

Piwnica, Wang headline 2018 MIAC Women's Golf Awards

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BLOOMINGTON, Minn. – After an exciting NCAA Championship Tournament last week that saw the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) champion Carleton Knights finish sixth in the nation, the MIAC announced its annual women's golf awards on Wednesday.

Bethel senior **Christine Piwnica** and Carleton junior **Ziyi Wang** took home top honors as Co-Players of the Year, while Piwnica was also honored with Senior of the Year and teammate **Nicole Miller** earned Rookie of the Year recognition. Carleton coach **Eric Sieger** was selected by his peers as MIAC Coach of the Year.

Piwnica (Sr. | Victoria, Minn. | Southwest Christian) capped an outstanding four-year career at Bethel with a bevy of accolades, punctuated with MIAC Co-Player of the Year and Senior of the Year honors. The awards come a week after Piwnica received honorable mention All-America recognition and her fourth straight All-Region selection from the Women's Golf Coaches Association (WGCA). Piwnica tied for 34th in the nation at last week's NCAA Championships, becoming the first Royals player ever to compete at the national tournament. A four-time All-Conference honoree and three-time MIAC Championship individual runner-up, Piwnica ended her senior campaign tied for second in the Conference with an average of 77.7 shots per 18 holes.

Wang (Jr. | Beijing City, China | Lighthouse Christian Academy) tied for seventh in the nation at last week's NCAA Championships, which served as a fitting conclusion to a stellar junior season. The two-time honorable mention All-America selection won medalist honors at the 2017 MIAC Championships after tying a Conference record with a three-day total of 224 at the October meet. A three-time All-MIAC honoree, Wang led the Conference with an average of 77.3 shots per 18 holes on the year.

Miller (Fy. | Eden Prairie, Minn.) led all first-year competitors and ranked fourth in the MIAC with an average score of 78.0 in her debut season. The All-Region honoree played 15 rounds of competitive golf as a rookie for the Royals, recording six top-10 finishes, including a pair in the top-five.

Sieger guided the Knights to an undefeated 8-0 regular season, the 2017 MIAC Championship and a sixth-place finish at the 2018 NCAA Championships. Carleton posted a school-record scoring average of 313.1 during the regular season and set a new MIAC 54-hole low with 924 shots to win the Conference title back in October. This is Sieger's fifth Coach of the Year honor in his 17 seasons at the helm in Northfield.

The MIAC Golf All-Conference team was 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.

Three golfers - Bethel's Piwnica, St. Catherine's **Kaitlyn Alvarez** and St. Thomas' **Emily Thul** - joined elite company by earning All-Conference honors all four years of MIAC competition. Five more - Carleton's Wang and **Ayumi Sakamoto**, Saint Benedict's **Natalie Amundson**, St. Catherine's **Sydney Busker** and Gustavus' **McKenzie Swenson** - received the accolade for the third time. Carleton's **Alyssa Akiyama** joined St. Olaf's **Melissa Biesmann** as two-time honorees.

As part of a conference-wide sportsmanship initiative, the MIAC also announced the 12th 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.



2017-18 MIAC Women's Golf Awards

Co-Player of the Year – Christine Piwnica | Bethel (Sr. | Victoria, Minn. | Southwest Christian)

Co-Player of the Year – Ziyi Wang | Carleton (Jr. | Beijing City, China | Lighthouse Christian Academy)

Senior of the Year – Christine Piwnica | Bethel (Sr. | Victoria, Minn. | Southwest Christian)

Rookie of the Year – Nicole Miller | Bethel (Fy. | Eden Prairie, Minn.)

Coach of the Year – Eric Sieger | Carleton (17th Season)

2017-18 MIAC Women's Golf All-Conference Team

Name	Institution	Class	Hometown High School
Alyssa Akiyama	Carleton	So.	Terrace Park, Ohio Seven Hills School
Kaitlyn Alvarez	St. Catherine	Sr.	Eau Claire, Wis. North
Bridget Amundson	Saint Benedict	Fy.	Alexandria, Minn.
Natalie Amundson	Saint Benedict	Jr.	Alexandria, Minn.
Melissa Biesmann	St. Olaf	So.	Fitchburg, Wis. Verona Area
Sydney Busker	St. Catherine	Jr.	Detroit Lakes, Minn.
Alexis Chan	Carleton	Fy.	Castle Rock, Colo. Rock Canyon
Abby Euyang	Carleton	Fy.	Seattle, Wash. Lakeside
Nicole Miller	Bethel	Fy.	Eden Prairie, Minn.
Madeline Pagel	Saint Benedict	Jr.	Rochester, Minn. Lourdes
Christine Piwnica	Bethel	Sr.	Victoria, Minn. Southwest Christian
Ayumi Sakamoto	Carleton	Jr.	Honolulu, Hawaii 'Iolani School
McKenzie Swenson	Gustavus	Sr.	Buffalo, Minn.
Emily Thul	St. Thomas	Sr.	Alexandria, Minn. Jefferson
Ziyi Wang	Carleton	Jr.	Beijing City, China Lighthouse Christian Academy

2017-18 MIAC Women's Golf All-Sportsmanship Team

Name	Institution	Class	Hometown High School
Julia Mantey	Augsburg	Jr.	Anoka, Minn.
Christine Piwnica	Bethel	Sr.	Victoria, Minn. Southwest Christian
Tory Peterson	Carleton	Sr.	Marlborough, Conn. Loomis Chaffee School
Bailey Klause	Concordia	Fy.	Redwood Falls, Minn. Redwood Valley
McKenzie Swenson	Gustavus	Sr.	Buffalo, Minn.
Ji Sue Song	Macalester	Jr.	Surrey, B.C. Southridge School
Hannah Moen	Saint Benedict	Jr.	Nisswa, Minn. Brainerd
Sydney Busker	St. Catherine	Jr.	Detroit Lakes, Minn.
Michaela Heuckendorf	Saint Mary's	Jr.	Plymouth, Minn. Benilde-St. Margaret's
Solveig Christenson	St. Olaf	So.	Red Wing, Minn.
Kate Drimel	St. Thomas	Jr.	St. Michael, Minn. St. Michael-Albertville