

2016 MIAC Men's Soccer Preview and Preseason Coaches' Poll

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2016 MIAC Men's Soccer Conference Preview

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. – The Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) enjoyed an outstanding 2015 season on the men's soccer field, and with the 2016 campaign set to kick off on Thursday, anticipation is high to see if the league can continue its collective ascent in NCAA Division III.

A year ago, there were success stories across the fields of the MIAC, as the league sent two teams – Macalester and St. Olaf – to the NCAA Tournament. Both reached the second round where they squared off against one another. The Oles prevailed for their first-ever trip to the Sweet 16 to put the postseason cherry on top of a tremendous season for the conference as a whole.

In all, the MIAC had four teams – the Scots, St. Olaf, St. Thomas and Saint John's – each finish with 12 or more victories. More than half of the conference – six teams, to be exact – finished above .500 and one more squad was just a game below even. All but one of the MIAC's 11 teams won at least six games in 2015, resulting in tremendous parity and excitement throughout the entire season.

However, the two headliners were the league's two NCAA Tournament teams. Macalester had a remarkable season and claimed the conference championship without a loss (8-0-2) in MIAC play. The Oles finished fourth in the regular season standings but got hot at the right time, rallying for three wins to claim the MIAC Playoff title, and the team added two more wins in the national tournament to earn a spot in the Sweet 16.

Saint John's was the regular-season runner-up a year ago, and joined Macalester with a first-round bye in the MIAC Playoffs, where the Johnnies ran into the red-hot Oles in a 1-0 loss. Carleton claimed third place and a Playoff bid as well, with St. Thomas and Hamline sharing fifth place and grabbing the final two MIAC tournament spots. The Tommies pulled off a pair of dramatic road upsets – at Carleton (1-0, OT) and at Macalester (2-1) – to reach the MIAC Playoff title where their magical run ended in a 2-0 loss to St. Olaf.

Gustavus was just outside the Playoff picture in seventh place, with Augsburg just two points back of the Gusties in eighth. Bethel, Concordia and Saint Mary's rounded out the final three places in the standings. However, each of those five teams certainly had their highlights, and reason for optimism to challenge for Playoff contention as 2016 begins.

The 2016 season is set to start Thursday, with eight of the MIAC's 11 teams opening their season against nonconference foes. The others will kick things off over the following days, with MIAC teams warming up against out-of-conference competition over the seasons opening weeks. Conference play begins Wednesday, Sept. 14, and will run through the regular season's final day – Saturday, Oct. 29. The MIAC Playoffs will follow with quarterfinals on Tuesday, Nov. 1, semifinals on Wednesday, Nov. 2, and the championship on Saturday, Nov. 5. The tournament champ will receive the league's automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament, although if 2015 is an indication, multiple teams may be in line to represent the conference on the sport's biggest stage.

Though Macalester separated itself throughout the regular season a year ago, and St. Olaf stole the show in the postseason, numerous teams enter the 2016 campaign hopeful that they could be the one left standing at the end. This season, the battle for the MIAC men's soccer championship and six MIAC Playoff spots expects to be a can't-miss, season-long fight with excitement and intrigue to spare.

COACHES CALL FOR A SCOTS REPEAT

The MIAC coaches once again cast their votes in the Preseason Coaches' Poll, and the top-end talent was reflected in the voting, as four different teams received first-place votes and just 13 points separated the top four. However, Macalester's unbeaten run through the conference a year ago wasn't forgotten as the coaches tabbed the Scots as the favorite to repeat. Macalester headlined the poll with six first-place votes and a total of 89 points.

The strong postseason runs of St. Olaf and St. Thomas made them the top contenders, as each received two first-place votes. The Oles finished with a total of 81 points to grab the No. 2 spot, and St. Thomas was just two points back with 79. 2015 runner-up Saint John's is also expected to be in the mix again, as the Johnnies received the other first-place vote and 76 total points to round out an exceptionally strong top four.



Carleton (61 points) grabbed the final spot in the top five, while Gustavus (52 points) edged Hamline (51 points) by a single point for the final spot in the coaches' predicted six-team Playoff field. Augsburg received 44 points to finish eighth in the poll and also figure into the postseason mix, and Bethel (33 points), Concordia (24 points) and Saint Mary's (15 points) rounded out the final three spots in the preseason predictions.

PLAYERS TO WATCH

It's easy to see why the coaches are confident in the Scots' chances to repeat, as Macalester and Head Coach Gregg Olson have a ton of talent coming back from last season's 14-2-5 (8-0-2 MIAC, 26 points) team, led by a trio of talented seniors. Two-time All-MIAC and First Team All-Region goalkeeper Zeke Vainer is back as the team's defensive anchor. Midfielder Charlie Spurr is back as well after earning All-MIAC and Second Team All-Region honors in 2015, and Austin Burrows leads the Scots' forwards after scoring eight goals and earning All-MIAC Honorable Mention (HM) honors a year ago.

The Oles definitely have some talent to replace from last season's Sweet 16 team, but Head Coach Kurt Anderson's cupboard certainly isn't bare following last season's 15-8-1 (6-3-1 MIAC, 19 points) campaign. All-MIAC HM senior Erik Frank and classmate Tyler Rosera are both back to lead the team's defensive corps, while Aaron Miller is also back to provide senior leadership in the midfield after starting all 24 games a year ago.

St. Thomas and Saint John's are well-known for their football rivalry, but their soccer programs head into 2106 looking with equally high hopes. The Tommies (12-7-1, 5-4-1 MIAC, 16 points) bring back All-MIAC duo Pierce Erickson (Jr. F) and Mark Heydt (Sr. D) and two-time All-MIAC HM defender Johnny Mulvahill also returns to lead a talented team in St. Paul. The Johnnies (12-4-2, 7-2-1 MIAC, 22 points) restock their roster behind a strong senior nucleus. Rocky Harmon returns in the midfield, Dylan Lehrer is back on defense, and Sam Newman will lead the forwards after a strong summer performance with Division III Team USA on its trip to Brazil.

Carleton (9-6-4, 6-2-2 MIAC, 20 points) was third a year ago and must replace MIAC Player-of-the-Year Branden McGarrity, but Head Coach Bob Carlson's team still has legitimate hopes of contending in his 20th season leading the Knights. All-MIAC HM defender Stephen Baisch returns, as does leading goal-scorer Danny Leal and talented goalkeeper Brandon Hilliard. Gustavus (9-5-3, 3-4-3 MIAC, 12 points) was above .500 overall but missed out on the postseason last year but hopes to be right back in contention in 2016 with plenty of offensive talent back in St. Peter. Senior forward Patrick Roth and his team-leading 16 points return, as do junior midfielder Matt Murakami and sophomore forward Arthur Parens.

Hamline (8-9-2, 5-4-1 MIAC, 16 points) was one of 2015's brightest surprises in conference play, as the Pipers scored a top-five finish and a trip to the MIAC Playoffs. This season, two-time All-MIAC midfielder Jake Niemann returns to lead the team, alongside All-MIAC HM defender Oscar Campbell and fellow mid James Reardon. Augsburg (6-10-2, 3-6-1 MIAC, 10 points) has a ton of senior talent back as it tries to work its way back into the Playoff picture in 2016. Forward Ben Henry returns for his final season after earning two-straight All-MIAC honors and Third Team All-Region accolades in 2015, and he's joined by decorated defensive duo Barinedum Kordah (All-MIAC) and Festus Lamin (All-MIAC HM).

Bethel (6-10-2, 2-7-1 MIAC, 7 points) went 5-5 in its last 10 games in 2015 and hopes to carry that momentum forward behind the return of senior forward Danny Jaderholm and juniors Jakob Bartels (GK) and Kevin Hintz (MF). Concordia (4-14, 2-8 MIAC, 6 points) has a strong group of upperclassmen back as the Cobbers look for improvement. Seniors Ben Gologozza (GK) and Sage Thornbrugh (F) were both All-MIAC HM picks, and Jacob Schmidt (Jr. MF) led the team in scoring in 2015. Saint Mary's (6-9-3, 0-7-3 MIAC, 3 points) went 6-2 against nonconference competition in 2015 and hopes to carry that into the MIAC this season behind the return of All-MIAC HM defender Chris Beiersdorf and forwards Jared Wolt and Jim Dreshar, who shared the team lead in goals a year ago.

A CLOSER LOOK

The rest of the 2016 MIAC Men's Soccer Preview contains complete results from the 2016 Preseason Coaches' Poll, a video from MIAC Media, helpful links and a preview for each team submitted by their sports information director. The MIAC web site - www.miacathletics.com - will be an outstanding source for MIAC men's soccer news, schedules, scores, stats and more throughout the 2016 season.

Visit the [MIAC scoreboard](#) on game days to follow all the action, and download the [MIAC mobile app](#) to have all the information with you anywhere you travel. Also, connect to the conference on its [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#) pages for updates and interaction all season long.

2016 MIAC Men's Soccer Preseason Coaches' Poll

Coaches voted for every team in the conference except their own team. Points were assigned for each vote (10 for first, nine 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.

| 2016 MIAC Men's Soccer Preseason Coaches' Poll | | |
|--|------------------|-------|
| Rank | Institution | Total |
| 1. | Macalester (6) | 89 |
| 2. | St. Olaf (2) | 81 |
| 3. | St. Thomas (2) | 79 |
| 4. | Saint John's (1) | 76 |

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|-----|--------------|----|
| 5. | Carleton | 61 |
| 6. | Gustavus | 52 |
| 7. | Hamline | 51 |
| 8. | Augsburg | 44 |
| 9. | Bethel | 33 |
| 10. | Concordia | 24 |
| 11. | Saint Mary's | 15 |

2016 MIAC Men's Soccer Playoffs

The [2016 MIAC Playoffs](#) will feature the conference's top six teams from the regular season in a single-elimination, high-seed host tournament. The top two seeds receive byes to the semifinals, while teams seeded No. 3-6 will square off in the quarterfinals. The two quarterfinal games will take place Tuesday, Nov. 1, the two semifinal games will be follow on Wednesday, Nov. 2, and the championship is set for Saturday, Nov. 5. The winner will receive the MIAC's automatic bid to the 2016 NCAA Division III Men's Soccer Tournament.

| [MIAC Men's Soccer Playoffs Websites](#) | [2016](#) | [2015](#) |

MIAC Men's Soccer Links

| [2016 MIAC Schedule](#) | [2015 MIAC Statistics](#) | [MIAC Recordbook](#) | [MIAC Archives](#) |

Team-by-Team Previews

| [AUG](#) | [BU](#) | [CAR](#) | [CON](#) | [GAC](#) | [HU](#) | [MAC](#) | [SJU](#) | [SMU](#) | [STO](#) | [UST](#) |



AUGSBURG | [Auggies' men's soccer home page](#) |

Head Coach

- Greg Holker (13th season)

A Year Ago

- 3-6-1 MIAC (8th place) | 6-10-2 Overall

Players to Watch

- Ben Henry (F, SR | All-MIAC in 2015 and 2014, NSCAA All-North Region 3rd team, NSCAA Scholar All-North/Central Region 1st team in 2015, All-MIAC Honorable Mention in 2013; 3 goals and 2 assists in 2015; 14 goals and 5 assists for 33 points in 54 career games.)
- Barinedum Kordah (D, SR | All-MIAC in 2015; Led Augsburg with 8 goals and 2 assists for 18 points in 2015; 10 goals and 4 assists for 24 points in 54 career games)
- Festus Lamin (D, SR | All-MIAC Honorable Mention in 2015; Defensive midfielder averaged 63.0 minutes per-game in 17 games in 2015.)

Did You Know?

- Greg Holker, entering his 13th season as Augsburg's head coach in 2016, has a 114-85-26 (.560) career record. His 114 wins, the most in school history, are more than the combined wins for Augsburg in the 25 seasons prior to his arrival in 2004 (109-266-29 from 1979 to 2003).



BETHEL | [Royals' men's soccer home page](#) |

Head Coach

- Jeremy Iwaszkowicz (6th season)

A Year Ago

- 2-7-1 MIAC (9th place) | 6-10-2 Overall

Players to Watch

- Danny Jaderholm (F, Sr. | 5 G, 3 A, 13 Pts. in 2015)
- Jakob Bartels (G, Jr. | 1.51 Ga.Avg in 2015, 97 Saves, 2 Shutouts, Scored one goal)
- Kevin Hintz (M, Jr. | 1 G, in 2015)

Did You Know?

- The Royals will play 11 of their 18 matches at the friendly confines of the Ona Orth Athletic Complex in 2016 which has been upgraded

recently with a soccer team facility. The building was opened in the 2015 season but has since been upgraded and includes an air-conditioned team room with lockers for both the men and women along with a second level for film, broadcasting, statistics and small group gatherings and this summer the branding of the inside and outside of the building was completed.



CARLETON | [Knights' men's soccer home page](#) |

Head Coach

- Bob Carlson (20th season)

A Year Ago

- 6-2-2 MIAC (3rd place) | 9-6-4 Overall

In the 2015 Postseason

- Lost 0-1 (OT) to St. Thomas in MIAC Playoffs - Quarterfinals

Players to Watch

- Stephen Baisch (D, Jr. | All-MIAC Honorable Mention in 2015; an integral member of the Carleton backline as the Knights' defense was the second stingiest among MIAC squads, posting a 0.75 GAA)
- Danny Leal (F, Sr. | Paced the Knights with 7 goals last season and was second among MIAC players with 4 game-winning goals)
- Brandon Hilliard (GK, Jr. | Ranked second among MIAC keepers with an .819 save percentage and tied for the conference lead with 7 shutouts)

Did You Know?

- The Knights have made 9 consecutive trips to the postseason, more than twice the length of the next-longest streak for a MIAC squad (4). Over this span, the Knights own a .789 win percentage in conference matches.
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CONCORDIA | [Cobbers' men's soccer home page](#) |

Head Coach

- Ben Schneweis (5th season)

A Year Ago

- 2-8 MIAC (10th place) | 4-14 Overall

Players to Watch

- Ben Glogoza (GK, Sr. | 2015 MIAC All-Conference Honorable Mention; 2nd in the MIAC in saves in 2015; 3-year starter)
- Jacob Schmidt (M, Jr. | Led the team in scoring in 2015 with five goals; 2-year starter)
- Sage Thornbrugh (F, Sr. | 2015 MIAC All-Conference Honorable Mention; 3rd on the team in scoring in 2015; 3-year starter)

Did You Know?

- 16 of the 32 players on the 2016 Concordia roster are from North Dakota.
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GUSTAVUS | [Gusties' men's soccer home page](#) |

Head Coach

- Mike Middleton (Seventh season)

A Year Ago

- 3-4-3 MIAC (7th place) | 9-5-3 Overall

Players to Watch

- Patrick Roth (Forward, Sr. | led team with seven goals and 16 points last season ... took a team-high 37 shots)
- Matt Murakami (Midfield, Jr. | three goals and three assists for nine points last season)
- Arthur Parens (Forward, So. | scored five goals in 16 games last season with a .600 shot-on-goal percentage)

Did You Know?

- In his seventh season as head coach, Mike Middleton welcomes 11 freshman to his 28-man roster.
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HAMLIN | [Pipers' men's soccer home page](#) |

Head Coach

- Alex Morawiecki (5th season)

A Year Ago



- 5-4-1 MIAC (T5th place) | 8-9-2 Overall

Top Returners

- Jake Niemann (Sr, MF) All-MIAC choice in 2013 and 2015 –DNP in 2014 due to military commitment.)
- Oscar Campbell (Jr., D) All-MIAC HM in 2015; has not missed a game in his career
- James Reardon (Jr., MF) Has not missed a game in his career; 4 assists last year

Did You Know?

- Hamline's MIAC playoff appearance last year was its first since the 2006 season.



MACALESTER | [Scots' men's soccer home page](#) |

Head Coach

- Gregg Olson (5th season)

A Year Ago

- 8-0-2 MIAC (1st place) | 14-2-5 Overall

In the 2015 Postseason

- NCAA 1st Round vs. St. Scholastica, W, 1-0
- NCAA 2nd Round vs. St. Olaf, L, 0-1

Players to Watch

- Zeke Vainer (GK, Sr. | 2-time All-MIAC, 2015 All-Region 1st team, 0.73 GAA, 75 saves, .824 Sv%, 7 shutouts)
- Charlie Spurr (M, Sr. | All-MIAC, All-Region 2nd team, 8 G, 1 A, 17 TP in 2015)
- Austin Burrows (F, Sr. | All-MIAC honorable mention in 2015; 8 G, 4 A, team-best 20 TP)

Did You Know?

- The Scots, who are ranked 20th in the NSCAA Division III Preseason Poll, were 13-0-5 in the regular season, tying the school record for most regular-season games without a loss. The 1997 team was 14-0-4.



SAINT JOHN'S | [Johnnies' men's soccer home page](#) |

Head Coach

- John Haws (7th season)

A Year Ago

- 7-2-1 MIAC (2nd place) | 12-4-2 Overall

In the 2015 Postseason

- L, 0-1 vs. St. Olaf in MIAC Semifinals

Players to Watch

- Rocky Harmon (M, Sr. | 2014 All-MIAC...tallied a goal and three assists in 16 matches last fall...has 26 points (9g/8a) in 52 career games)
- Dylan Lehrer (D, Sr. | 2015 CoSIDA Academic All-District...posted two goals and two assists in 17 matches last fall...has 11 points (4g/3a) in 43 career games)
- Sam Newman (F, Sr. | Traveled to Brazil with USA D-3 soccer team this past summer...finished second on the team with four goals, including three game-winners, in 2015...has 16 points (6g/4a) in 44 career games)

Did You Know?

- SJU will play three schools ranked in the top 20, according to the NSCAA preseason poll: No. 2 Loras (Iowa), No. 15 St. Olaf and No. 20 Macalester. The Johnnies went 1-2-1 against the three schools last fall. Haws' squad will also face three teams that played in the 2015 NCAA Division III playoffs: Loras, St. Olaf and the Milwaukee School of Engineering. Loras advanced to the Sweet 16 of the NCAA Tournament in 2014 and finished as the national runner-up last fall. The Johnnies' eight non-conference opponents combined for a 92-59-14 (.600) record in 2015 fall. Only seven of SJU's 18 regular-season opponents this fall failed to reach nine wins last season.



SAINT MARY'S | [Cardinals' men's soccer home page](#) |

Head Coach

- Pete Watkins (6th season)

A Year Ago

- 0-7-3 MIAC (11th place) | 6-9-3 Overall

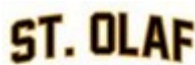
Players To Watch

- Jared Wolt (Forward, Jr. | 17 GP, 4 G, 0 A, 8 Pts. ... Shared team lead in goals, third in points. ... 2014 honorable-mention All-MIAC)

- Chris Beiersdorf (Defender, So. | 18 GP, 3 G, 2 A, 8 Pts. ... 2015 honorable-mention All-MIAC)
- Jim Dreshar (Forward, Senior | 18 GP, 4 G, 1 A, 9 Pts ... Shared team lead in goals, second on team in points)

Did You Know?

- The Cardinals boasted three players who boasted multiple-goal games a year ago: Chris Beiersdorf (Arlington Heights, Ill.) recorded his first collegiate multiple-goal game with two goals against Martin Luther on Oct. 21, while Wolt notched his first collegiate two-goal game vs. Simpson on Sept. 23, and Kareem Rassas (Lake In The Hills, Ill.) posted his first two-goal outing as a Cardinal against Cornell on Sept. 4.



ST. OLAF | [Oles' men's soccer home page](#) |

Head Coach

- Kurt Anderson (28th season)

A Year Ago

- 6-3-1 MIAC (4th place) | 15-8-1 Overall

In the 2015 Postseason

- Defeated UW-Oshkosh 2-0 in NCAA First Rd... Defeated Macalester 1-0 in NCAA second Rd... Lost to Wheaton (Ill.) 2-1 in overtime in NCAA third round.

Players to Watch

- Aaron Miller (M, Sr. | Started all 24 games... Had two goals and two assists.)
- Tyler Rosera (D, Sr. | Had four goals... Started 23 of the Oles' 24 games.)
- Erik Frank (D, Sr. | Was All-MIAC honorable mention... Started all 24 games for a backfield that allowed 1.0 goals/game.)

Did You Know?

- The Oles' trip to the round of 16 last fall was the first in school history... The Oles have won at least 10 games in each of the last five seasons and eight of the last nine... Last season St. Olaf jumped ahead quickly in games, outscoring opponents 23-8 in the first half.



ST. THOMAS | [Tommies' men's soccer home page](#) |

Head Coach

- Jon Lowery (5th Season)

A Year Ago

- 5-4-1 MIAC (T5th place) | 12-7-1 Overall

In the 2015 Postseason

- MIAC No. 6 seed – defeated Carleton 1-0 (OT) in Quarterfinals, Macalester 2-1 in Semifinals, fell to St. Olaf 2-0 in Championship.

Players to Watch

- Pierce Erickson (F, Jr. | 2015 MIAC All-Conference... Recorded eight goals (t-5th/MIAC) and two assists for a total of 18 points (t-7th/MIAC) as a sophomore last season... Has started 33 of 36 career games played... Scored 13 goals paired with three assists for 29 career points)
- Mark Heydt (D, Sr. | 2015 MIAC All-Conference... Finished third on the team in points last season with 15 thanks to four goals and seven assists (t-5th/MIAC) from the left back position... Has started 40 of 45 career games played as a Tommie... Four goals, 12 assists, and 20 career points)
- Johnny Mulvahill (D, Sr. | 2x MIAC All-Conference Honorable Mention (2014, 2015)... Played in all 20 games last season, anchoring a St. Thomas defense that allowed just over one goal per game... Scored four goals for eight points in 2015... Has started 50 of 57 career games played, scoring eight goals for a total of 16 points)

Did You Know?

- The Tommies have five fifth-year seniors on the roster this season, a rarity in NCAA Division III.

[MIAC Men's Soccer Home Page](#)