

St. Thomas, Carleton take top MIAC Women's Golf Awards for 2015-16

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BLOOMINGTON, Minn. -- Throughout the 2015-16 Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) women's golf season, the University of St. Thomas and Carleton College waged an outstanding battle atop the leader board. So it was no surprise when, Monday, the Tommies and Knights split the conference's top four honors with the announcement of the 2015-16 MIAC Women's Golf Awards.

St. Thomas sophomore Emily Thul (Alexandria, Minn. / Jefferson) was named the MIAC Player-of-the-Year and her coach - Sara Evens (11th season) was voted the MIAC Coach-of-the-Year for their role in the Tommies' MIAC title and NCAA Championships bid. Carleton golfers claimed the other two awards as Grace Gilmore (Edina, Minn.) was named Senior-of-the-Year, and Ziyi Wang (Beijing City, China / Lighthouse Christian Academy) earned Rookie-of-the-Year honors. The MIAC All-Conference and All-Sportsmanship teams were also announced.



Thul received the conference's top honor thanks to her remarkable sophomore campaign, which included a team title for the Tommies with a historic MIAC Championships performance. Individually, Thul finished in a tie for second at the conference meet with a total score of 234 (83-73-78) and she helped her team break a pair of MIAC Championship scoring records in the process.

The Player-of-the-Year was outstanding all season long, as her 18-hole scoring average of 77.6 shots per round led the MIAC. She played in 10 tournaments and finished in the top 10 eight times. She was in the top five in more than half (six) of her appearances and won one medalist honor during her sophomore season. Thul shot 73 or better four times, with her season-best score of 71 registering below par. Thul also headlined the 15-player MIAC All-Conference team.

Thul's coach - Evens - was voted Coach-of-the-Year by her peers for the third time (2016, 2014, 2006). This time, it was in recognition of St. Thomas' outstanding season and historic MIAC Championships performance. Her team won the title by 22 shots with new MIAC Championship scoring records for 18 holes (297) and 36 holes (608) and the Tommies' 54-hole total (937) is second-best all-time.

Beyond the conference meet, Evens' team led the MIAC in scoring average by more than a shot with an 18-hole team average of 316.3 shots per round. UST played in eight events in 2015-16 and never finished lower than fourth. They won three tournament titles, were runners-up three times and finished third once and fourth once. Evens coached Thul to Player-of-the-Year honors and a total of four All-Conference selections.

Gilmore's honor as the MIAC's top senior is a fitting exclamation point for her career, which will end this week at the NCAA Championships, where she qualified as an individual. Gilmore won her second-straight MIAC Championships individual title as a senior, as her 54-hole score of 231 (76-74-81) was good for a three-shot win at the conference meet. Her 78.1 scoring average was third-best in the MIAC this season, and in her 10 tournament appearances she was medalist three times, with seven top-10 finishes and six in the top five. Gilmore also received All-Conference honors for the third-straight season.

Wang will also represent Carleton as an individual at the NCAA Championships, which will pair with her Rookie-of-the-Year honor as a great conclusion to her breakout collegiate debut. The first-year Knight ranks second in the MIAC with her 77.8 scoring average, and she was fourth at the MIAC Championships with a 54-hole score of 235 (80-77-78). She displayed remarkable consistency for a rookie, finishing in the top 10 in all nine of her tournament appearances, and she was in the top five six different times. Wang also added All-Conference honors to her MIAC individual award.

The MIAC Golf All-Conference teams were selected using a combination of MIAC championship results and end-of-season voting. The top 10 finishers (including ties) at the MIAC championships in October automatically earned All-MIAC honors, and the coaches nominated and voted to add five additional players to the 15-member squad based on their body of work throughout the season.

The All-Conference team included several familiar faces, as Gilmore, teammate Geraldine Tellbuescher, St. Thomas' Rachel Morris, and St. Catherine's Abby Conzemius each earned their third-straight All-MIAC honor. Thul, teammate Marja Sorensen, St. Kate's Kaitlyn Alvarez, Saint Benedict's Lauren Wise and Bethel's Christine Piwnica each earned a second-straight All-Conference honor, and St. Thomas' Erin Dingmann also earned her second career All-MIAC award, as she was also named to the 2013-14 squad.

As with the individual honors, St. Thomas and Carleton were also heavily represented on the All-Conference team with four selections each. St. Catherine was next with three All-MIAC selections, Saint Benedict had two players honored and Bethel and Gustavus had one apiece. The team reflected a youth movement in the MIAC, with five first-year players, four sophomores, three juniors and three seniors named to the All-Conference squad.

As part of a conference-wide sportsmanship initiative, the MIAC announced the 10th annual All-MIAC Sportsmanship team for women's golf. 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.

2015-16 MIAC WOMEN'S GOLF AWARDS

Player-of-the-Year - Emily Thul, St. Thomas (So., Alexandria, Minn. / Jefferson)

Senior-of-the-Year - Grace Gilmore, Carleton (Sr., Edina, Minn.)

Rookie-of-the-Year - Ziyi Wang, Carleton (Fy., Beijing City, China / Lighthouse Christian Academy)

Coach-of-the-Year - Sara Evens, St. Thomas (11th season)

2015-16 MIAC WOMEN'S GOLF ALL-CONFERENCE TEAM

<u>Name</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Hometown / High School</u>
Kaitlyn Alvarez	St. Catherine	So.	Eau Claire, Wis. / North
Natalie Amundson	Saint Benedict	Fy.	Alexandria, Minn.
Sydney Busker	St. Catherine	Fy.	Detroit Lakes, Minn.
Abby Conzemius	St. Catherine	Jr.	Chanhassen, Minn. / Minnetonka
Erin Dingmann	St. Thomas	Sr.	Kimball, Minn. / Kimball-Eden Valley Watkins
Grace Gilmore	Carleton	Sr.	Edina, Minn.
Rachel Morris	St. Thomas	Jr.	Mequon, Wis. / Homestead
Christine Piwnica	Bethel	So.	Victoria, Minn. / Southwest Christian
Ayumi Sakamoto	Carleton	Fy.	Honolulu, Hawaii / Iolani School
Marja Sorensen	St. Thomas	Fy.	Cold Spring, Minn. / Rocori
McKenzie Swenson	Gustavus	So.	Buffalo, Minn. / Benilde-St. Margaret's
Geraldine Tellbuescher	Carleton	Jr.	Ashiya, Japan / Canadian Academy
Emily Thul	St. Thomas	So.	Alexandria, Minn. / Jefferson
Ziyi Wang	Carleton	Fy	Beijing City, China / Lighthouse Christian Academy
Lauren Wise	Saint Benedict	Sr.	Prior Lake, Minn. / New Prague

2015-16 WOMEN'S GOLF ALL-MIAC SPORTSMANSHIP TEAM

Augsburg - Wendy Anderson (Jr., Bird Island, Minn. / BOLD)

Bethel - Kalyn Root (Jr., Orange City, Iowa / MOC Floyd Valley)

Carleton - Mara Daly (Sr., Hopkins, Minn. / St. Louis Park)

Concordia - Emily Grace Olson (Jr., Roseau, Minn. / Roseau)

Gustavus - McKenzie Swenson (So., Buffalo, Minn. / Benilde-St. Margaret's)

Macalester - Ji Sue Song (Fy., Surrey, B.C. / Southridge School)

Saint Benedict - Lauren Wise (Sr., Prior Lake, Minn. / New Prague)

St. Catherine - Nicole Traxler (Jr., Northfield, Minn.)

Saint Mary's - Haley Jung (Sr., Monticello, Minn. / Rogers)

St. Olaf - Meaghan Carney (So., Denmark, Wis.)

St. Thomas - Rachel Morris (Jr., Mequon, Wis. / Homestead)

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