

2017 MIAC Women's Soccer Preview and Preseason Coaches' Poll

Posted: Aug 29, 2017

[Jump to:](#) | [Poll](#) | [Storylines](#) | [Marquee Matchups](#) | [Playoffs](#) | [Record Book](#) | [Notes](#) |

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. – For the second consecutive year, the University of St. Thomas women's soccer program is picked to bring home the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) title, as MIAC coaches granted the Tommies the top spot in the annual Preseason Women's Soccer Poll.

Conference champs each of the last two seasons, St. Thomas garnered nine first-place votes and were picked to finish no lower than second on any ballot this year. The Tommies also received votes in the United Soccer Coaches Preseason Top 25. In order to turn projections into reality, however, the Tommies will have to replace two key graduates in All-American goalkeeper and 2016 MIAC Defensive Player of the Year Tarynn Theilig and All-Region midfielder Taylor Skorik. Fortunately for St. Thomas, All-American junior forward and defending MIAC Offensive Player of the Year, **Mallory DeBoom**, is back, along with rising senior **Brielle Bierman**, who has tallied 15 goals and 11 assists in 50 career games.

Augsburg University earned three first-place votes to come in at No. 2 in this year's Preseason Coaches' Poll. The defending MIAC Playoff champs – who topped St. Thomas 1-0 in last season's Conference Championship Game – also enter 2017 with big cleats to fill, as last year's Auggie senior class was the winningest in program history, compiling a 59-19-5 four-year record and advancing to the NCAA Division III National Tournament in 2014 and 2016. While Augsburg will no longer have the services of a whopping nine graduating seniors, including All-American defender Emily Gregg and All-Region midfielder Marta Anderson, big things are expected from 2016 MIAC Rookie of the Year **Ashley St. Aubin**, who finished her debut season with 39 points and 16 goals – 10 of which were game-winners. The Auggies also bring back experience between the pipes – rising senior goalkeeper **Marissa Guillou** ranked second in MIAC play last season with seven wins and a save percentage of .867.

Two years removed from the program's first-ever MIAC Playoff title and NCAA Tournament bid, Gustavus Adolphus College claimed the No. 3 spot in the 2017 Preseason Coaches' Poll. Led by one of the Conference's premier goalkeepers, junior **Ashley Becker**, the Gusties could be positioned as a tough out in MIAC play this season. Becker, an All-Conference and All-Region honoree last season, began the 2017 campaign with three consecutive shutouts and ended up ranked second among MIAC keepers with a total of 94 saves on the year. Honorable mention All-Conference defender **Josie Mazzone** is back in the lineup as well, which should pose a serious threat to opponents' scoring efforts.

Coming in at No. 4 in this year's Women's Soccer Coaches' Poll is Macalester College. Rising junior **Clara Webby**, an All-Region and All-MIAC selection a year ago, played a role in nine shutouts last year and figures to anchor the Scots' defense once again in 2017. Senior forward **Jaime Hasama**, who led the team with nine goals and 20 points as a sophomore in 2015, will be back as well to provide a spark on the offensive side of the ball.

Two points behind Macalester in the Preseason Coaches' Poll is the College of Saint Benedict. Though the team will need to find a way to replace the production of Taylor Hedin – the MIAC's top point-getter in Conference play last season – CSB has enough pieces to turn some heads in 2017. Most notable among them is junior forward **Jane Koch**, who has logged 15 goals and 36 points in her two collegiate seasons. Another player to keep an eye on is sophomore defender **Meghan Verkinderen**, who started 12 games as a first-year at CSB last season.

Complete 2017 Preseason Coaches' Poll

Coaches voted for every team in the conference except their own team. Points were assigned for each vote (11 for first, 10 for second, etc.) Teams are ranked in order of highest point total to lowest with vote totals listed and first-place votes shown in parentheses.



2017 MIAC Women's Soccer Preseason Coaches' Poll

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Institution</u>	<u>Total</u>
1.	St. Thomas (9)	119

2.	Augsburg (3)	109
3.	Gustavus	91
4.	Macalester	79
5.	Saint Benedict	77
6.	Bethel	67
7.	St. Olaf	56
8.	St. Catherine	54
9.	Carleton	50
10.	Hamline	46
11.	Concordia	28
12.	Saint Mary's	16

Around the MIAC

-After finishing 0-11 against MIAC opponents and 3-15 overall in 2015, the Bethel Royals staged a dramatic turnaround last season under the guidance of 2016 MIAC Coach of the Year Amanda Maxwell, posting an 8-3 Conference record and a 13-4-1 mark during the regular season. Rising junior forward **Maggie Sipe** played a key role in last year's 10-win improvement, finishing her first season as a Royal with 28 points on 10 goals and eight assists.

-The Carleton Knights return a pair of honorable mention All-Conference midfielders and 17-game starters in **Ruby Kazemi** and **Madeline Topf**. Three of Topf's four goals in 2016 gave Carleton the lead, while Kazemi finished second on the team with 1,547 minutes played.

-Honorable mention All-MIAC defender **Ashley Malone** was an immediate impact player in her first season as a Cardinal, starting 16-of-17 games last season while aiding a Saint Mary's defense that allowed a goals-against-average of just 2.06 on the year.

Can't-Miss #MIACtion

-Sept. 1, 2017: Gustavus vs. University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. What better way to open the new season than by squaring off with one of the nation's premier programs? The Warhawks – ranked 10th in Division III in the United Soccer Coaches Preseason Top 25 – are coming off a 22-2 2016. For a team with NCAA Tournament aspirations like Gustavus, UWW may provide the perfect measuring stick to kick off the year.

-Sept. 23, 2017: Bethel at St. Catherine. Neither the Royals nor Wildcats were expected to accomplish much in 2016, but both programs proved doubters wrong. Bethel – picked to finish dead last by MIAC coaches in last year's Preseason Poll – locked up the No. 2 seed in the Conference tournament, thanks in large part to an influx of first-year talent, while St. Kate's secured the four seed, in addition to the program's first-ever home playoff game and NCAA Regional Ranking. Both programs are on the upswing, which makes this late September matchup must-see.

-Oct. 25, 2017: Augsburg at St. Thomas. Last season's Playoff Championship matchup between these two teams was decided by a single goal. With both programs once again anticipated to be vying for a Conference title in 2017, this late season contest is certainly one to circle on the calendar.

2017 MIAC Women's Soccer Playoffs

The 2017 MIAC Women's Soccer Playoffs will feature the Conference's top six teams from the regular season in a single-elimination, high-seed host tournament. The top two seeds receive byes to the semifinals, while teams seeded No. 3-6 will square off in the quarterfinals. The two quarterfinal games will take place Tuesday, Oct. 31, the two semifinal games will follow on Wednesday, Nov. 1, and the championship is set for Saturday, Nov. 4. The winner will receive the MIAC's automatic bid to the 2017 NCAA Division III Women's Soccer Tournament.

For the Record

-Prior to 2016, Concordia had reached the MIAC Playoffs in all 13 years of the tournament's existence. Though the streak was snapped last year, the Cobbers maintain the Conference records for consecutive MIAC Playoff appearances and total postseason berths. The 2017 MIAC Women's Soccer Record Book is available for download [here](#).

Odds and Ends

-Hamline reached the MIAC Playoffs for the first time ever last season and returns 16 players from the 2016 squad, including First Team All-Conference forward **Arendje Louter** and honorable mention All-Conference forward **Kaley Roberts**. One new face is head coach Emily Cripe, a Twin Cities native who played collegiately at Seton Hall.

-The St. Catherine Wildcats won a shootout over Gustavus Adolphus to advance to the MIAC Playoff semifinals for the first time in program history last season. Three honorable mention All-MIAC selections – senior defender **Shannon Hickey**, junior forward **Kaitlin Machovec** and junior defender **Iryna Talkachova** – return to the St. Kate's lineup in 2017.

-After finishing 4-10-4 in 2015, St. Olaf doubled its win total in the debut season of head coach Rachel Sushner last year. The Oles will lean on honorable mention All-MIAC midfielder **Emily Helle** and defender **Kaylyn Billmeyer** to continue trending in the right direction in 2017.