

2012 MIAC Men's Outdoor Track and Field Championship preview

5/9/2012

MOORHEAD, Minn. -- After several surprises a year ago, it's tough to make predictions about the 2012 MIAC Men's Outdoor Track and Field Championships, which will be held Friday and Saturday at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minn. Saint John's ended St. Thomas' three-year reign atop the conference in one of the closest competitions in recent memory.

The Johnnies were the champ a year ago with a total of 141 points, just four better than Hamline, and SJU was one of five MIAC teams to finish with 100 points or more in an extremely close race at the top. However, the Tommies were bit by the injury bug and were not in triple digits, scoring 77 points and finishing sixth.

Among the big questions heading into this weekend's championship meet in Moorhead is whether or not the Tommies are back in top form and ready to retake the title. Can Saint John's defend? Will Hamline leap to the top spot? Or will Gustavus, Bethel, St. Olaf or another surprise contender make a push for the crown? Will the host Cobbers or Augsburg, Carleton, Saint Mary's or Macalester make a leap into the upper ranks of the standings? As the answers unfold Friday and Saturday, the excitement is expected to be at an all-time high.



Looking at the top returning individuals, there is talent across the board again at the 2012 Championships. St. Thomas was dominant at the indoor championships in March, and with its top three athletes healthy and in the lineup, the Tommies are one of the top contenders for the outdoor title as well. Senior Mike Hutton is seeded first in the 400-meter dash and 800-meter run, and he ranks second in the nation in the 800 after winning the national title in the event in the indoor season.

Eyo Ekpo and Ben Sathre are also expected to star for the Tommies. Sathre - the 2011 cross country national champion - has the top time in the 5,000-meter run and the No. 2 time in the 10,000-meter run and is ranked in the top 10 nationally in both. Meanwhile, Ekpo is seeded first in the high jump and second in the triple jump, and was the MIAC champ in the triple in 2010. St. Thomas is already off to a strong start after Maxwell Dunne claimed the MIAC decathlon champion last weekend as UST swept the top three places.

The defending-champion Johnnies have one athlete - Chase Myhran - seeded first heading into the meet. Myhran has the conference's top distance in the long jump this season. However, the Johnnies used a deep, talented lineup to claim the 2011 championship, and have plenty of proficient athletes back to help in the title defense.

Gustavus also returns a talented crew, headlined by Blair Riegel. Last year, Riegel claimed MIAC titles in the 100-yard dash and the long jump, and he returns as the top seed in the 100 and the triple jump, and the No. 2 seed in the long jump. Steve Goskreutz enters with the conference's top time in both the 110-meter and 400-meter hurdles, and Josh Owens - the MIAC record holder - leads the field in the pole vault.

Hamline's hopes of moving into the top spot in the team standings are bolstered by top-notch talent in the distance and throwing events. Brennan McKeag is the defending shot put champ, and he enters the 2012 meet as the top seed in the shot and the hammer throw. He ranks in the top 20 in the nation in both events. Jack Diechert returns for the Pipers at the defending champion and the No. 2 seed in the 1,500-meter run, and senior Devin Monson appears set for a pair of memorable showdowns with Sathre in the 5K and 10K. Monson is ranked fourth in Division III in the 10K and enters as the top seed, and he's second in the 5K with the 11th-fastest time in the nation.

Bethel returns a pair of defending champions in Jordon Spronk and Anthony Puckett. Spronk claimed both the 200- and 400-meter dash titles at the 2011 MIAC meet, and he enters the 2012 meet ranked third in the 400, but isn't seeded in the 200. Puckett was the 2011 pole vault champion, and he returns to defend his title seeded fourth.

Other athletes to watch this weekend include St. Olaf's Brian Saksa, who has the conference's top time and the No. 9 time in all of Division III in the 1,500-meter run. Augsburg sprinter Rick Wolke enters the meet as the favorite in the 200, Marcus Huderle of Carleton has the MIAC's top time in the steeplechase this season, and the hometown fans will be closely watching the javelin, where Concordia's Connor Johnson is seeded first.

The 2012 MIAC Outdoor Track and Field Championships will begin Friday in Moorhead with field events starting at 1 p.m. and running events beginning at 1:30 p.m. Saturday's field events will start at 11:30 a.m. with running events scheduled to start at 1 p.m. The meet's final event will begin Saturday at 5:15 p.m., and a short awards ceremony will follow to honor the men's and women's team champions.

The MIAC has set up a [home page](#) for the 2012 MIAC Outdoor Track and Field Championships, including entries, heat sheets, links to live scoring and other meet information, and it will be updated throughout the weekend with results and recaps. Concordia's sports information department also has a [home page](#) for the event, with great preview information and other links, and it will also be updated frequently throughout the meet.

[2012 MIAC Outdoor Track & Field Championships Website](#) | [Concordia's event page](#)

Links: [2012 Schedule](#) | [2012 Performance List](#) | [Archives](#) | [Recordbook](#) |



Augsburg

Coach: Dennis Barker (18th season)

2011 Championship Finish: 8th (48 points)

Augsburg Championship Preview

Coming off of an eighth-place team finish at last year's conference meet, the Augsburg College men's track and field team enters the 2012 Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Outdoor Track and Field Championships looking to build on the program's recent success. The conference meet will be held this weekend at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minn.

Leading the Auggies at the championships this season will be sprinter Rick Wolke (SR, Belle Plaine, Minn.). A 2010 NCAA outdoor national championships qualifier, Wolke has been a dominant force on the outdoor scene this season, as he has collected three first-place finishes and one MIAC Athlete of the Week award. Wolke, who finished second in the 200-meter dash at the MIAC Indoor Championships, currently holds the top time among MIAC competitors in the outdoor 200 this season. The Augsburg school record-holder in the 200 (21.61 seconds), Wolke recorded a season-best time of 21.64 seconds at the Wisconsin-River Falls Falcon Invitational on April 13. In addition to his performance in the 200, Wolke should also be in contention for an individual title in both the 100- and 400-meter dashes. Wolke's top time of 49.38 seconds in the 400 is ranked sixth in the conference, while his top time of 10.81 seconds is ranked second in the 100. Among NCAA Division III sprinters nationally, Wolke ranks 23rd in the 200 and 41st in the 100.

Another Augsburg veteran who will look to pad the Auggie point total at this year's championship is sprinter Joe Arnold (SR, Grand Rapids, Minn.). A fourth-place finisher at the MIAC Championships a season ago, Arnold is currently ranked seventh in the conference with a time of 49.44 seconds in the 400-meter dash. Arnold will also be a factor in the 200-meter dash, where he currently ranks second in the conference behind Wolke with a time of 21.93 seconds.

Rounding out the trio of impressive sprinters is first-year participant Fabien Dubbe (FY, New Prague, Minn.). Dubbe, currently ranks seventh in the conference in the 200 with a time of 22.44 seconds. Dubbe will also challenge for a spot in the finals in both the 100 and 400, where he has recorded season-best times of 11.48 and 49.89 seconds, respectively.

Wolke, Arnold and Dubbe will be joined by teammate Luke Iverson (FY, Maple Grove, Minn.) on the Augsburg 1,600-meter relay team. The quartet, which has registered two first-place finishes this season, recorded a season-best time of 3:22.59 at the Falcon Invitational.

Augsburg will also look to defend its title in the 400-meter relay, as the team of Wolke, Arnold, Dubbe and Alex Obonor (FY, Fischers, Ind./Marian Catholic (Ill.) HS) will enter the conference meet ranked second in the event this season. The relay team recorded a season-best time of 42.56 seconds at the Falcon Invite earlier this season.

In the field events, the Augsburg high jump duo of Mike Harley (FY, Sugar Hill, Ga./Stillwater (Minn.) HS) and John Spray (FY, Mount Dora, Fla./Mount Dora Bible HS) will look to continue their solid first-year campaigns at the conference meet. Harley, who finished fourth in the high jump at the MIAC Indoor Championships, currently ranks second in the conference with a height of 2.00 meters (6-feet-6.75), while Spray will enter the meet with a season-best height of 1.80 meters (5-feet-10.75). Harley claimed a first-place finish earlier this season at the Carleton College Relays, and is ranked 33rd nationally among Division III competitors.

Spray will also look to qualify in the javelin throw, where he currently holds a season-best distance of 42.82 meters (140-feet-6).



Bethel

Coach: Jim Timp (7th season)

2011 Championship Finish: 4th (101 points)

Bethel Championship Preview

Bethel University anxiously anticipates the upcoming track and field championships on Friday and Saturday, April 11-12, at Moorhead, Minn., as many members of the men's team are in prime position to make waves.

Perhaps the student-athlete with the most clout coming in for the Royals is senior Jordon Spronk (Sr., Pipestone, Minn.), who will enter the weekend competition with the third fastest time in the MIAC for the 400-meter dash. His time of 49.10 seconds at the 2012 Don Church Invitational held at Wheaton College was just edged last weekend by two runners for the top time in the conference and is a hair in front of teammates Rob LeMay (Jr., Maplewood, Minn.) and Zach Schlegel (Sr., Woodbury, Minn.). LeMay and Schlegel will both be highly competitive with times of 49.11 and 49.69, respectively.

Together the trio of sprinters, along with Anthony Puckett (So., Waconia, Minn.), will look to take home the crown in the 4x400-meter relay. The quartet on this relay team owns the No. 1 time in the conference with a mark of 3:17.0 at the Don Church Invitational, which also has them at the 20th fastest time in the country.

Anthony Puckett will not only make noise in the 4x400-meter relay, but also in the 400-meter hurdles and Pole Vault. Puckett, who owns the second-fastest time in the conference, comes into the hurdles race with a time of 54.67. Additionally, he and teammate Gabe Hymer (Sr., Apple Valley, Minn.) have the third highest thrust in the pole vault competition, at 4.65 meters.

In the longer distance runs, Bethel University will look to Matt Schafer (Jr., New Brighton, Minn.) and Zach Haskins (Jr., Maple Grove, Minn.) to lead the way. Matt Schafer, who owns the 27th fastest time in the nation, ranks sixth in the conference with his time of 1:52.83 in the 800-meter dash. Just a step behind is Haskins, who ranks 46th nationwide and seventh in the conference with a time of 1:53.49 at the Holst Invitational just weeks ago.

In the 1500-meter run Schafer owns the fourth fastest time in the conference. The New Brighton, Minn. native paced himself to a 3:54 finish at the Hamline Invitational, which ranks 30th nationwide and is just three seconds behind first place.

Zach Haskins will be the team's strongest competitor in the 5000-meter run, as his time of 14:59.35 ranks fourth in the MIAC. Haskins is also a part of the distance medley relay team that recently smashed a 29-year-old Bethel University record by nearly 15 seconds.

In the field events, Bucky Dixon (Jr., Hayward, Wis.) comes in with the Royals' best discus throw and second best in the conference (45.56m). His heave at the Don Church Invitational is just two meters shy of the first place throw.

Finally, Ben Bursaw (Sr., St. Louis Park, Minn.) will lead the way in the High Jump contest. Bursaw's leap of 1.97m at the Bolstorff Twilight has the senior in third among all other conference jumpers.

Overall, Bethel looks prime to capture a top spot in the MIAC Championships. The Royals, who finished fourth in the 2011 competition, will fight to improve its efforts and set itself up for the remainder of the season.



Carleton

Coach: David Ricks (8th season)

2011 Championship Finish: 9th (31 points)

Carleton Championship Preview

If the Knights are to move up in the team standings from a year ago, they will have to rely on their youth.

Marcus Huderle (So./Eden Prairie, Minn.) will be one of the primary Knights to watch. He has had a stellar sophomore season and is currently ranked in the top ten in the MIAC in the 800-, 1,500-, and 5,000-meter runs, as well as the steeplechase. His season-best time in the steeplechase (9:15.55) is the fastest in the MIAC since 2008, and places him at No. 15 across all Division-III runners.

Three rookies will accompany Huderle in the 4x400-meter relay. Noah Laack-Veeder (Madison, Wis./ Lafollette), Colby Seyferth (Banks, Ore.), and Arnaud Kpachavi (San Gregorio, Calif./Woodside Priory School) finished 11th out of 21 entries in the Drake Relays earlier this season, and the quartet will look to put together a strong performance at the conference meet.

The freshman will be key in other events, too. Seyferth holds the 10th-best performance in the 100-meter dash, Garo Anguiano-Sanz (Chico, Calif.) has the eighth-fastest 200-meter dash time, Isaac Schrantz (Owatonna, Minn.) holds the eighth best 400-meter time, and Laack-Veeder has raced the fourth-fastest 800-meter figure and has a chance to score in the 1500-meter run.

In the long distance runs, Carleton will be led by junior Bobby Davis (Eden Prairie, Minn.) and sophomore Guthrie Cunningham (Finland, Minn./East) who hold the sixth- and seventh-best 10,000-meter run times, respectively.

After turning in a personal record at the Drake Alternative, Adrian Carpenter (So./Menlo Park, Calif./Atherton) looks to score points in the 110-meter hurdles. He was second in the 60-meter hurdles at this year's conference indoor meet.

The trio of Dylan Cheever (Minneapolis, Minn./Southwest), Lobo James (Redmond, Wash./Telluride), and newcomer Chris Williams (Fy./Chicago, Ill./Rowe-Clark Academy) each competed in the high jump at the MIAC indoor championships and could do so once again.

C.J. Dale (Fox Island, Wash./Charles Wright Academy) will round out the jumpers and will also compete in the triple-jump and long jump. Dale currently has the fifth-longest jump in the MIAC this season.

Senior Robert Wakely (Kenmore, Wash./Northwest) looks to finish off his career with a strong performance in the javelin. His throw of 48.97 meters is the fifth-furthest in the MIAC this season.

Seyferth, Cheever, Dale, and Evan McNeil (Fy./Burnsville, Minn./Academy of Holy Angels) qualified for the MIAC Decathlon.



Concordia

Coach: Garrick Larson (19th season)

2011 Championship Finish: 7th (75 points)

Concordia Championship Preview

For the first time in several years the Concordia men's track and field team enters the MIAC Championship Meet with an individual ranked No.1 in an event. In addition, the Cobbers have several others ranked in the top 6 in the conference. The successful lead up to the conference meet as well as being able to host the conference meet has Cobber head coach Garrick Larson optimistic for a top 5 finish.

The top Concordia individual performance prior to the MIAC Meet was turned in by sophomore Connor Johnson. Johnson enters the conference meet with the top mark in the javelin. His distance of 175-10.00 is a foot farther than the next competitor. He was named the MIAC Field Athlete of the Week on Monday becoming the first CC athlete to garner MIAC weekly honors since 2008. Johnson is also ranked ninth in the triple jump.

Johnson has company in the top 5 of the conference from his field teammates. There are four CC athletes ranked in the top 10 of the javelin. The Cobbers also have a pair of athletes in the top 7 in the high jump. Freshman Mark Goss is fourth with a height of 6-4.74. Simon Erlandson is close behind with a season-best of 6-02.75.

Erik Olson is the other Cobber field athlete seeded in the top 6. He ranks sixth in the pole vault with a mark of 14-09.50. Olson will be looking to go above the 15-foot mark in his home venue for the conference meet.

The top track marks for Concordia this season have been turned in by a pair of hurdlers. Sophomore Dustin Britten is ranked second in the 110-meter hurdles with a time of 15.21. His season-best time came at the Cobber Twilight Meet and he will be hoping that the home track advantage will help him at the MIAC Meet. Britten is also ranked sixth in the 200-meter dash. Junior John Bye saved his best for the final tune-up meet of the year. He clocked a 55.03 in the 400-meters last weekend at the Ron Masanz Invite held at MSU Moorhead and is seeded third heading into conference.

The only other CC track athletes in the top 10 are junior Brad McConn and freshman Bruce Shields. McConn is ranked seventh in the 1500 meters with a mark of 3:59.32 while Shields clocked a 22.46 in the 200 meters at the Cobber Twilight Meet and ranks eighth.

The top Cobber 4x400-meter relay team has a chance to finish in the top 4 of the conference. The CC quartet heads into the meet with the fourth fastest time at 3:22.06.



Gustavus

Coach: Dale Bahr (3rd season)

2011 Championship Finish: 3rd (126 points)

Gustavus Championship Preview

After a strong third place finish last season, the Gustavus men's outdoor track and field team is poised for a return to the podium at the 2012 MIAC Championships being held on May 11-12 on the campus of Concordia College in Moorhead, Minn.

The Gusties will rely heavily on its workhorse sophomore Blair Riegel (Lakeville, Minn.) for big points in Moorhead. Riegel, the reigning MIAC champion in the 100-meter dash and long jump, will once again look to contribute in the sprints, jumps and relays. In the sprints, Riegel ranks first in the 100-meter dash (10.80) and second in the 200-meter dash (22.27) according to the most recent MIAC performance lists released by Raceberry .com. The sophomore also ranks first in the long jump (47-5) and second in the triple jump (47-5).

Helping out Riegel in the sprints will be Matt Dvorak (Burnsville, Minn.) and Phillip Butler (St. Paul, Minn.). Dvorak ranks third in 100 (10.97) and ninth in the 200 (22.70), while Butler ranks eighth in the 100 (11.24).

Eric Jorgenson (Maple Grove, Minn.) is Gustavus' top mid-distance runner, ranking seventh in the 800-meter run with a time of 1:54.42. Tanner Davenport will also look to crack the top ten in the 800, ranking 15th at a 1:56.27.

Anders Bowman (Plymouth, Minn.) will look to cap off his senior season with a strong performance in the steeplechase, entering the meet with the fourth fastest time at 9:36.44.

Rounding out the top competitors on the track is Steve Groskreutz (Faribault, Minn.). Groskreutz comes in as one of the top hurdlers in the conference, ranking first in the 400 (53.98) and second in the 110 (15.23).

To have a shot at the podium, the Gusties will need a strong showing in the field events. Having a great spring season so far has been Cameron Clause (Mankato, Minn.) in the long jump. He currently ranks second behind Riegel with a leap of 21-2.50.

Ryan Obele (Le Sueur, Minn.) will seek the top-10 in all three throwing events, as he ranks fourth in the discus (143-3), 12th in the shot put (43-5.75), and 13th in the hammer throw (148-9). Jesse Scheiterlein (Sartell, Minn.) ranks 10th in the discus (134-8), and Mark Stice ranks eighth in the hammer throw (North Oaks, Minn.).

To cap off the field events, Josh Owens (Brooklyn Park, Minn.) will attempt to defend his indoor title in the pole vault, enter the MIAC Championships as the one to beat in the event. His top mark so far this season is 16-0.75.



Hamline

Coach: Paul Schmaedeke (11th season)

2011 Championship Finish: 2nd (137 points)

Hamline Championship Preview

None of the current members of Hamline's men's Track and Field team had even been born when the school won its last outdoor title in 1982. But many of them were around last year when the Pipers lost out to St. John's by four points for the title. And they are would like to see that ancient history (well, 30 years ago anyway) be repeated instead of the modern type.

The Pipers will attempt do so this weekend in Moorhead with a deep contingent of long distance runners (several of whom have been part of the three-time conference cross country championship contingent) and an impressive field unit.

Tops on that list is senior Devin Monson, who has the best recorded times this year in the MIAC this year in the 5,000 and 10,000 Meter races. Should he match (or even come close) to his 10,000 time of 29:37.13 he recently ran in Hillsdale, Michigan, he would shatter the conference record set (ironically) in 1982.

Monson may have to fend off his own teammates to do so. Jack Deichert, the current MIAC Men's Track Athlete Of The week, won last year's 1500 Meter race. He has the second best time this year in the league in the 1500 (recorded just last week) and the 5,000. Ellis Richardson is also hot on Monson's tail with a second best league ranking in the 10,000 and the third best effort in the 5,000.

Brennan McKeag won the Shot Put and was the third in the Hammer Throw last year. This spring, he ranks tops in both events. He has had to fend off some familiar faces in Joe Morelli (second in the Shot Put) and Andrew Schlicting, who has a likewise position in the Hammer.

But it takes more than a few wins to cop an outdoor title. Veteran head coach Paul Schmaedeke is hoping that folks like Nate Dobbins (currently ranked second in the Steeplechase) as well as freshmen Arthur Moore (seventh, 110 Meter Hurdles) and Luke Johannsen (seventh, 400 Meter Hurdles) can move up the list in Moorhead. In addition, the Pipers have four of the top ten listed results this year in the Triple Jump.

"Our goal is always to be in the top three," Schmaedeke said. "We lost some real good talent from last year's team and it is difficult to ask freshmen to score a lot of points in their first meet. And I wish we were a bit healthier (PV Shaise Schuette is hurt). But our guys have been getting better all spring and I think we're going there in a good frame of mind. We're as ready as we can be."

Macalester



Coach: Martin Peper (19th season)

2011 Championship Finish: 11th (0 points)

Macalester Championship Preview

The Scots will send a contingent to Moorhead with hopes of moving up from last year's 11th place finish and have a few possible point scorers.

Brent Campbell (Jr., St. Catherine, Jamaica / Glenmuir) leads the Macalester sprinters and is currently ranked in the top 10 in the 100-meter dash (11.11). Joe Frankl (So., Wilmette, Ill. / New Trier) comes in with a 1:56.86 mark in the 800-meter run and will be looking to improve on that mark while Sebastian Roemer adds depth in this event. Dan Voss (So., Willmar, Minn.) ran a 4:04.26 in the 1500 at Hamline's Meet of the UnSaintly, and leads a Macalester distance-running group which includes Auburn Jimenez (So., East Los Angeles, Calif. / St. John Bosco) and Carl Biggers (Sr., Verona, Wis.).

Potential point scorers in the vertical jumps include Siqi Zheng (Jr. Guangzhou, China / Affiliated H.S. of SCNU) in the high jump and Mason Kriegel (Fy., Danbury, Wis.) in the pole vault.

Saint John's



Coach: Tim Miles (33rd season)

2011 Championship Finish: 1st (141 points)

Saint John's Championship Preview

Saint John's won the 2011 MIAC Outdoor Championship with a total of 141 points, followed by Hamline (137), Gustavus (126) and Bethel (101). Eight different Johnnies earned All-MIAC honors.

Senior Logan Schwinghammer (Sartell, Minn./Sartell-St. Stephen) earned All-MIAC honors by finishing third in the 110-meter hurdles (16.02). Sophomore Brian Vargason (Owatonna, Minn.) earned All-MIAC status with a third-place finish (14.05 meters) in the shot put. Senior Rob Floren (Kenyon, Minn./Kenyon-Wanamingo) earned All-MIAC honors with a second-place finish in the long jump (6.68 meters). Senior Dustin Franta (La Crescent, Minn.) claimed third (32:40.84) in the 10,000-meter for All-MIAC status. The Johnnies 4x400-meter relay finished second with a time of 3:19.13, while the 4x800-meter relay finished third with a time of 7:53.92.

SJU will again expect a strong showing from its throwers, after earning All-MIAC honors in throwing events four times last year. Senior Wade Powers (Hawick, Minn./New London-Spicer) leads the MIAC in the discus with a top throw of 47.83 meters. Powers and Vargason are fourth (14.04 meters) and fifth (14.02 meters), respectively, in the shot put. SJU holds five of the top 10 shot-put marks in the conference.

In other throwing events, Powers is fourth in the hammer throw (50.93 meters) and junior Andrew Calascione (Parker, Colo./Chaparral) holds the third-best distance in the javelin (49.73 meters).

Senior Andrew Clasen (Plymouth, Minn./Robbinsdale Armstrong) is fifth in the MIAC in the steeplechase with a time of 9:37.24, while sophomore Nate Engel (Plymouth, Minn./Wayzata) and senior Ruari Moynihan (Fargo, N.D./South) are sixth (9:39.85) and seventh (9:41.67), respectively. Engel and Clasen finished sixth (9:43.20) and seventh (9:45.27), respectively, at last year's Outdoor meet.

Sophomore John Subialka (Plymouth, Minn./Wayzata) is currently third in the 10,000 meters (32:38.69), followed by junior Matt Scherber (Royalton, Minn./Sartell-St. Stephen) in fourth (32:45.32). In the 5,000 meters, Moynihan is fifth (14:59.65) and Franta (15:04.11) is sixth.

Schwinghammer is third in the 400-meter hurdles (56.04) and sixth (15.62) in the 110-meter hurdles. Following Schwinghammer, sophomore Taylor Nauman (Blaine, Minn./Totino-Grace) is ranked sixth in the 400-meter hurdles with a time of 56.65. Freshman Chase Myhran (Orono, Minn.) leads the conference in the long jump with a distance of 6.84 meters.

Junior Kevin Horton (Eagan, Minn.) is fifth (49.48) in the 400 meters, while senior Chris Phillips (Ham Lake, Minn./Blaine) and sophomore Jack Elsnes (Brooklyn Park, Minn./Champlin Park) is sixth (11.14) and seventh (11.15) respectively, in the 100 meters.

The Johnnies are third in the 4x100-meter relay (43.12) after finishing third overall in the MIAC Outdoor Championships with a time of 42.75.



Saint Mary's

Coach: Shawn McMahon (5th season)

2011 Championship Finish: 10th (22 points)

Saint Mary's Championship Preview

With the graduation two-time All-American Andrew Brueggen and national-qualifier Sara Harstad, center stage — and the spotlight that goes with it — is vacant for the Saint Mary's University men's and women's track and field teams.

For now — and not for long.

"As is the case every year, great athletes leave us," SMU coach Shawn McMahon said. "And as is the case every year, returning athletes dig in and rise to the top of their own game — and I don't think this year will be any different.

"When someone re-writes the record books — especially at the MIAC level — you don't replace them. I think Andrew's example and his commitment to improve still very much exists among our returning athletes," McMahon added. "People like Andrew, Brittany Kuehn and Sara Harstad are virtually impossible to replace, but we will be saying that about some of our current athletes once they move on, too.

"We've got some real talent ready to step forward."

Leading the charge on the men's side are seniors David Feather (Oak Creek, Wis.), Robby McGuire (Rochester, Minn.) and Michael Mockler (Dubuque, Iowa), while an experienced women's squad is spearheaded by seniors Kassondra Burtis (Fairmont, Minn.), Stephanie Sturges (Woodbury, Minn.) and Regina Quandt (Minneapolis, Minn.).

"I'm very encouraged by the potential on both our men's and women's teams," McMahon said. "There's some real top-end talent on both squads."

On the men's side, the Cardinal distance runners are ready to steal the show, according to McMahon.

"A formerly young group, our distance and middle-distance runners have matured and I think those guys should expect to do some damage this year," said McMahon. "David Feather and Robby McGuire are All-MIAC level competitors that have the experience and talent to get it done, and (juniors) Peter Borash (Bowlus, Minn.) and Jake Traxler (Le Center, Minn.) had great years last year and are coming off real solid cross country seasons.

"The distance squad is possibly the deepest Saint Mary's has ever had — the work of cross country coach (Ward) Berndt and assistant Brett Ayers is very evident."

On the women's side, McMahon expects Burtis and junior Coco Booker (St. Paul, Minn.) to pick up a bit of the slack left by the graduation of Harstad, while Sturges and Quandt lead a talented group of runners.

"Coco had a great indoor season — finishing second in the shot put at the conference championships — and Kassondra keeps getting better every week. They both look to be on pace to be All-MIAC caliber performers," McMahon said. "We'll be looking for Steph and Regina to provide some points (at the conference championships), while Bethany Schmidt (Sparta, Wis.) really started coming on last year as a great runner and I expect some good things from her this year."

Add to that the emergence of distance runners Amy Spitzmueller (New Brighton, Minn.) and Katie Stolz (Forest Lake, Minn.) on the women's side, and Aaron Haley (Plainview, Minn.) on the men's side — all three coming off exceptional cross country seasons — and it's no wonder McMahon is walking around campus with a permanent smile on his face.

"It's always exciting this time of year," said McMahon. "The potential is certainly there, and I'm looking forward to seeing what lies ahead for both squads."



St. Olaf

Coach: Phil Lundin (4th season)

2011 Championship Finish: 5th (100 points)

St. Olaf Championship Preview

St. Olaf will look to return to the top half of the conference. The Oles placed fourth last season and were fifth at this year's Indoor Championships.

Brian Saksa, who earned All America honors in the 1,500 at the NCAA Indoor Championships in March, holds the fastest time in the 1,500. Teammate Reid Gilbertson's best time is less than a second back.

Stefan Lemke, Anders Nienstaedt and Grant Wintheiser will also factor in the 1,500. Brian Tomlinson looks to contribute in the 800.

Sprinters Reggie Woods, Cameron Smith and Kevin Foss will lead the Oles in the sprints. Smith hopes to place in the long jump, as well.

Aaron Dunphy and Brandon Berger are both seeded in the top ten of the 110 meter hurdles. Berger also holds the third best triple jump mark this season.

Senior JB Tut is a potential force in the 400 meter hurdles and the high jump.

Rookie Nicholas Hodge leads the Conference in the javelin. John Bennett and Ethan Smith look to collect in the shot put and hammer throw.



St. Thomas

Coach: Steve Mathre (17th season)

2011 Championship Finish: 6th (77 points)

St. Thomas Championship Preview

Key injuries in 2011 spiraled St. Thomas to an uncharacteristic sixth-place finish at the 2011 MIAC Track and Field Championships. In 2012, the Tommies will look to squeeze out points at every turn as at least three teams appear to have a shot at the team crown when the two-day competition unfolds in Moorhead.

The Toms have captured 52 of the last 57 MIAC team championships contested indoors and outdoors since 1983. That includes 24 men's outdoor titles and all 28 held indoors.

In all, St. Thomas men's and women's squads have won 109 all-time MIAC team titles in indoor and outdoor track and field.

Coach Steve Mathre's Tommies will build around three elite athletes who helped St. Thomas place fifth in the national indoor meet:

--Senior All-American Mike Hutton is a threat in the 800, 4x400 and possibly the 4x800 and open 400.

--Senior All-American distance runner Ben Sathre, the NCAA cross country national champ last November, was a double winner in March at the conference indoor meet.

--Junior All-American Eyo Ekpo is expected to challenge for titles in the long jump, triple jump and high jump.

The team title likely will swing on depth and balance. In the March indoor meet, St. Thomas used points from 27 athletes and scored in 19 of 20 events at it outscores runner-up Hamline by 60 points.

The Toms got a good start in last week's decathlon with 24 team points as it placed 1-2-3 led by winner Maxwell Dunne.

In the remaining 20 events, St. Thomas is seeded first in five events, second in four events, and third in seven events.