

Alm, Tommie duo and Heacox headline 2014 MIAC Softball Awards

Posted: May 13, 2014

ST. PAUL, Minn. -- Though Mother Nature didn't always cooperate throughout the 2014 Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) softball season, she certainly didn't rain on the conference's parade, as the season was full of highlights and memorable performances. Tuesday, the top performers from another outstanding season were honored with the announcement of the 2014 MIAC Softball Awards.

Saint Benedict outfielder Lexi Alm capped a tremendous career for the Blazers as she was selected as the MIAC's Player-of-the-Year. St. Thomas junior Kendra Bowe continued her storied run with the Tommies, earning the MIAC Pitcher-of-the-Year award for the third-straight season, and her coach, John Tschida, was awarded the 11th MIAC Coach-of-the-Year honor of his career. Gustavus pitcher Hannah Heacox was named the top first-year player in the conference, as she was voted the MIAC Rookie-of-the-Year.



In addition to the top individual awards, the MIAC All-Conference team was also announced, along with All-Conference Honorable Mention selections and the Softball All-MIAC Sportsmanship Team.

Alm received her third-straight All-Conference honor and the prestigious Player-of-the-Year honor thanks to an incredible season at the plate. She led Saint Benedict to an outstanding 28-11 overall record and a 15-7 mark in the MIAC, which was good for third place and a spot in the MIAC Playoffs. In overall games, Alm finished in the top five in the MIAC in nearly every offensive category, including batting average (.434), RBI (45), runs (44), home runs (nine), stolen bases (20), triples (three), total bases (103), hits (56) and slugging percentage (.798).

The Blazers' star senior was even better in conference play, as she finished in the top three on the MIAC leader board in nearly every offensive category. She ranked first in RBI (32), doubles (10) and total bases (69). She was second in batting average (.493), on-base percentage (.575), slugging percentage (.945), runs (29), hits (36) and triples (one) and she was third in home runs (seven) and stolen bases (12).

Bowe's historic run of MIAC success continued with her third-straight MIAC Pitcher-of-the-Year honor, a streak the junior will attempt to extend to four in 2015. She also earned her third-straight All-Conference nod while leading St. Thomas to its 5th-straight MIAC title, and its 11th-straight MIAC Playoff championship. Overall, Bowe led the MIAC in wins (20-4) and ranked second in ERA (1.12), opponent batting average (.187) and shutouts (five). Her 108 strikeouts ranked fourth in the league, and she allowed just 90 hits and 22 walks in 131.1 innings pitched.

As good as Bowe was overall, she was even better against conference foes. She led the MIAC in wins and ERA, as she went a near-perfect 12-1 with a miniscule 0.40 ERA. She ranked second in shutouts (three) and strikeouts per game (7.50) and fourth in strikeouts (75) and opponent batting average (.142). In 70 MIAC innings pitched, Bowe allowed just 35 hits and 11 walks.

Bowe wasn't the only one honored for St. Thomas' success. Tschida received the 11th MIAC Coach-of-the-Year honor in his esteemed career for the job he did leading the Tommies to the conference crown again in 2014. This season, his team went 21-1 in MIAC play to capture the regular season title, and 3-0 in the MIAC Playoffs to capture that championship as well. His team is currently 40-6 overall and won an NCAA Regional Tournament last week to advance to this week's Super Regional.

This season, Tschida's team was dominant in conference play, leading the league in batting average (.391), runs (172), ERA (0.65), runs allowed (19) and earned runs (13) in addition to numerous other categories. Tschida's career record is now 774-134 with winning percentage of .852, making him the winningest softball coach - active or retired - in NCAA Division III history.

Heacox burst onto the scene in 2014 as a difference-maker on the mound for the Gusties, leading to her All-Conference selection and Rookie-of-the-Year award. The first-year pitcher led Gustavus to a 24-15 overall record and a 17-5 mark in MIAC play, which was good for second place and a trip to the MIAC Playoffs. In her first-ever postseason collegiate start, Heacox delivered an unforgettable highlight, as she pitched a no-hitter with 10 strikeouts in the first round of the 2014 MIAC Playoffs.

Overall, Heacox went 12-4 with one save and a 2.53 ERA. She led the MIAC in strikeouts per game (7.58) and was second in strikeouts (126) and shutouts (five). She was even better in her first trip through the conference, as she went 9-1 in MIAC play with one save and a 1.91 ERA. She led the league in strikeouts (83), strikeouts per game (8.80), was third in wins (nine) and ERA (1.91) and fifth in opponent batting average (.167).

As part of a conference-wide sportsmanship initiative, the MIAC announced the eighth annual All-MIAC Sportsmanship team for softball. Members of the All-MIAC Sportsmanship team are selected by their coaches and teammates as individuals who demonstrate ideals of positive sportsmanship both on and off the field of competition.

The All-Conference team featured 26 players, nominated and selected by the MIAC coaches. The top two teams in the final standings, St. Thomas and Gustavus, led the way with five honorees apiece. Bethel had four selections, Saint Benedict had three and Hamline, Carleton and Macalester each had two players honored. St. Catherine, Saint Mary's and St. Olaf each had one player selected. The team featured 10 seniors, seven juniors, eight sophomores, and Heacox was the lone first-year player honored.

Out of the 26 players honored, 12 of them were repeat selections, led by St. Catherine's Alyssa Luedtke, who capped her outstanding career with her fourth-straight All-Conference honor. Alm and Bowe both earned their third consecutive All-Conference selection, as did St. Thomas seniors Emily Gregory and Jenna Hoffman. Carleton's Jenna Ramey also earned the third All-MIAC honor of her career, as she was also honored in 2013 and 2011.

Bethel's Angie Jackson - the 2013 MIAC Player-of-the-Year - headlined the group of two-time honorees, along with Gustavus' Carly Klass, Saint Benedict's Kim Lidstone, Macalester's Miranda Stokes and St. Olaf's Becca Walz. Gustavus' Nathalee Boissiere also earned her second-straight All-MIAC honor, as she earned All-Conference accolades playing for Saint Mary's in 2013.

All players who were nominated for All-Conference and received at least one vote, but were not among the top 22 vote getters (including ties) were named Honorable Mention.

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2014 MIAC SOFTBALL AWARDS

- Player-of-the-Year** - Lexi Alm, Saint Benedict (Sr., Stacy, Minn./Forest Lake)
Pitcher-of-the-Year - Kendra Bowe, St. Thomas (Jr., Chippewa Falls, Wis.)
Rookie-of-the-Year - Hannah Heacox, Gustavus (Fy., Stillwater, Minn.)
Coach-of-the-Year - John Tschida (20th season)

2014 MIAC SOFTBALL ALL-CONFERENCE TEAM

Name	School	Year	Position	Hometown / Previous School
Lexi Alm	Saint Benedict	Sr.	OF	Stacy, Minn./Forest Lake
Kelsey Anderson	Bethel	Jr.	IF	Burnsville, Minn
Kaitlyn Bicek	Gustavus	So.	UT	Northfield, Minn.
Kirstin Bigelbach	St. Thomas	Sr.	LHP/OF	Red Wing, Minn.
Nathalee Boissiere	Gustavus	So.	UT	Plymouth, Minn./Robbinsdale Cooper
Kendra Bowe	St. Thomas	Jr.	RHP	Chippewa Falls, Wis.
Keelin Davis	Carleton	So.	P	Woodinville, Wash.
Emily Gregory	St. Thomas	Sr.	C	Prior Lake, Minn.
Hannah Heacox	Gustavus	Fy.	P	Stillwater, Minn.
Jenna Hoffman	St. Thomas	Sr.	SS	Eagan, Minn./Cretin-Derham Hall
Angie Jackson	Bethel	Jr.	SS	Oakdale, Minn./North Saint Paul
Caroline Kivisto	Bethel	So.	C	Dassel, Minn./Dassel-Cokato
Carly Klass	Gustavus	Jr.	IF	Richfield, Minn.
Kim Lidstone	Saint Benedict	So.	IF	Minnetonka, Minn./Hopkins
Alyssa Luedtke	St. Catherine	Sr.	OF	Spring Lake Park, Minn.
Cristina Masten	Bethel	Sr.	C	Fergus Falls, Minn.
Shelby Nosan	Gustavus	Jr.	IF	Baudette, Minn./Lake of the Woods
Jenny Ramey	Carleton	Sr.	SS	Cottage Grove, Minn./New Life Academy
Jamie Rubbelke	Hamline	So.	IF	North St. Paul, Minn.
Miranda Stokes	Macalester	Jr.	P/OF	Perry, Utah/Box Elder
Stacy Svihel	Saint Benedict	Sr.	IF	St. Cloud, Minn./Rocori
Kristen Thelen	Saint Mary's	Sr.	IF	Rochester, Minn./John Marshall
Lauren Turitto	Hamline	Sr.	C/IF	West St. Paul, Minn./Henry Sibley
Brenna Walek	St. Thomas	So.	1B	Maple Grove, Minn./Robbinsdale Cooper
Becca Walz	St. Olaf	So.	IF	Elk Grove Village, Ill.
Saraswati Wilson	Macalester	Jr.	SS	Olathe, Kan./Northwest

2014 MIAC SOFTBALL ALL-CONFERENCE HONORABLE MENTION

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<u>Name</u>	<u>Schools</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Hometown / Previous School</u>
Paige Beseman	Concordia	Jr.	IF	Little Falls, Minn.
Ashley Betzold	Saint Mary's	Fy.	P/OF	Farmington, Minn.
Brooke Chapman	Hamline	Fy.	P/IF	Anaconda, Mont.
Mary-Clare Couillard	Hamline	Fy.	IF	Fridley, Minn./St. Anthony Village
Lindsay Edeen	Bethel	So.	P	St. Michael, Minn./Heritage Christian Academy
Emily Engelmeier	Saint Benedict	So.	P	South St. Paul, Minn.
Micaela LaRose	Carleton	Jr.	P/1B	Waconia, Minn./Holy Family
Cleo Nagy	Macalester	Sr.	OF	Eugene, Ore./Henry D. Sheldon
Kathi Opsahl	Saint Mary's	Fy.	OF	Elk River, Minn.
Bianca Peterson	St. Thomas	Jr.	OF	Hopkins, Minn.
Alex Raske	Saint Mary's	Jr.	C/OF	Chicago, Ill./Mother McAuley
Lauren Torborg	Augsburg	Fy.	C	Brooklyn Park, Minn./Park Center
Jessica Tyminski	St. Catherine	Jr.	IF	Champlin, Minn./Totino-Grace
Mackenzie Wenner	Saint Benedict	Jr.	C	St. Peter, Minn.

2014 SOFTBALL ALL-MIAC SPORTSMANSHIP TEAM

Augsburg - Olivia Boerschinger (Sr., Neenah, Wis.)
 Bethel - Abigail Bircher (So., Vadnais Height/White Bear Lake)
 Carleton - Hailey Jones (Fy., Dodgeville, Wis.)
 Concordia - MacKenzie Jensen (So., Benson, Minn.)
 Gustavus - Caitlin Whitney (Sr., Waseca, Minn)
 Hamline - Cassie Lopez (Sr., St. Paul, Minn./Como Park)
 Macalester - Anna Munson (Jr., LaCrosse, Wis./Central)
 Saint Benedict - Kelsey McQuillan (Sr., Stillwater, Minn.)
 St. Catherine - Larrissa Karl (Jr., Buffalo Lake, Minn./Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart)
 Saint Mary's - Samantha Borawski (Jr., Stickney, Ill./Fenwick)
 St. Olaf - Sydney Mason (So., Eden Prairie, Minn.)
 St. Thomas - Kirstin Bigelbach (Sr., Red Wing, Minn.)

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