

2011 MIAC Women's Golf Championship Preview

9/29/2011

ST. PAUL, Minn. - The 2010 Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) Women's Golf Championships were a fairly predictable event, with Gustavus and its star senior **Katie Schenfeld** successfully defending their team and individual titles.

However, the 2011 installment should be anything but predetermined as the conference welcomes a talented and youthful field to Bunker Hills Golf Course in Coon Rapids, Minn., this Saturday, Sunday and Monday to battle it out for the MIAC championship and the league's automatic bid to the NCAA Division III Women's Golf Championships. As always, there will be numerous individual accolades on the line as well.

The playing field has changed considerably this season, as two-time medalist and Division III All-American Schenfeld left a void atop the standings with her graduation last spring. Now there are a number of players entering this weekend's event with legitimate title hopes with the contenders ranging from seasoned returning veterans to tremendously talented freshmen looking to make an impact in their first conference tournament.

The absence of Schenfeld will undoubtedly affect Gustavus' quest for a fourth-straight MIAC championship as well, although the Gusties certainly weren't a one-trick pony a year ago. **Taylor Drenttel** was the runner-up at the last two MIAC Championships and a two-time All-Conference performer who has been key to Gustavus' success. She's back to lead the team's charge for a four-peat, and to try to claim the individual crown vacated by her graduated former teammate.

Drenttel's 81.0 scoring average is tied for sixth-best in the MIAC this season, and she's joined in the lineup by another returning All-Conference selection, **Kayleigh Dittes**, and **Sam Falk**, **Liz Strom**, **Ann Jackson** and **Rikka Holiday** offer great options to the Gusties' potent line up as they go for another MIAC title. Gustavus' scoring average of 322.0 is tops in the MIAC thus far in 2011.

However, there are a handful of teams ready to make a run at the Gusties, starting with St. Olaf, last year's runner up. Though the entire field was a significant distance behind Gustavus last year, St. Olaf has certainly closed the gap, with just over one shot per round between them (323.2) and the Gusties this season. St. Olaf has a dynamic duo of Mollies leading the way, as both **Molly Erickson** and **Molly Knutson** earned All-MIAC honors a year ago, and both rank in the Top 8 in scoring average this season. Erickson is No. 1 at 79.0 shots per round, and Knutson is tied for 6th at 81.0.

No team has benefitted from incoming talent more than Carleton this season, and after finishing fourth a year ago, the Knights appear ready to take another step forward in 2011. Freshmen **Taylor Wells** and **Gina Kabasakalis** have each earned a MIAC Women's Golf Athlete-of-the-Week honor already this fall, and both are in the Top 5 in terms of scoring average. It will be interesting to see how Carleton's skilled, young lineup performs at the conference tournament with a top-three finish within reach.

Saint Benedict was the third-place finisher a year ago, and the Blazers return another one of the contenders for the individual crown in senior **Kathryn Hauff**. Hauff has finished in the top three each of the last two years, and both her and the Blazers are entering the MIAC Championships fresh off decisive victories last weekend. Her 79.5 scoring average ranks No. 2 in the conference.

St. Thomas rounded out the top five a year ago, and the Tommies are led by super-sophomore **Emma Wilson**, an All-MIAC selection last season and the 2010-11 MIAC Rookie-of-the-Year. All-MIAC performer **Cassy Norton** also returns for the Tommies, who won seven-straight conference titles prior to Gustavus' recent run.

When looking for a team from the bottom half of last year's standings to make a significant jump this season, the team with the most MIAC women's golf titles in its history looks to be the logical choice judging by the scores. Concordia has 11 championships, but without one since 2000, the Cobbers are looking to get back in the mix this season. Concordia was ninth at last year's MIAC Championships, but it has the league's fourth-best scoring average at 336.6 shots per round despite starting five freshmen in its varsity lineup. **Kristi Opatz** leads the way with an average of 83.0 shots per 18 holes.

Saint Mary's, Augsburg, Bethel and Macalester round out the rest of the field after finishing sixth, seventh, eighth and 10th respectively. Both Saint Mary's and Macalester have All-MIAC golfers returning in search of more honors as both SMU's **Rachel Lamberty** and the Scots' **Grace Caird** tied for ninth at the 2010 Championship. SMU's **Gia Puch** is another one of the top returners at the conference meet this season after finishing 13th last season and leading the Cardinals this year. **Paige Lemieux** returns as Bethel's top player after just missing the Top 20 at last year's MIAC meet. Augsburg is led by **Courtney Barthel**, who has two Top-10 finishes this year, and **Jill Ferguson**.

There will be one other new twist to the MIAC Championships in 2011 as the field expands from 10 teams to 11 with the addition of St. Catherine University. The Wildcats join the field for their first-ever conference tournament appearance. Led by coach **Kris Wessinger**, St. Catherine is enjoying its first season as a varsity team with **Ellen Rager** and **Miranda McKeeth** leading the way.

As usual, each team will play one 18-hole round each day, with the champion and individual places decided by the cumulative scores after all 54 holes are complete. Saturday and Sunday will both begin with tee times starting at 11:20 a.m., and Monday's final round will start at 9 a.m. with a brief awards ceremony to conclude the tournament.

The MIAC women will play the North and East courses at Bunker Hills each day, with the men playing the East and West courses. Pairings



and tee times for Saturday's opening round are determined by last year's finish at the MIAC Championships, and Sunday and Monday's pairings and tee times will be dictated by the previous day's scores.

The MIAC Web site will offer live scoring updates throughout the tournament, along with complete results and recaps following each day of action with photos and videos to highlight the event as well. Stay tuned to the [2011 MIAC Golf Championship Home Page](#), as well as the MIAC's social media networks on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#) throughout the weekend to stay connected to all the action at Bunker Hills.

| [2011 MIAC Schedule](#) | [2011 MIAC Statistics](#) | [MIAC Recordbook](#) | [MIAC Archives](#) |

Augsburg

Coach: Ted Vickerman (3rd season)

2010 Championship Finish: 7th (54-Hole Total: 1,089 - +225)

Augsburg Championship Preview

The Augsburg College women's golf team is aiming for improvement with a young lineup in this weekend's Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Championships, to be held Saturday to Monday (10/1-3) at Bunker Hills Golf Course in Coon Rapids, Minn.

Under third-year head coach Ted Vickerman and first-year assistant coach Dee Forsberg McCullagh, the Auggies enter the conference meet with a young roster, with no seniors and three juniors among the nine golfers. Augsburg has a 401.8 stroke average this fall.

This season, Augsburg has been led by junior Jill Ferguson (JR, Batavia, Ill.), who has been the top two in team scoring in four of the five meets she has competed in this fall. Ferguson has a 96.9 season stroke average and 99.0 career average. Ferguson has cut more than five strokes off her stroke average since her initial college campaign.

Newcomer Courtney Barthel (FY, St. Michael, Minn./St. Michael-Albertville HS) has emerged as a strong competitor in her first collegiate golf season, with a 100.8 stroke average entering the championships. Kelli Linton (FY, Keiter, Ore./McNary HS), who has been on the five-golfer roster in each of the team's six tournaments this year, has also had a solid first campaign, with a 101.3 stroke average.

Ashley Lindemann (SO, Fargo, N.D./Fargo South HS) has also been on the Auggie five-golfer roster in each of the team's six meets, with a 102.3 stroke average entering this weekend.

Margaret Hughes (SO, Mendota Heights, Minn./Cretin-Derham Hall HS) has shown dramatic improvement this season, taking more than 25 strokes off her average from last season to this one. Emilee Howe (JR, Eden Prairie, Minn.), McKay Karl (SO, Belle Plaine, Minn.) and Nikki Johnson (JR, Upsala, Minn.) have all shown improvement as well this fall.

Bethel

Coach: Trent Anderson (2nd season)

2010 Championship Finish: 8th (54-Hole Total: 1150 - +286)

Bethel Championship Preview

The status of the women's program is very promising. After having a difficult year of filling out a full roster of golfers last year we now look forward to a year in which we will be having tryouts for the season as 10 women battle for spots in the top five. We have 7 potential returning players, Paige Lemeuix, Amber Hovland, Angie Buck, Erika Anderson, Emily Gerry, Beckah Ripley, and Erica Dennis, and three new recruits, Courtney Stoesz- Elsworth HS in WI, Haley Kuffel - Robinson HS MN, and Laura Nicholson - Minnehaha HS MN. The three new recruits are coming from good golf programs and are ready to threaten for a spot in the top five. All women have been working hard during the offseason honing their game with much practice and some summer tournaments. We intend to challenge for the top of the conference this season, and are looking forward to seeing the women in action, camp opens August 21st.

A slight coaching change for this season is giving past assistant coach, Tony Weber, a new title of Associate Head Coach. Tony will now be leading the men's team and I will be overseeing the women with oversight over both programs.

Carleton

Coach: Eric Sieger (11th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 4th (54-Hole Total: 1,040 - +176)

Carleton Championship Preview

The Knights, sporting four first-year players in their starting line-up, head into the conference tournament in the midst of their best season in program history. Carleton enters the MIAC Championships with a 332.1 team stroke average, which ranks the Knights third in the MIAC, and ranked 25th in the latest National Golf Coaches Association (NGCA)/Golf World poll.

The rookie revolution has been led by Gina Kabasakalis (Alameda, Calif./College Prep) and Taylor Wells (Rochester, Minn./Century). The dynamic duo earned consecutive MIAC athlete of the week honors the first two weeks of the season and both have rewritten the Carleton record book in the first four weeks of their collegiate careers. Wells sits fourth in the conference scoring average race and has finished inside the top 10 in all four starts this fall. Kabasakalis, after a bit of a slow start the first weekend, finished T2nd at the Warburg Invitational two weeks ago and solo second at last weekend's ACM Invitational. She ranks sixth in conference scoring average.

The lone senior in the Carleton starting line-up, Traci Johnson (Lakeville, Minn./North), has been a stalwart in the middle of the Knight line-up. Her 85.4 stroke average is a career low, as she's carried over her strong play from this past spring into her final year in the maize and blue. Rounding out Carleton's line-up are two Oregonian first-year players in Kelsey Moede (Lake Oswego, Ore.) and Sophia Roman (Portland, Ore./Catlin Gabel). Moede has scored in every round for Carleton and could be the x-factor for the Knights, along with Johnson, while Roman has been steady for head coach Eric Sieger at the back-end of the lineup all season.

"We're very proud of the season we've produced thus far, but we're very excited to compete this coming weekend in one of the best conference championships in Division III women's golf," Sieger said. "I feel like there are six teams that are top-25 caliber in our conference this year, so we're going to have to be on point all weekend if we want to reach our goals."

Concordia

Coach: Duane Siverson (27th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 9th (54-Hole Total: 1,154 - +290)

Concordia Championship Preview

It will be a completely new Concordia team that participates in the 2011 MIAC Championship Meet. The Cobbers will take five freshmen to the conference meet and will have high hopes of posting a top 5 finish for the first time since the 2007 season.

Concordia has had three different top 5 finishes on the year and is coming off their lowest team round of the season. The Cobbers shot a 315 in the opening round of the Southwest Minnesota State Invite which is the lowest single round total since the end of the 2000-01 season.

The Cobbers have four golfers with average season scores in the 80's. All four of the top CC golfers are within two shots of each other and all four have taken turns leading Concordia at the five different invites this year.

Kristi Opatz (Eagan, Minn./Eastview HS leads the team with an 83.0 average. She has one sub-80 round on the year and has one top 5 finish on the year. Holly Karkela (Perham, Minn.) fired the lowest round of the year for CC and is second on the team with an 84.5 average. She carded a 76 in the first round at the SMSU Invite which is the lowest round shot by a CC golfer since the 2008 season. Molly Zavedil (Crofton, Neb.) and Amy Mireault (Fosston, Minn.) round out the top 4. Zavedil has an 84.8 average and has placed in the top 20 on three occasions while Mireault is fourth with an 85.0 average and led the team at both the Concordia Invite and the DIII Classic.

A fifth freshmen will lock down the NO.5 spot for Concordia at the conference meet. Leading the group to contend for that fifth spot is Katie Nelson (Bismarck, N.D./Century HS) who has a 90.9 stroke average in her eight rounds of the season.

Concordia enters the conference meet ranked fourth in the MIAC in scoring average. The Cobbers are averaging 336.6 strokes as a team in the eight rounds of competition. If they can continue their steady season improvement, then a top 5 conference finish should be just around the corner.

Gustavus

Coach: Scott Moe (9th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 1st (54-Hole Total: 974 - +110)

Gustavus Championship Preview

In its final tune up before the MIAC Championships, the Gustavus women's golf team took third place out of 14 teams at the SMSU Mustang Invite held at the Marshall Golf Club in Marshall, Minn. on Sunday, Sept. 25. The third place finish caps off an impressive start to the 2011-12 campaign, which includes two first place finishes. The Gusties won the Division III Midwest Classic on Sept. 17-18 in Lake City, Minn. and took home top honors in their first meet of the season at the Eau Claire Invitational on Sept. 3-4 in Eau Claire, Wis.

Senior Taylor Drenttel proved to be the best golfer at the DIII Midwest Classic after shooting a two-day total 73-80-153 (+9) for first place out of 115 participants. The first place finish also earned Drenttel MIAC Women's Golf Athlete of the Week honors. The Inver Grove Heights, Minn. native has compiled an 18-hole average of 81.0 and has finished in the top-13 in three of the four meets this season.

First-year Sam Falk has made her presence known by leading the Gusties with an 80.3 18-hole average through four meets. Falk, a native of Glenwood, Minn., has been consistent with her play, placing in the top-20 in each meet this season. She turned in her best performance of the year at the SMSU Mustang Invite last weekend, finishing in a tie for seventh with a score of 79-75-154 (+10).

Junior Kayleigh Dittes (Eden Prairie, Minn.) and first-year Liz Strom (Fargo, N.D.) have 18-hole averages under 82 – Dittes at 81.3 and Strom at 81.8. Dittes, like Falk, has finished in the top-20 in all four meets this season, including a fifth place finish in a field of 122 at the Eau Claire Invite on Sept. 3-4. Strom registered her best performance of her collegiate career with a seventh place finish (75-79-154, +10) alongside fellow frosh Falk last weekend in Marshall, Minn.

Seniors Ann Jackson (Fargo, N.D.) and Rikka Holiday (Bozeman, Mont.) are no strangers to the MIAC Championships, entering the event with 18-hole averages of 82.0 and 84.3, respectively. Jackson provided her top performance early this season in Eau Claire, Wis. with a sixth place finish (78-84-162). She also placed 13th at the Midwest Classic. Holiday has consistently placed in the upper-third of competitors of each meet with two 22nd place finishes, one 33rd and one 38th.

The Gusties will look to take their fourth consecutive MIAC Championships on Oct. 1-3. The 2011 MIAC Championships will be held at Bunker Hills Golf Course in Coon Rapids, Minn.

Macalester

Coach: Martha Nause (11th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 10th (54-Hole Total: 1,167 - +303)

Macalester Championship Preview

The Scots have a little more depth in the lineup than their 10th place teams from the past two conference tournaments, and looking to move forward in the MIAC standings. Macalester comes into the championships with a 372.6 team scoring average, seventh best overall.

Grace Caird (Jr., Shorewood, Wis.) played to All-MIAC standards a year ago as a sophomore when placing ninth on consistent rounds of 87-84-85 (256), and returns to lead the lineup. Caird was 13th at last weekend's ACM Invitational, carding an 82 on the second round, and looks to be coming into the competition in top form. She leads Macalester with an 85.8 stroke average this fall. In addition to taking ninth at last year's conference tourney, Caird was fourth last spring at the St. Thomas Invitational and last fall was fourth at the Division 3 Classic.

Maddie Arbisi (So., Stillwater, Minn.) has been Mac's No. 2 golfer the past two years. She's averaged a 90.7 through nine rounds this fall, and has carded a couple rounds of 85. Suzanne Dufault (Fy., Fosston, Minn.) was the squad's No. 2 player at last weekend's ACM Invitational, scoring a season-best 86 on the second round. Kyla Martin (Fy., Madison, Conn. / Daniel Hand) is the team's fourth player.

St. Catherine

Coach: Kris Wessinger (1st Season)

2010 Championship Finish: N/A

St. Catherine Championship Preview

2011 marked the inaugural season of competition for the Wildcat golf team and head coach Kris Wessinger is eagerly anticipating seeing St. Kate's golfers out on the links at the MIAC Championship. "This is an exciting time for us to be competing in our first conference championship. The experience the women on the team gain this weekend will continue to help move this program forward."

Four first-year players have been the top scorers for the Wildcats in every event they played this season. Ellen Rager has been the Wildcats most consistent golfer over the season, posting an average of 90.5 and a low round of 86. Miranda McKeeth owns the lowest round of the season for the Wildcats with her 85 at the Division 3 Classic. Whitney Nash and Chelsey Craft have both been in the top four all season.

Although a young team, the Wildcats have steadily improved over the season, dropping at least a dozen strokes off their team score each week. If that trend continues at MIAC's, the young Wildcat squad may be able to surprise a few teams.

Saint Benedict

Coach: Daryl Schomer (1st season)

2010 Championship Finish: 3rd (54-Hole Total: 1,030 - +166)

Saint Benedict Championship Preview

The College of Saint Benedict Blazer golf team will look to conclude its stellar season with a strong finish at the MIAC Championships.

Senior Kathryn Hauff, who placed third at last year's championship, has the fourth best average score in the conference at 79.5. She's record three top-five finishes this season, including winning the CSB Fall Classic last week.

A pair of first-year golfers has shown improvement throughout the season. Grace Todora came on strong at the Concordia Invite with a second place overall finish and continued her success at the DIII Classic by taking ninth. She has an average score of 85.3. Bridget Cummings has also been solid for the Blazers and enjoyed her best meet of 2011 at the CSB Fall Classic by placing second overall with a low score of 83 on Sunday.

Sophomore Jillian Sampair and junior Karly Pratt round out the Blazers' top five. Sampair has an average score of 87.8, while Pratt, who has two top-ten finishes this year, has averaged a score of 88.0

With experienced and young talent, the Blazers are in position to compete for the top-three at this weekend's MIAC Championships.

Saint Mary's

Coach: Kevin Landrum (1st season)

2010 Championship Finish: 6th (54-Hole Total: 1,084 - +220)

Saint Mary's Championship Preview

A year ago, the Saint Mary's University women's golf team began its climb up the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference ladder, placing sixth in the season-ending conference tournament — the Cardinals' highest finish since 2003.

And with the entire Cardinal lineup returning — including All-MIAC First Teamer Rachel Lamberty (Farmington, Minn.) and scoring leader Gia Puch (Des Plaines, Ill.) — first-year head coach Kevin Landrum is confident his squad can put together a repeat performance in 2011.

"I'm excited about what this team can accomplish," said Landrum, who takes over the head coaching reigns after serving as the men's and women's assistant the past three seasons. "Hopefully we can pick up at this year's MIAC Championships where we left off (last year)."

Lamberty made her first year as a Cardinal a memorable one a year ago, capping off a stellar season with rounds of 86-84-86—256 to finish ninth individually and earn all-conference honors. Puch, meanwhile, placed 13th at the MIAC Tournament, recording a three-day total of 257 (90-82-85), while closing out the season with a team-leading 92.5 scoring average.

And the two have been the Cardinals' leaders again this season.

"Rachel and Gia are both very talented individuals," Landrum said. "And both are expecting big things this year."

Not only does Landrum have the luxury of having Puch and Lamberty at the top of his lineup, but he also has the luxury of experienced returners Lauren Ulbrich (Rochester, Minn.) and Jenna Mrozinski (North St. Paul, Minn.), not to mention newcomer Sarah Gustafson (Esko, Minn.).

"I've liked what I've seen thus far — everyone worked hard on their game over the summer and it shown this year," said Landrum, noting Mrozinski, Ulbrich and Gustafson have all turned in their collegiate-best scores over the past couple weeks, giving his team some much-needed depth heading into this weekend's championships. "I think that if we play up to our potential, we can stay in that middle group of tee times (at the MIAC Championships).

"We made great strides a year ago — it would be great to see that continue this year."

St. Olaf

Coach: Luke Benoit (6th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 2nd (54-Hole Total: 1,020 - +156)

St. Olaf Championship Preview

St. Olaf enters the MIAC tournament ranked tenth in the latest Division III GolfStat national rankings under the guidance of coach Luke Benoit. The Oles' best showing was at the Wartburg College Women's Fall Invite in early September with a score of 631, which set a school record, smashing the previous by 20 strokes. They have finished in the top five of every tournament this year, capped by a first-place finish at the six-team ACM Invitational from September 24-25.

The Oles are led by junior Molly Erickson who set a school record at the ACM Invitational with a two-round 154, shooting 77 for both rounds. Overall, Erickson has averaged an impressive 79.0, with three top-five finishes to her credit and one first-place finish at the ACM Invitational. Erickson is complemented by fellow junior Molly Knutson, who has also recorded a 77 round this season and has a scoring average of 81.0. Close behind Knutson is sophomore Linde Sundell, averaging 82.6 with a top five showing to her credit, senior Vanessa Kleckner averaging 82.9 and finishing in the top 20 in all but one event this season, and freshman Maxine Carlson, averaging 83.9 with a top five finish at the ACM Invitational.

St. Thomas

Coach: Sara Evens (7th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 5th (54-Hole Total: 1,049 - +185)

St. Thomas Championship Preview

The 2011-2012 Tommies are young but have bolstered their depth with four new players. Coach Sara Evens has a nine-player roster, including just one senior (Shannon Richter) and one junior (Cassy Norton).

The 2010 Tommies closed the fall season with a fifth-place finish at the MIAC Championships and Norton and Emma Wilson placed eighth and ninth, respectively, for All-MIAC recognition.

The Tommies have a 342.2 stroke average in eight rounds this fall to rank sixth of 10 MIAC teams.

Wilson, a sophomore, leads the team at 83.4 through eight rounds and is followed by freshman Katie Kruchten (87.6), Richter (87.9), Norton (88.1) and freshman Kayla Westling (90.3).