

2011 MIAC Men's Cross Country Championship Preview

10/26/2011

ST. PAUL, Minn. -- The 2011 Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) Men's Cross Country Championships will take place Saturday, Oct., 29, with plenty of intriguing storylines. However, the most prevalent is whether or not Hamline University will repeat the sheer dominance of its 2010 performance in its quest for a third-straight championship.

Saturday's race will be held at Como Park Golf Course in St. Paul, Minn., for the 14th consecutive season. The men's 8K race will begin at 3:15 p.m., following the women's race at 2:15 p.m. Saint Mary's University is the host school for 2011 MIAC Cross Country Championships, which welcomes back 11 of the top 15 runners from a year ago.

In 2010, the men's field appeared to be highly competitive heading into the championships, until Hamline stunned the large crowd in a blaze of maroon and silver. The Pipers - led by individual champion **Devin Monson** - claimed four of the top six places and five of the 15 All-Conference spots en route to a comfortable win. The scary thing is, this year, Head Coach **Paul Schmaedeke's** team could be even better.

The Pipers enter as the prohibitive favorites, and headline two MIAC teams in the national rankings and five ranked in the Top 10 in the Central Region. Hamline is ranked No. 25 in Division III and No. 2 in the Region, and has had several jaw-dropping team performances this fall, led by Monson and fellow senior **Jack Deichert**, who finished fourth at last year's MIAC Championships. St. Olaf will be the Pipers chief competition as the Oles hold the No. 32 ranking in the nation and are just a spot behind Hamline at No. 3 in the Region Top 10. St. Olaf was the runner-up last year, and the last team other than the Pipers to win a MIAC title in 2008.

Saint John's, which claimed back-to-back titles in 2006 and 2007, will also be trying to unseat Hamline and finish in the Top 3 once again. The Johnnies were third a year ago and are ranked sixth in the Central Region. St. Thomas and Bethel finished fourth and fifth a year ago, respectively, and appear in the Region rankings. The Tommies are currently ranked No. 8 and the Royals are a spot back at No. 9 in the Central Region Top 10.

Rounding out last year's field was Carleton in sixth, Concordia in seventh, Gustavus in eighth, this year's host Saint Mary's in ninth, Augsburg at No. 10 and Macalester rounding out the field at No. 11. Concordia and Saint Mary's both have some talented runners back in their lineups, and are among the candidates from this group, along with Carleton, to make a jump into the upper echelon of the final standings.

While it will be interesting to see how the team race plays out - and whether any of the contenders can threaten Hamline's three-peat chances - the race for the individual championship and All-Conference honors should create the day's real drama with an unbelievably strong field of veteran runners. The Top 15 individual finishers earn All-MIAC honors, with places 16-25 receiving Honorable Mention.

Monson won last year's race with a time of 25:38.7 and he'll be among the favorites again this year, but there are several other seniors in the field who could make just as strong a case for their chances at finishing first. Among them are Monson's teammate, Diechert, who has several strong performances this fall in addition to his fourth-place finish last year. The Pipers also return All-MIAC runners **Colin Rogers** (fifth in 2010) and senior **Ellis Richardson** (15th).

Also contending for the individual title will be seniors **Tom Sederquist** of Concordia and St. Thomas' **Ben Sathre**. Sederquist was the runner-up to Monson in last year's race and has long been one of the league's top runners, so another Top-3 finish or even a conference title would be a fitting conclusion to his career. Meanwhile Sathre used his seventh-place finish at the MIAC meet a year ago as a springboard to a first-place finish at the Region meet and a second-place finish in the Division III National Championships, and he's won both of his races this fall against large, talented fields.

Other returning All-MIAC runners include Bethel junior **Zach Haskins** (eighth in 2010), Saint John's senior **Ruairi Moynihan** (11th), St. Thomas senior **Tyler Iverson** (13th) and Saint Mary's senior **David Feather** (14th).

One new twist at this year's race is a service project headed up by the Bethel cross country teams and Head Coach **Jim Timp**. The Royals are collecting old running shoes for a non-profit organization called GreenSneakers EcoChallenge for Education. GreenSneakers provides the used shoes to places in the world where people have an otherwise hard time attaining them. There will be bins at Como Park Golf Course Saturday to collect the shoe donations to contribute to this unique and relevant service project.

The MIAC Championships will conclude with a short awards ceremony to honor the team and individual champions and All-Conference runners near the clubhouse following the end of the men's race. The MIAC has a [Web page](#) dedicated to the event, and complete results, recaps, photos and more will be available on that site following the event. Webcast America will also be offering on-demand video highlights of both races following the event on its [Web site](#).

The MIAC would like to thank Saint Mary's for its effort in hosting this year's meet, Como Park Golf Course, Webcast America and Twin Cities Orthopedics, which will provide on-site athletic training and medical services.

Links:

[2011 MIAC Cross Country Championships Website](#)





Augsburg

Coach: Dennis Barker (18th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 10th (231 points)

Augsburg Championship Preview

With four of the team's top six finishers back from last year's competition, the Augsburg College men's cross country team will look to continue its success at the Minnesota intercollegiate Athletic Conference championships again this season. The conference meet will be held this Saturday (10/30) at Como Park Golf Course in St. Paul. Action begins at 2 p.m.

Despite the loss of two of the team's top performers from last year's squad, the Auggies remain in good position to contend for a spot in the top half of the conference standings. The Auggies will enter the conference meet with momentum, as five of the team's top six runners have posted season-best times during the last four meets.

Augsburg has been paced this year by a veteran group of runners including Micheale Tesema (SO, Burnsville, Minn.), Joe Arnold (JR, Grand Rapids, Minn.) Brian Byrnes (JR, Marshall, Minn.) Dakota Darkstar (SO, Minneapolis, Minn./Southwest HS).

Tesema has paced the Auggie squad throughout the season, leading the squad across the finish line in four of the team's five meets this season. Tesema recorded a season-best 8,000-meter time of 26:11 at the Wisconsin-Eau Claire Open on Sept. 30, and finished in second place with a time of 26:34 at the Wisconsin-Parkside Invitational earlier this month.

Arnold has been a consistent presence for the Auggies this season, as he has finished as one of the team's top two finishers in every race this season. Arnold recorded a season-best time of 27:13 on Sept. 17 at the St. Olaf Invitational. Byrnes and Darkstar have each shown steady improvement throughout the course of the season and will be counted on to boost the Augsburg point total.

Hunter Melius (SO, Shakopee, Minn.) and Daniel Gerber (JR, Plymouth, Minn./Wayzata HS) should also be in contention for Augsburg as well. Melius recorded a career-best time at the Wisconsin-Parkside Invitational, as he finished the race with a time of 27:34.

Austin Erickson (SR, Albany, Minn.) and Luke Iverson (FY, Maple Grove, Minn.) will round out the Augsburg team and have both shown improvement throughout the season.



Bethel

Coach: Jim Timp (15th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 5th (145 points)

Bethel Championship Preview

Bethel's men's cross country team looks to improve on its fifth place finish from a year ago, despite losing three of its top four runners at the conference meet to graduation. The Royals have been led by All-MIAC runner Zach Haskins (Jr., Maple Grove, Minn.) all season as he has steadily improved with each successive race, shaving nearly a minute off his time between his performance at the Les Duke Invitational in early September and the Brooks Invitational in mid-October. Haskins was Bethel's top runner last year with a time of 26:22, and given his times so far this year, there is every indication that he will match or improve upon that mark. Newcomer Matt Berens (Fr., Oakdale, Minn.) has definitely been another bright spot for the Royals so far this year. His time of 26:47 at Les Duke earned him a fourth place finish out of 135 runners. Since then, he has finished in the top three among Royal runners in each of their races, as has Matt Schafer (Sr., New Brighton, Minn.). Schafer has stepped up to provide upper classman leadership by also steadily improving his times with each race. Bethel will look to a number of additional runners to add depth, including Brent Schultz (Jr., Wayzata, Minn.), Justin Ivory (Jr., St. Charles, Mo.), and Austin Woetzel (So., Ham Lake, Minn.).



Carleton

Coach: David Ricks (5th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 6th (167 points)

Carleton Championship Preview

The Knights are looking to improve upon their sixth-place finish at the 2010 MIAC Championship. Three times throughout the 2011 season, the Carleton men have been ranked in the top 10 in the Central Region. Although, the Knights recently slipped back out of the USTFCCCA rankings, they are looking to have strong performances from a number of young runners at the conference meet.

Marcus Huderle (So./Eden Prairie, Minn./Eden Prairie) has been the Knight's best finisher at every race thus far, and he will be a key factor in the team's success at the conference meet. Last year he earned All-MIAC honorable mention status finishing 26th at the MIAC Championships. His performances this season include a 16th-place finish at the St. Olaf Invitational and 10th-place result at the UW-Eau Claire Blugold Invitational. In the Knights' most recent outing, Hurdele finished 69th out of 437 racers at the Jim Drews Invitational.

In order to move up in the team competition, Carleton will need another strong showing from junior Bobby Davis (Eden Prairie, Minn.), who paced the Knights at last year's championship finishing 22nd and earning All-MIAC honorable mention status.



Concordia

Coach: Garrick Larson (15th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 7th (198 points)

Concordia Championship Preview

For the first time in recent history the Concordia men's cross country team will bring a deep squad to the MIAC Championship Meet. The Cobbers will have at least three runners that have the capability to finish in the top 40 of the conference.

Leading the way for the group of Cobber top runners is senior Tom Sederquist (Moorhead, Minn.). Sederquist, last year's conference runner-up, has battled through sickness and injuries in 2011. However, when he is healthy he is one of the top runners in the region. Sederquist has won all three of the meets he has participated in this season and was named the MIAC Men's Cross Country Athlete of the Week on Oct. for his victory at the UMD Pine Hill Invite. Sederquist will be with the lead pack the entire race as he hopes to become the Cobbers' third MIAC Cross Country champion in program history.

Tanner Sakrismo (Sr., Moorhead, Minn.) has had a breakout season in 2011. Last year he finished 46th at the MIAC Meet but this year he has posted three different top 5 finishes. Sakrismo's top finish this year came at the UMD Pine Hill Invite where he was runner-up to Sederquist. He has also posted a third-place finish at the Valley City Invite and was fifth at the Jamestown Invitational. Sakrismo's recent form has Cobber head coach Garrick Larson hoping for a top 25 finish at the MIAC Meet.

After Sederquist and Sakrismo, the Cobbers have a question mark and then a pack of three runners. The question mark comes from junior Brad McConn (Fargo, N.D./Fargo South). McConn, the team's No.2 runner at the MIAC last year with a top 25 finish, was second at the Valley City Invite in his only meet of the year. Since then he has fought with injuries. If McConn can compete at the conference meet, he will give Concordia a great shot at putting three runners inside the top 25.

Jake Stunek (Sr., Baxter, Minn./Brainerd HS) and Ryan Sederquist (Fr., Moorhead, Minn.) have consistently been in the team's top 5 all season long. Stunek has been steadily progressing all season long and posted his best finish in the team's final meet before conference. His commitment to e posted a career-best seventh-place finish at the Jamestown Invitational on Oct. 14. He laso had a top 15 finish at the UMD meet. Sederquist's top meet of the year came at the Valley City Invite where he finished fourth. He has been the team's No.2 runner at a pair of other meets this season.

If Concordia can get the depth they have shown in the first two months of the season at the MIAC Championship Meet, then Larson is hoping the team can post their first top 6 finish since the 2002 season.



Gustavus

Coach: Dale Bahr (3rd season)

2010 Championship Finish: 8th (213 points)

Gustavus Championship Preview

The Gustavus men's cross country team will compete at the MIAC Championships Friday, Oct. 29 in St. Paul, Minn. looking to improve on consecutive eighth place finishes at the conference meet over the past two years. The Gusties' clear front-runner is senior Mark Bartley, who has consistently finished races in the front of the pack throughout the season. The Blue Earth, Minn. product has posted the Gusties' lowest time in six of their seven races, including four top-10 finishes.

A welcome addition to head coach Dale Bahr's squad has been first-year Dillon Emo. The Brookings, S.D. native posted a 13th place finish at the Saint John's Invitational on Sept. 9 and since then has hovered around the 27-minute mark in the 8K races.

Other top runners for Gustavus include seniors Anders Bowman (Plymouth, Minn.) and Alex Thornton (Byron, Minn.), juniors Adam Lund (Burnsville, Minn.) and Preston Tomlinson (New Prague, Minn.), sophomores Tanner Davenport (Ham Lake, Minn.) and Eric Jorgenson (Maple Grove, Minn.) and freshman Leighton Becher (Woodbury, Minn.).



Hamline

Coach: Paul Schmaedeke (24th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 1st (31 points)

Hamline Championship Preview

It's the race the Pipers have been aiming for ever since they met for the first time in late August. If Hamline is to successfully defend its Men's Cross Country title this Saturday, it will because they put together a balanced effort.

Devin Monson (Sr., Thompson, N.D.) has a chance to become the first two-time men's winner in over a decade. But veteran coach Paul Schmaedeke says an individual victory is not the key to success Saturday. "I've told Devin this already – if he runs a great race and finishes, say, third, we'll be happy," he said. "This is a very talented field. We need to have all our guys continue to progress as well as they have all year. If they do so – and stay together – we'll do fine."

Such was the case at the shorter St. Catherine's Invitational earlier this month when Monson, who also won the prestigious Roy Griak race, finished first followed by Jack Deichert (Sr., Golden Valley, Minn.) who was second. Ellis Richardson (Sr. Shoreview, Minn.) was a fourth, barely nipping teammate Colin Rogers (Jr., River Falls, Wis.).

If that quartet is near the top again (Deichert was fourth, Rogers fifth and Richardson was 15th in last year's MIAC meet), it will be a wonderful afternoon for the Pipers. "It's important these guys stay close to each other," Schmaedeke said. "I have no doubt they will compete well."

In addition to the aforementioned foursome, there is other depth, too. For the Pipers to repeat, they know they need a solid effort from Chris Gill (Fy., North St. Paul, Minn.), Brendon Ruter (Jr., new London, Minn.) and Nate Dobbins (Jr., Rochester, Minn.), who was 23rd a year ago. All three have shown steady improvement heading into the conference's biggest race.

The Pipers have been ranked first or second in their Central region all season. They have also been in the Top 25 in Division III as well.

None of that matters this Saturday, though. Schmaedeke expects stiff competition from St. Olaf, St. John's and St. Thomas. "I really do think it will be a dogfight," he said. "It's what we have aiming for all year. If we take care of what we can control, we'll be fine."



Macalester

Coach: Matt Haugen (9th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 11th (260 points)

Macalester Championship Preview

The Scots dropped to 11th at last season's MIAC meet and the young Macalester squad is eager to move up. The youthful Scots have been relying on their first-years and sophomores at the top of the lineup.

Macalester has featured a balanced lineup this fall and four different Scots have paced the team in their six meets. Joe Giamberdino (Fy., St. Charles, Ill. / St. Francis Prep) has led the way for Macalester in three races this year, placing fifth in the Summit Cup dual meet with UST, 129th at the Roy Griak, and 128th at the Loyola Lakefront.

Michael Waltman (Fy., Lexington, Ky. / Sayre School) was Mac's top runner at the Jim Drews Invitational; Andy Keefe (So., Minneapolis, Minn. / South) led the way at the St. Olaf Invitational, and Ben Mahew (So., St. Paul, Minn. / Highland Park) paced the Scots at the St. John's Invite.

"We're looking forward to moving up a few spots with freshmen and sophomores leading the way," says head coach Matt Haugen. "I'm excited to see their upside after we've rested them up for the first time this year."



Saint John's

Coach: Tim Miles (33rd season)

2010 Championship Finish: 3rd (96 points)

Saint John's Championship Preview

After finishing third in last season's MIAC Championship and fifth at the NCAA Central Regional, the Saint John's cross country team will look to several key returnees and a promising freshman class to improve upon last season's performance.

The Johnnies need to replace two-time national entrant Dustin Franta (La Crescent, Minn.), who ended his collegiate cross country career with a 76th- place finish (25:19) out of 279 runners at last year's NCAA Division III National Championship. Franta, however, plans to return for the indoor and outdoor track and field seasons this spring. Saint John's also graduated David Forster (Minnetonka, Minn./Hopkins), who claimed 35th at the MIAC Championship with a time of 27:17.

Head coach Tim Miles will look to his current seniors to help lead the way for the Johnnies. Seniors Ruairi Moynihan (Fargo, N.D./South), Grant Cook (Duluth, Minn./East), Jordan Fladland (Coon Rapids, Minn.) and Joe Gair (Coon Rapids, Minn.), as well as junior Matt Scherber (Sartell, Minn./Sartell-St. Stephen) all return as key runners for the Johnnies. All five finished in the Johnnies' top seven at the 2010 MIAC Championship last fall. Moynihan earned All-MIAC honors with an 11th-place finish (26:34). Scherber followed in 21st place (26:54), while Fladland and Gair claimed 30th (27:06) and 31st (27:06), respectively. Cook rounded out the Johnnies' top seven finishing 40th with a time of 27:27. Moynihan also placed in the top 25 at the 2009 MIAC Championship. Senior Andrew Clasen (Plymouth, Minn./Robbinsdale Armstrong) and sophomore Nate Engel (Plymouth, Minn./Wayzata) are also expected to compete in the Johnnies' top seven this fall.

Saint John's finished fifth out of 26 teams at last year's NCAA Central Regional and finished second out of MIAC teams in the race. Out of the Johnnies top-seven finishers, all but two runners return. Moynihan finished 14th with a time of 25:56, while Gair and Scherber followed in 39th (26:25) and 41st (26:26), respectively. Sophomore John Subialka (Plymouth, Minn./Wayzata) finished fifth for SJU and 48th overall with a time of 26:33. Fladland rounded out the Johnnies top seven in 70th (26:57).

Miles begins his 33rd season as head cross country coach at Saint John's in 2011. He has produced a winning program that has finished among the MIAC's top two squads in 22 of the past 32 seasons, including nine MIAC titles (1981, 1982, 1983, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2006 and 2007) during his tenure. He has had 22 cross country teams qualify for the national meet, with 17 recording top-15 finishes.



Saint Mary's

Coach: Ward Berndt (7th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 9th (228 points)

Saint Mary's Championship Preview

The Saint Mary's University men's cross country team in general — and David Feather (Oak Creek, Wis.) — closed out the 2010 season in memorable fashion, which leaves coach Ward Berndt with one nagging question: What can the Cardinals do for an encore?

Just two weeks after posting the highest individual finish in SMU men's cross country history with his 14th-place effort at the MIAC Championships, Feather recorded a career-best eight-kilometer time of 26:12 en route to a 27th-place finish and All-Region honors at the season-ending NCAA Central Regional.

Feather's 27th-place effort helped the Cardinal men place 16th in the 26-team field.

"It was a great way for us to end the season," said SMU coach Ward Berndt. "And the guys have really picked up where they left off this year.

"The guys came into the season more fit than ever," said Berndt. "Everyone logged a lot of miles over the summer and they are determined to make this year even better than last season."

"This is probably the deepest, most talented team I've had."

And while Feather has been steering the Cardinals' ship this season, he won't be the only one making waves at this year's conference championships

The Cardinals return 11 members of last year's squad, including seniors Feather, Robby McGuire (Rochester, Minn.) and Michael Mockler (Dubuque, Iowa). Juniors Peter Borash (Bowlus, Minn.), Jake Traxler (Le Center, Minn.), Ryan Winegardner (Northfield, Minn.), Colin Sheehan (Austin, Minn.) and Michael Wolter (Rushford, Minn.), and sophomores Erik Germundsen (Minneapolis, Minn.) and John Soucheray (Woodbury, Minn.) round out the Cardinal returners.

"I'm excited to see what this group can accomplish this season," Berndt said. "Last year, we were ninth in the MIAC and seventh among MIAC teams at the (NCAA) regional — and everyone's looking for bigger and better things this time around."



St. Olaf

Coach: Phil Lundin (4th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 2nd (79 points)

St. Olaf Championship Preview

The St. Olaf men's cross country team, ranked 32nd in the nation and second in the Central Region by the USTFCCCA, look to secure a top spot in the MIAC Championships.

The Oles are led by Brian Saksa and Grant Wintheiser. Saksa, who finished 35th at the MIAC Championships in 2010 as St. Olaf's ninth runner, has made tremendous progress in the last year. He finished second at the St. Olaf Invite on September 17 and was named a MIAC Athlete-of-the-Week this fall.

Wintheiser, a first year, has been on the heels of Saksa throughout the season, finishing with a season best 25:25 at the UW-Eau Claire Blugold Invite on September 30.

Tim Lillehaugen and Pat Boland have also posted good times this season. The two finished in the Top 25 at the 2010 Championships, earning All-MIAC Honorable Mention awards.

St. Olaf has won four MIAC titles, the last in 2008.



St. Thomas

Coach: Pete Wareham (19th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 4th (141 points)

St. Thomas Championship Preview

A young roster and a key injury likely will prevent St. Thomas from any serious run at a top-two MIAC team finish. But look for UST senior two-time All-American Ben Sathre to make his presence felt.

The Tommies took fourth place at the 2010 MIAC Championships. Coach Pete Wareham's team had a better outing two weeks later at regionals with an eighth-place finish, but still fell short of return trip to nationals.

Last fall, Sathre was regional champion and placed second out of 279 runners at nationals. In the winter, he won the 3,000 and 5,000 events to help the Tommies edge Hamline and claim the team title at MIAC Indoor Track and Field Championships. He later placed fifth at nationals in the 5,000. A spring injury knocked him out of the last half of the 2011 season.

Sathre has raced just twice in fall 2011, but both have yielded impressive victories over prestigious fields. On Oct. 1, Sathre took first among 563 finishers, including several Division I runners, with an impressive time of 24:30 for 8K (4.97 miles) on a wind-swept course at Loyola (Ill.). The runner-up was a Division I athlete from Toledo who was 19 seconds back.

At the Oct. 15 Princeton (N.J.) race, Sathre ruled a field of 139 runners, including athletes from 11 Division I teams, to place first in 24:29. His time was just six seconds off his career best recorded last November with his NCAA runner-up finish. The second-place finisher, from Division I St. Joe's, closed 25 seconds back. Sathre also beat two Division III All-America runners from defending NCAA champion Haverford (Pa.) by more than 40 seconds.

The Chaska native has now won cross country races in six different states -- New Jersey, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Ohio. In his 14 cross country races over the last three seasons, he has 12 top-five places and also took 26th at the 2009 national meet.

Iverson was MIAC outdoor runner-up in the steeplechase in 9:28. He has placed 16th and 14th in the last two conference CC meets, and has a 2011 best 8K time this fall of 25:50.

Freshman Keaton Wendroth was running in UST's top three before suffering a season-ending injury.

Freshman Brian Anderson has been in the top five throughout the season and clocked 26:35 for 8K at Loyola. Anderson didn't compete last season while a student at Washington (Mo.) University. He ran 9:37 for 3,200 meters as a senior at St. Thomas Academy.

Junior Stu Lombardo and Brian Farley, sophomores Zach Brintz and Scott Fusco, senior Crawford Hubbell, and freshman Ben Rascher have scored this fall for the Tommies. Lombardo and Brintz have each run in the 26:50 range this month.