

2018 MIAC Women's Soccer Preview and Preseason Coaches' Poll

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BLOOMINGTON, Minn. – The University of St. Thomas will open the 2018 women's soccer season as the favorite to win the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC), earning six first-place votes and 116 total points in the league's annual Preseason Coaches' Poll.

This is the third consecutive season the Tommies have been slotted No. 1 in the Preseason Poll. Head coach **Sheila McGill**'s squad placed second in the Conference standings last season and advanced to the NCAA Playoffs for the second time in as many years. UST is poised to return a pair of All-Conference and All-Region honorees in **Mallory DeBoom** and **Brie Bourdage**. Both seniors have proven to be significant difference makers, as the Tommies are undefeated in games when DeBoom (32-0-4) or Bourdage (10-0-1) nets a goal or assist. St. Thomas will have ample opportunity to prove itself, with three games scheduled against nationally-ranked teams including No. 9 Wis.-La Crosse, No. 15 Wheaton and No. 22 Loras, in addition to a tough MIAC game slate.

The defending regular season MIAC champion Augsburg University received four first-place votes and totaled 108 points to finish second in the preseason balloting. The Auggies just missed out on an NCAA Tournament berth last season and will have to replace a senior class that combined for a 61-20-2 career record, the most wins by a four-year class in program history. The good news for Augsburg, however, is that 2017 United Soccer Coaches Second Team All-America selection and MIAC Player of the Year, **Ashley St. Aubin**, will be back on the field for her junior season in Minneapolis. One of the Conference's most dynamic players, St. Aubin led all MIAC scorers for the second year in a row in both goals (16) and points (36) as a sophomore in 2017.



Mallory DeBoom has earned All-Conference honors each of her first three seasons at St. Thomas.

Coming in at No. 3 in the Preseason Coaches' Poll is St. Olaf College. The Oles received 89 points and a pair of first-place votes in the 2018 balloting after finishing the 2017 campaign with the program's first MIAC Playoff berth in four seasons and their highest number of First Team All-Conference honorees (three) on record since 1984. Two of those All-MIAC selections will be back in the lineup this season, as **Kaylyn Billmeyer** returns for her senior year as the anchor of the Ole defense and **Claire Bash** looks to build on an impressive sophomore season last year.

The College of Saint Benedict is picked to finish fourth this year after totaling 82 points in the preseason balloting. CSB got back to the MIAC Playoffs last season following a two-year hiatus and will return several key pieces from that team, including 2017 MIAC Rookie of the Year **Megan Thompson** and All-Conference pick **Meghan Verkinderen**. Thompson had a dynamite debut last year, scoring four goals in her first collegiate game. She went on to lead the team with seven goals on the year, three of which were game-winners.

The surprise team of 2017, St. Catherine University finished No. 5 in the 2018 preseason balloting with 78 points. The Wildcats entered last season with the program's smallest roster in years but displayed incredible mettle throughout, bouncing back from an 0-4 start to go on a streak of seven straight non-losing games and secure a spot in the MIAC Playoffs. Proving that all it takes sometimes is just an opportunity, St. Kate's made history, becoming the first No. 5 seed to host the MIAC women's soccer championship, the first St. Catherine team to host a MIAC Playoff Championship of any kind, and the first team in program history to win the Conference playoff title and clinch a spot in the NCAA Tournament. The success of last season means that **Allie Bird** - who drilled the game-winner an hour and 41 minutes into last year's MIAC title game - and company will no longer fly under the radar, but a second straight trip to the Tournament is certainly not out of the question.

Gustavus Adolphus College landed at No. 6 in the Preseason Poll. Goalkeeper **Ashley Becker** earned Defensive Player of the Year honors last season after an exemplary junior campaign for Gustavus. The three-time All-Conference honoree played lights out all year with a goals-allowed average of 0.66 in 20 starts; however, her signature performance came in the MIAC Playoff semifinals, when she recorded a pair of saves on penalty kicks to propel the No. 6 seeded Gusties into the Conference title game.

Bethel came in at No. 7 in the Poll. BU forward **Maggie Sipe** has been an offensive force for the Royals since arriving on campus two years ago, totaling 54 points through her first two seasons. Only Augsburg's **Ashley St. Aubin** has accounted for more scores among MIAC competitors during that time period.

With 59 points in the balloting, Macalester College is No. 8 in the Poll. Macalester introduced **Krystle Seidel** as the program's new head coach in May. A Woodbury, Minn. native and former Minnesota High School Gatorade Player of the Year, Seidel played collegiately at West Virginia University and the University of Minnesota before entering the coaching ranks with the Gophers. During her nine seasons on staff, U

of M reached the Big Ten Tournament all nine years and earned NCAA Tournament berths four times.

Hamline University registered at No. 9 in the preseason balloting. If defense wins champions, the Pipers are in good shape, with three goalkeepers and four defensive regulars back from last year's squad. Headlining the bunch is sophomore **Kat Armstrong**, who led all MIAC goalies last season with 99 saves - 78 of which came in Conference play.

Carleton College secured the No. 10 spot in the Preseason Coaches' Poll. The Knights are led by senior midfielder **Annika Martensson**, who returned to the field last season after missing the entire 2016 campaign with a knee injury. Martensson started all 17 matches for the Knights last year, leading the team in minutes played and landing on the All-Conference squad for the first time in her career.

At No. 11 in the preseason balloting is Saint Mary's University. SMU midfielder **Kendall Archer** was the only first-year player named to the 2017 All-Conference Team. A 17-game starter and defensive standout for the Cardinals last season, Archer led SMU with 28 shots on the year.

Finishing off the Poll at No. 12 is Concordia College. **Rebecca O'Shurak** became the seventh coach in the history of Concordia women's soccer in April and is the very first female to lead the program in its 35-year history. An Allegheny College grad, O'Shurak served as an assistant coach at Youngstown State and Tennessee Tech before taking the job at Concordia. The Cobbers have made 13 MIAC Playoff appearances - more than any program in Conference history - but have not reached the postseason since 2015.

Complete 2018 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.

2018 MIAC Women's Soccer Preseason Coaches' Poll

Rank	Institution (First-Place Votes)	Total
1.	St. Thomas (6)	116
2.	Augsburg (4)	108
3.	St. Olaf (2)	89
4.	Saint Benedict	82
5.	St. Catherine	78
6.	Gustavus	67
7.	Bethel	63
8.	Macalester	59
9.	Hamline	54
10.	Carleton	36
11.	Saint Mary's	22
12.	Concordia	18

2018 MIAC Women's Soccer Playoffs

The 2018 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. 30, the two semifinal games will follow on Wednesday, Oct. 31, and the championship is set for Saturday, Nov. 3. The winner will receive the MIAC's automatic bid to the 2018 NCAA Division III Women's Soccer Tournament.

Odds and Ends

-Six of the 10 United Soccer Coaches All-North Region selections from the MIAC in 2017 (Augsburg's St. Aubin, Gustavus' Becker, Macalester's **Clara Webby**, St. Catherine's **Kaitlin Machovec**, and St. Thomas' Bourdage and DeBoom) will return to the field in 2018. The MIAC had five All-Region honorees total in 2016, all of whom were seniors.

-The newly-renovated Rolf Mellby Field in Northfield, Minn. - which now features synthetic turf - will see its first official action of the season on August 31 when the Oles host a double-header against Wis.-Stevens Point (women's) and Martin Luther College (men's).

-Gustavus goalkeeper **Ashley Becker** and St. Thomas forward **Mallory DeBoom** have been named First Team All-Conference each of their first three seasons in the MIAC. Only 14 women on record have received four straight All-MIAC honors, with the most recent being Saint Benedict's Colleen Bouchard (2010-13). The MIAC has not had two four-time All-Conference honorees in one class since Macalester's Annie Borton and St. Olaf's Kelsey Watt in 2006.

For the Record

The MIAC is in the process of overhauling its sport record books to provide a better historical perspective of the Conference and the accomplishments of its student-athletes over the last century. The 40-page MIAC Women's Soccer Record Book contains annual Conference

championship information, year-by-year standings, all-time award winners, individual and team records, NCAA Playoff history, and more. The information included in the 2018 Record Book is based on available data and research for additional historical documents is ongoing. The 2018 MIAC Women's Soccer Record Book is now available for download [here](#).