

Peterson, Thompson, SMU duo headline 2014 MIAC Baseball Awards

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ST. PAUL, Minn. -- The 2014 season was a great one on baseball diamonds throughout the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC), with continued depth and parity resulting in an entertaining regular season and conference postseason tournament. Wednesday, the top individual performers were honored for their heroics with the announcement of the 2014 MIAC Baseball Awards.

St. Thomas senior Tyler Peterson led the Tommies to their 12th-straight MIAC Championship while leading the conference in the three Triple Crown categories to claim Max Molock Most Valuable Player Honors. Saint John's Justin Thompson had an ERA under 1.00 and racked up double-digit saves to earn the Mike Augustin Pitcher-of-the-Year in honor of his excellence on the mound. Saint Mary's also had a pair of individual honorees, as Head Coach Nick Winecke was voted the Jim Dimick Coach-of-the-Year, and outfielder Ben Buerkle received MIAC Rookie-of-the-Year honors.

In addition to the top individual awards, the MIAC also announced the 27-player All-Conference team, as well as the 10-player All-Defensive Team and the Baseball All-MIAC Sportsmanship Team.

Peterson was an All-Conference performer in 2013, but took his offensive game to a new level in 2014 to earn the Max Molock MVP award. In overall games, he led the MIAC in batting average (.473), runs batted in (50), home runs (eight), total bases (106) and slugging percentage (.809). He ranked second in on-base percentage (.526) and doubles (18), third in hits (62) and fifth in runs (43). He had two or more hits in 22 of 38 games and was nearly perfect at first base, committing only two errors in 310 chances for a .994 fielding percentage.

The Tommie senior was just as good in conference play, leading the MIAC in average (.461), RBI (27), total bases (59), hits (35) and doubles (10), while leading St. Thomas to an 18-2 conference record and its 12th-straight title. He also ranked second in slugging (.776) and third in on-base percentage (.506), runs (24) and home runs (four) and he was flawless at first with no errors in 180 chances.

Thompson received the Mike Augustin Pitcher-of-the-Year award for his role in the Johnnies' third-place finish and trip to the MIAC playoffs. He was mostly a reliever, but made two brilliant starts late in the season to solidify his team's trip to the postseason. Thompson was 2-0 and led the MIAC with 10 saves and a miniscule 0.87 earned run average. His average of 11.03 strikeouts per nine innings ranked second in the league, and he allowed just three earned runs on 20 hits and eight walks in 31 innings with 38 strikeouts.

The versatile Johnnie hurler did most of his damage against MIAC foes, as he was 2-0 with eight of his 10 saves and an even-better 0.72 ERA in conference play. Thompson led the league in saves and ERA and opposing hitters hit just .179 against him. He was fifth in the MIAC with 29 strikeouts, second in Ks per nine (10.44) and he went the distance in both of his late-season spot starts to go 2-0 with one shutout.

Now in his sixth season guiding the Cardinals, Winecke received his first Jim Dimick Coach-of-the-Year award for another stellar job leading Saint Mary's to the postseason. Winecke's team rallied to win its final six regular-season games to ascend to third place in the MIAC, and earn its third-straight trip to the conference tournament. Winecke's team finished 13-7 in the MIAC, 18-23 overall and advanced to the MIAC Playoff semifinals.

Winecke's team found success through fundamentals, as the Cardinals led the MIAC with a .979 fielding percentage and only 15 errors in conference play. Saint Mary's was the only team to record fewer than 20 errors in MIAC games. His team also was top five in ERA and second in runs (79) and walks (42) allowed. Offensively, the Cardinals were second in walks (84) and stolen bases (27), third in on-base percentage (.390), runs (115) and hits (182) and fourth in batting average (.298) in conference games.

One big key to Saint Mary's success was the emergence of Buerkle in the outfield, which led to his Rookie-of-the-Year honor. The Cardinal freshman hit .412 with 33 RBI, 32 runs, two home runs and seven stolen bases in 2014, and he hit safely in 37 of 40 games played. He ranked in the top 10 in the MIAC in batting average, RBI, on-base percentage (.473), hits (61), doubles (13) and total bases (84). In conference play, Buerkle hit safely in 17 of 20 games for a .377 average with 19 runs scored and 13 RBI.

St. Thomas was rewarded for its conference title with seven All-Conference selections. Carleton was next with five players honored, Saint Mary's had three and Bethel and Saint John's each had two. Augsburg, Concordia, Hamline and Macalester each had one player selected. The team was heavy on upperclassmen, with 14 seniors, nine juniors and four sophomores comprising the 27-player team.

A trio of Tommies all capped their careers with their third All-Conference honor. Outfielders Tim Kuzniar and Ben Podobinski were selected each of their last three seasons, and J.D. Dorgan earned All-MIAC accolades in 2011, 2013 and 2014. MVP Peterson, Carleton's Hayden Tsutsui and St. Olaf's Jack Schechinger were all repeat picks, and Saint Mary's Jon Schlemmer also received his second career nod after also earning honors in 2012.



For the fifth-straight season, the MIAC coaches selected an All-Defensive team to reward one player's great work with the glove at each position, including two pitchers. Honorees were chosen for their arm strength and range, as well as defensive statistics from the conference season. Dorgan earned his third-straight nod as the team's catcher, Podobinski and Saint Mary's Willie Doll were repeat picks in the outfield and St. Olaf shortstop Nick Kulla returned to the team after his selection in 2012. The All-Defensive Team features six seniors, one junior and three sophomores. St. Thomas and Saint Mary's each had three selections, and Hamline and St. Olaf each had two.

As part of a conference-wide sportsmanship initiative, the MIAC announced the eighth-annual All-MIAC Sportsmanship team for baseball. 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.

2014 MIAC BASEBALL AWARDS

- Max Molock Most Valuable Player** - Tyler Peterson, St. Thomas (Sr., 1B, Eden Prairie, Minn.)
Mike Augustin Pitcher-of-the-Year - Justin Thompson, Saint John's (Sr., P/C, Chanhassen, Minn. / Chaska)
Rookie-of-the-Year - Ben Buerkle, Saint Mary's (Fr., OF, Roseville, Minn.)
Jim Dimick Coach-of-the-Year - Nick Winecke, Saint Mary's (Sixth season)

2014 MIAC BASEBALL ALL-CONFERENCE TEAM

Name	School	Year	Position	Hometown/Previous School
Grant Anderson	Bethel	Jr.	OF	Andover, Minn. / Legacy Christian Academy
Nolan Baker	Carleton	Jr.	P/OF	Appleton, Wis. / North
Brett Becker	Saint John's	Jr.	2B	North Oaks, Minn. / Mounds View
Matt Connell	Hamline	Jr.	1B	Shell Lake, Wis. / Turtle Lake
Tommy Danczyk	St. Thomas	Sr.	P	Hayward, Wis.
Willie Doll	Saint Mary's	So.	OF	Amherst, Wis.
J.D. Dorgan	St. Thomas	Sr.	C	Eagan, Minn.
Jeff Dsida	Carleton	Sr.	C	Winnetka, Ill. / New Trier
Tom Forster	Macalester	Jr.	C	Stillwater, Minn.
Jordan Gefroh	Concordia	Sr.	DH	Fargo, N.D. / Shanley
Jack Hogan	St. Thomas	Jr.	3B	Minneapolis, Minn. / Holy Angels
Ben Johnson	Saint Mary's	So.	P	Brooklyn Park, Minn. / Osseo
Kevin Johnson	Carleton	Sr.	2B	St. Anthony, Minn. / DeLaSalle
Tim Kuzniar	St. Thomas	Sr.	OF	Lakeville, Minn. / North
Joe Lampe	Saint John's	Sr.	OF	Osceola, Iowa / Clarke
Sam Maus	St. Olaf	Sr.	3B	Northfield, Minn.
Tanner Oakes	Augsburg	Jr.	P	Jordan, Minn.
Tyler Peterson	St. Thomas	Sr.	1B	Eden Prairie, Minn.
Ben Podobinski	St. Thomas	Sr.	OF	Roseville, Minn.
Jack Schechinger	St. Olaf	Sr.	C	Edina, Minn.
Jon Schlemmer	Saint Mary's	Jr.	C	DePere, Wis. / West DePere
Taylor Thelemann	Saint Mary's	Sr.	SS	Bloomington, Minn. / Jefferson
Justin Thompson	Saint John's	Sr.	P/C	Chanhassen, Minn. / Chaska
Hayden Tsutsui	Carleton	So.	OF	Northridge, Calif. / Chatsworth
Eric Veglahn	St. Thomas	So.	P	LaCrescent, Minn.
Ray Yong	Carleton	Sr.	OF	Elmhurst, Ill. / York
Joe Zorn	Bethel	Jr.	P	Stillwater, Minn.

2014 MIAC BASEBALL ALL-DEFENSIVE TEAM

Name	School	Year	Position	Hometown/Previous School
Steph Scatassa	Saint Mary's	So.	SP	Westchester, Ill. / St. Joseph
Rob Miller	Hamline	Sr.	RP	Minnetonka, Minn.
J.D. Dorgan	St. Thomas	Sr.	C	Eagan, Minn.
Tyler Peterson	St. Thomas	Sr.	1B	Eden Prairie, Minn.
David Barry	Saint Mary's	Jr.	2B	Apple Valley, Minn. / Eastview
Sam Maus	St. Olaf	Sr.	3B	Northfield, Minn.
Nick Kulla	St. Olaf	Sr.	SS	Lakeville, Minn. / North

Willie Doll	Saint Mary's	So.	OF	Amherst, Wis.
Dan Moro	Hamline	So.	OF	Calgary, Alberta / Vauxhall
Ben Podobinski	St. Thomas	Sr.	OF	Roseville, Minn.

2014 BASEBALL ALL-MIAC SPORTSMANSHIP TEAM

- Augsburg - Gary Mariscal (Sr, Savage, Minn. / Prior Lake)
 - Bethel - Mike Whartnaby (Sr, Libertyville, Ill.)
 - Carleton - Jukie Tsai (Sr, New York, N.Y. / Friends Seminary)
 - Concordia - Mike Rose (Sr, Durbin, N.D. / Central Cass)
 - Gustavus - Scott Benjamin (Sr, Northfield, Minn.)
 - Hamline - Darby Nelson (Sr, Osceola, Wis.)
 - Macalester - Justin Sims (Sr, Bronx, N.Y. / The Beacon School)
 - Saint John's - Tom Lambert (Sr, Broomfield, Colo. / Holy Trinity)
 - Saint Mary's - Tommy Merkelis (Sr, Calumet City, Ill. / Bishop Noll)
 - St. Olaf - Zack Meyer (Sr, St. Paul, Minn. / Central)
 - St. Thomas - Harry Welsh (Sr, Rogers, Ark./Shiloh)
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