seasons (78-42).

Did You Know?

- St. Olaf plays at DePauw University on Sept. 8. The meeting is the first between the schools and will be the first football game in school history for St. Olaf in the state of Indiana.
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ST. THOMAS | [Tommies' football home page](#) |

Head coach

- Glenn Caruso (Fifth season)

A Year Ago

- 8-0 MIAC | 13-1 Overall

In the 2011 Postseason

- Advanced to NCAA Division III National Semifinals. Defeated St. Scholastica (48-2), Monmouth (38-10), St. John Fisher (45-10), lost to eventual National Champion UW-Whitewater (20-0)

Top Returners

- Curtis James, SR, C; Consensus 2011 All-America; team 36-4 in his era
- Garrett Maloney, JR, P; 40 ypp on two-year career; preseason All-America
- Harry Pitera, JR, LB; 2011; 10 TFL; 3.5 sacks, 2 FF, 1 fum. rec., 2 blocked kicks in 10 games; All-MIAC

Key Losses

- Fritz Waldvogel, WR-KR, 2X All-America, 2X Conf. POY; Career: 50 starts, 46 TDs, 7,433 all-purpose yards
- Tony Danna, LB, Career: 47 games, 325 tackles, 43.5 TFL; 2011 All-America
- Colin Tobin, RB; Career: 3,654 rushing yards, 50 TDs; 2011 All-America

By the Numbers

- 1: Toms' 2011 ranking, out of all 646 NCAA teams, in third-down conversion defense (21.9%)
- 17: Players back with starting experience, including eight selected first- or second-team All-MIAC
- 33: Number of 100-yard rushing performances by Tommie backs over last three seasons (40 games)

Did You Know?

- St. Thomas football is 25-2 at home at O'Shaughnessy Stadium in Glenn Caruso's four-year era, including an 8-0 record in 2011.

Off the Field

- Tommie football players will again volunteer with the on-campus Up 'til Dawn fundraiser for St. Jude's Hospital. UST will also begin its third year as volunteers in the Reading Recess program at St. Paul elementary schools.
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