




2004 MIAC BASEBALL PREVIEW

The MIAC beings it's 84th season of baseball this year with a number of squads vying for the league crown. Reigning MIAC regular season champion St. Thomas will once again be the favorite to win the title. While 2003 MIAC Tournament Champion St. Olaf, Concordia, and Gustavus all have the potential to be legit contenders for the MIAC Championship. A group of team looking to earn a spot in the MIAC Playoffs include; Saint John's, Saint Mary's, Bethel, and Hamline. Carleton, Augsburg, and Macalester all will field young teams looking to make an improvement in the league standings.


The 2004 MIAC Tournament will take place on May 14-16, 2004 in Dundas and Northfield, Minn.

Augsburg College		
Head Coach:	Keith Bateman (1st season)	
2003 Record:	9-24-2 overall (4-14 MIAC / 10th)	
Key Returners:	<p>-- Pat Knafla (C, Sr., Rice, Minn./Sauk Rapids-Rice HS), starting catcher last season, leading hitter among returners (.321, 17-of-53, 11R, 8 RBI, 4 doubles, 1 triple, 1 HR, .491 slugging percentage); career .269 average, 14 RBI, 2 HR.</p> <p>-- Jeremy Nelson (P, Jr., Maplewood, Minn./Roseville HS), 2-8 record, 47.2 IP, 28 strikeouts in 2003; 10 starts in 11 appearances, all team highs; 6-12 career record in 21 appearances, 5.60 career ERA.</p> <p>-- Joe Haehn (UTL, So., Minneapolis, Minn./Washburn HS), .313 average (31-of-99), team-high 7 HR and 37 RBI in 2003, also five doubles, .576 slugging percentage (tops among returners).</p> <p>-- Collin Nash (P/UTL Sr., Rochester, Minn./Mayo HS), transferred from St. Thomas in 2003, .275 average (22-of-80), 13 RBI, 8 doubles, 1 triple; 2-3 record in 8 pitching appearances (6 starts), 5.19 ERA, 23 strikeouts in 34.2 innings.</p> <p>-- Andy Nelson (2B, So., Waseca, Minn.), started 32 games as freshman, .309 average (29-of-94), 3 doubles, 11 RBI in 2003.</p> <p>-- Taylor Pagel (UTL, Jr., Cannon Falls, Minn.), .282 average (24-of-85), 3 HR, 5 doubles, 17 RBI in 2003.</p>	
Season Preview:	<p>For the Augsburg College baseball team, one of the few constants has been change.</p> <p>So for the third head coach in three seasons for the Auggies, it's time for a "back-to-basics" approach.</p> <p>"Augsburg has had a great baseball tradition, 10 conference titles in 80 seasons. It's not like we haven't been successful in the past. We just need to get back to the fundamentals, be competitive in every game. We can get better every day," said Keith Bateman, who was hired as Augsburg's interim head coach in September.</p> <p>"We need to work on the fundamentals of baseball, the back-to-basics things. If you handle the fundamentals, you're going to win a lot of games. If you take care of the small stuff, the big stuff will take care of itself."</p> <p>A three-time All-Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference catcher at Bethel College (1996-98), Bateman had served as an assistant coach at his alma-mater for three seasons (2000-02) and as a volunteer assistant coach at MIAC regular-season champion St. Thomas in 2003. He was an All-Midwest Region selection his senior season at Bethel and holds the school records for single-season hits and batting average.</p> <p>Bateman takes over an Auggie program that has won just 18 games the last two seasons, including a 9-24-2 overall record last season, 4-16 in MIAC play.</p> <p>The new head coach will inherit a very young program, with just seven upperclassmen, 11 letterwinners returning and more than half the team made up of freshmen (18). But Bateman has confidence in the team's potential.</p> <p>"The chemistry on this team has been really good, and that's what has impressed me the most about coming to Augsburg," Bateman said. "You really don't know what to expect, being the third coach in three years and coming from another MIAC school and a different background. ... But the way the upperclassmen have helped and accepted the freshmen, and how they all get along, the way they interact is really unique. It's their doing and it makes my job a lot easier."</p> <p>Complete Augsburg Baseball Preview</p>	


Bethel College		
Head Coach:	Greg Indlecoffer (2nd season at BC)	
2003 Record:	17-22 overall (6-14 MIAC / 9th)	
Key Returners:	Chris Carroll, SR, DH, All-MIAC in 2003, hit .338 BA in 2003 Ricky Saintey, SR, Catcher, hit .367 in 2003 Zach Ludvigson, JR, Shortstop, Three-year starter, hit .311 in 2003 Jason Steffenhagen, SR, RHP, 2-3 in 2003, two-year captain Ryan Mahoney	
Season Preview:	<p>Bethel's baseball team came out of their fall workouts encouraged with what they saw in their young recruits along with the overall enthusiasm and focus of the team. Second-year head coach Greg Indlecoffer was pleased with the work ethic and leadership demonstrated by his team this fall. "We are a team of transformation...both physically in the development of our baseball skills as well as spiritually in the development of our attitude and love for our fellow teammate," said Indlecoffer. Last season's 17 – 22 overall record is an improvement and positive momentum builder leading into the 2004 season. Bethel has a number of returning players looking to step up and lead this team through a tough MIAC conference schedule.</p> <p>Leading the pitching staff will be senior right-hander and co-captain Jason Steffenhagen (Maple Plain, Minn.) who will be joined by junior right-hander and co-captain Ryan Mahoney (St. Paul, Minn.). Looking to fill out the starting rotation will be juniors Justin Haddock (Burnsville, Minn.) and Eric Drake (Barrington, Ill.). Several newcomers will also look to contribute, including freshmen right-handers Luke Ludvigson (Minnetonka, Minn.), Chris Nordell (Roseville, Minn.), Luke Dalchow (Duluth, Minn.), and Robert Richmond (Shoreview, Minn.).</p> <p>Behind the plate, senior co-captain, All MIAC, and team MVP Ricky Saintey (Rosemount, Minn.) returns to manage the pitching staff. He will be backed up by a solid junior receiver and hitter Peter Sycks (Mound, Minn.). Transfers Tim Wells (Roseville, Minn.) and Alex Schmidt (Fairmont, Minn.) will add strength to a developing core of young receivers behind the plate.</p> <p>Junior shortstop and MIAC honorable mention selection Zach Ludvigson (Minnetonka, Minn.) along with second basemen Ryan Mahoney will provide solid defense up the middle for the Royals. Both have gained valuable experience over the past few years as starters. Sophomore Corey Hawkinson (Maple Plain, Minn.) and freshman Mike Gaustad (Fergus Falls, Minn.) will also look to contribute in role situations.</p> <p>At the corners, sophomore Brady Olson (Minnetonka, Minn.) looks to step in as the Royals everyday cornerman at third base. Freshman Ethan Formo (Granite Falls, Minn.) looked solid this fall at the corner and will compete for time. Sophomore Dane Hansen (Roseville, Minn.) returns as the starting first baseman after an impressive freshman year both offensively and defensively. Senior Chris Carroll (Roseville, Minn.) earned All-MIAC honorable mention honors as a designated hitter and will look to fill any voids in various roles at the plate, first base, or in the outfield. Junior Josh Storm (Lakeville, Minn.) will also contribute in role situations.</p> <p>In the outfield, junior Peter Harrell (Minnetrista, Minn.) returns to his starting position in left field with back up support by Chris Carroll. Junior Alex Garee (Maple Grove, Minn.) and freshmen standouts Kirby Carr (Fergus Falls, Minn.) and Dan Villas (Bloomington, Minn.) will compete for a starting job.</p> <p>The Royals open the season in the Metrodome on March 4 as they host Northland College before traveling to Fort Myers in late March for nonconference action. Bethel opens the MIAC schedule at home on April 3 against Concordia.</p>	


Carleton College		
Head Coach:	Bill Nelson (9th season)	
2003 Record:	10-24 overall (7-13 MIAC / 8th)	

Key Returners:	<p>Ben Cooprider, So., OF/C, DeKalb, Ill., 293, 5 2B in 2003</p> <p>Nate Flaherty, Sr., OF, Oakdale, Minn. (Tartan), team captain</p> <p>Luke Muellerleile, So., SS, White Bear Lake, Minn. (Mahtomedi), .266, 25 hits in 2003</p> <p>Gunnar Stapp, Sr., OF, Gordon, Wis. (Minong), .263, 25 hits, 11 SB</p> <p>Brian Sharkey, So., P, Bow, N.H. (St. Paul's School), 2-4, 5.52 ERA</p>
Season Preview:	<p>A bevy of young but experienced field players and a largely untested pitching staff has Carleton College head coach Bill Nelson excited but unsure of his team's prospects for 2004.</p> <p>Gone is All-MIAC hurler Tony LePage, who earned the conference pitcher of the year honors last year after posting a 6-6 mark with a miniscule 2.82 earned-run average. He tossed 10 complete games with two shutouts and fanned 80 batters in 83 innings of work. He also supplied the big bat in Carleton's lineup, hitting .324 with five homers and 19 extra-base knocks among his team-high 36 hits.</p> <p>In LePage's absence a core of young, experienced position players hope to step up and prove that the Knights were more than a one-man show the past two seasons. Sophomore Ben Cooprider (DeKalb, Ill.) is the team's top returning hitter in terms of average, as he hit .293 with five doubles in his rookie campaign. As was the case in football where he moved from quarterback to wide receiver, Cooprider will move from the catching spot to the outfield so Nelson can get sophomore catcher Fran Glover (Minnetonka, Minn./Blaine) and Cooprider into the lineup full-time. Glover hit .255 last year in 18 appearances. Sophomore Luke Muellerleile (White Bear Lake, Minn./Mahtomedi) returns as the starting shortstop after hitting .266 with 14 runs scores and seven stolen bases in his rookie season in 2003. Fellow sophomore Roddy Theobald (Bloomington, Ind./North) should hold down the first-base spot and hopes to improve on his .170 average in limited action last year.</p> <p>Nate Flaherty (Oakdale, Minn./Tartan) is one of two returning senior starters. He hit .277 last season, playing at third base, but he may move to a corner outfield position in 2004. The other returning senior who started last season is center fielder Gunnar Stapp (Gordon, Wis./Northwood), who hit .263 with 25 hits and 13 runs scored. He paced the club with 11 stolen bases in 13 attempts as well.</p> <p>The pitching staff is much more of a question mark for Nelson, in his 11th season as head coach and 12th overall with the Knights' program. LePage's graduation and Will Nissen's decision not to come out this season leaves sophomore Brian Sharkey (Bow, N.H./St. Paul's School) as the team's most experienced returning starter. The righty worked 44 innings with a 2-4 mark and a 5.52 ERA. Matt Topeff (Fy./Andover, Minn./Blaine) figures to hold down the second spot in the rotation and Nelson is hopeful sophomore David Williams (London, U.K./American School) can post a breakout season after working only 17.2 innings last season. A pair of rookies, hard-throwing Sam Chotiner-Gardner (Hamden, Conn./Hamden Hall) and talented righty Peter Watson (Lakewood, Ohio) could step forward to give the Knights' staff some depth. Nelson is counting on the combination of fire-balling senior Tanner Schieck (Austin, Minn.) and side-arm throwing Flaherty to cover Carleton's relief duties.</p> <p>In the competitive MIAC, the goal for any team is to make the four-team MIAC Playoffs and the Knights are no different. Nelson feels his team's defense is solid and that the bats will come through, so it may all come down to how the pitching staff shakes out as the season progresses. "It all depends on if the young pitchers can throw strikes," Nelson said. "If they throw strikes consistently and don't walk people I think our defense is good enough and I think we can score enough runs to compete with some of these teams. But at this point, it's a complete unknown with these young guys."</p> <p>Complete Carleton Preview</p>


<u>Concordia College</u>		
Head Coach:	Bucky Burgau (26th season)	
2003 Record:	24-16-1 overall (15-5 MIAC / 3rd)	
Key Returners:	<p>- Jeremy Hinderks, Sr., Renville, Minn./R-C-W HS Pitcher, Senior: All-Region and All-MIAC in 2003. Led team in starts (13), complete games (3), and wins (9) in 2003.</p> <p>- Ryan Hebrink, Sr., Sacred Heart, Minn./R-C-W HS, Shortstop/Pitcher, Senior: All-Region and All-MIAC in 2003. Led team in home runs (9), 2nd in hits (43), 3rd in batting average (.326). School record holder in career home runs (19)</p> <p>-Luther Kangas, Sr., Vadnais Heights, Minn., White Bear Lake HS, Catcher, Senior: Started 39 games, hit .248 with 6 doubles and 3 home runs.</p>	

Season Preview:	<p>The 2004 Concordia baseball team will help head coach Bucky Burgau eclipse a pair of awe-inspiring milestones this season. Burgau is poised to become the first coach in MIAC history to surpass the 300-win total in MIAC games. He currently has 299 MIAC victories in his career and the next conference win will push him into a category that no other MIAC coach has ever achieved. He is also on the verge of winning his 500th career game at the helm of the Cobbers. Entering today's doubleheader, he has 488 career victories at Concordia, and is the all-time winningest athletic coach in the history of the college. He also holds the best winning percentage of any active coach currently coaching at Concordia.</p> <p>This season Burgau will rely heavily on two of the best athletes in the school in recent years. Seniors Ryan Hebrink and Jeremy Hinderks will finish off their storied careers in baseball and football with their last go-around on the diamond. Hebrink earned all-region and all-conference honors last season for the Cobber baseball team. He is also a three-time all-conference football player. He recently broke the school's all-time record for home runs in a career. He finished the spring trip with four roundtrippers which gives him 23 for his career. He broke Chris Coste's mark of 19 set back in 1995. Hinderks was also an all-region and all-conference baseball player last season. Unfortunately he was overlooked as an all-conference football player despite leading the league in scoring. Hinderks will be the anchor for the Cobbers pitching staff. He has a chance to become the all-time winningest pitcher in the history of the program.</p> <p>Joining Hebrink and Hinderks as senior team leaders will be Luther Kangas, KC Solum, Chad Worthington, Jesse Barnacle and Jim Johnson. Kangas will make the switch from outfield to catcher. He is a career .267 hitter and was fourth on the team in RBI's last season.</p> <p>Burgau will also be aided by a stellar recruiting class. There are 14 new names on the Cobber roster this season. The biggest splash in the newcomer pool could be made by Chris Klabo. Klabo currently leads the team in batting after the team's nine-game Florida swing. He is hitting .429 and owns a .643 slugging percentage.</p> <p><u>For complete Cobber baseball coverage</u></p>
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<u>Gustavus Adolphus College</u>		
Head Coach:	Mike Carroll (8th season)	
2003 Record:	19-19 overall (12-8 MIAC / 4th-tie)	
Key Returners:	Bryant Rogness (Sr., second base, .368 batting average, .435 on-base percentage) Trent Larson (Sr, shortstop/pitcher, 2003 All-Conference, .342 batting average, 2.33 ERA) Ben Sherer (So., Outfield/1st base, 2003 All-Conference, .359 batting average)	
Season Preview:	Head Coach Mike Carroll returns the core of his team that posted a record of 19-19 overall and 12-8 in the MIAC (fifth place) last year. The loss of talented pitchers Mike Fritz and John Schaffler will hurt, but there are talented players ready to step up. Coach Carroll will look to his seniors to lead this team with Bryant Rogness, Trent Larson, and Tyler Vrieze at the forefront. The Gusties return five players who hit .300 or better last year. Junior Ash Larsen (outfield) led the team with a .369 average while also driving in 22 runs. Bryant Rogness (second base) will again be counted on to spark rallies, as he led the team with a .435 on-base percentage and stole nine bases. Tyler Vrieze (outfield) will provide the pop in the line-up for this year's team after slamming five home runs last season. In addition, Coach Carroll will be counting on some of his younger players to step up including sophomore Ben Sherer (first base), who earned all-conference honors after hitting .359 last year, Aaron Madson (third base), and Mike Holman (catcher). The Gusties lost some of their top pitchers to graduation, but Carroll feels the team has several quality returners who can anchor the rotation. The top two returning starters include Trent Larson, who posted an impressive 2.33 ERA, but only had a 2-4 record to show for it and sophomore Josh Spitzack who compiled a 4-1 record with an impressive 0.73 ERA. If the Gusties can find a couple of starters and a reliable group of relievers to complement Larson and Spitzack, they could very well be in contention for a MIAC playoff spot again this year.	


<u>Hamline University</u>		
Head Coach:	Jason Verdugo (3rd season)	
2003 Record:	21-19 overall (9-11 MIAC / 7th)	

Key Returners:	<p>Nate Dammann, Sr., C, Maynard, Minn. (MACCRAY) – MIAC All-Conference first team last season, .350 BA, seven doubles, two triples, four home runs, 39 RBIs, 17 R</p> <p>Dan Ryks, Jr., CF/DH, Renville, Minn. (Renville County West) – MIAC All-Conference honorable mention last season, .287 BA, eight doubles, seven home runs, 22 RBIs, 29 R</p> <p>Andy Gagnon, Jr., 1B, Waverly, Minn. (HLWW) - MIAC All-Conference honorable mention last season, .327 BA, seven doubles, three triples, one home run, 21 RBIs, 29 R, 31 BB</p> <p>Aron Helm, Jr., P, North Branch, Minn. – 3-3 record, 53 IP, 3.40 ERA, 21 BB, 45 K</p> <p>Anders Kronberg, So., P, Brooklyn Center, Minn. – 5-4 record, 48.1 IP, 5.03 ERA, 16 BB, 48 K</p>
Season Preview:	<p>After setting the Hamline school record for wins in a season with 21 last year, the Piper baseball team and head coach Jason Verdugo have heightened expectations for the 2004 season - including a trip to the MIAC playoffs.</p> <p>Verdugo will look for leadership in a trio of All-MIAC selections in senior catcher Nate Dammann, junior outfielder Dan Ryks and junior first baseman Andy Gagnon. Dammann made MIAC first team while both Ryks and Gagnon were given honorable mention.</p> <p>Dammann (Maynard, Minn.) was one of the best offensive catchers in the MIAC last season as he batted .350 for the year with 39 RBIs with seven doubles, two triples, and four homers. Dammann was fourth in conference action with 20 RBIs. This year, Verdugo says he has also emphasized the defensive aspect.</p> <p>Ryks started 39 games with a batting average of .287, adding eight doubles, a team-leading seven home runs, and knocking in 22. The anchor of the outfield will be used cautiously to begin the season after suffering a broken ankle while playing football for the Pipers.</p> <p>Gagnon batted .327 including a .339 average during conference play. Last year, Gagnon set Hamline school records for walks in all games (31) and runs during the MIAC season (19). He added 21 RBIs to go along with seven doubles and three triples.</p> <p>In addition, the Pipers return three other everyday starters in sophomore third baseman Owen Waller (Maplewood, Minn.), sophomore outfielder Brian Kingery (Atwater, Minn.), and senior infielder Isaac Tyroler (Shorewood, Wis.).</p> <p>But to make the next step from a team that finished 9-11 in the MIAC last year to a playoff berth, it won't be the offense that carries them. Instead, Verdugo believes defense will be the key. The Pipers committed 83 errors last season, leading to 63 unearned runs.</p> <p>Returning to the rotation will be junior Aron Helm and sophomore Anders Kronberg. Helm, a crafty lefthander, had the best ERA of any starting pitcher last season. Helm went 3-3 with a 3.24 ERA and 45 strikeouts. Kronberg, a hard-throwing righthander, led the team in strikeouts with 48. He posted a 5-4 record and 5.03 ERA.</p>


Macalester College		
Head Coach:	Matt Parrington (5th season)	
2003 Record:	6-29 overall (2-18 MIAC / 11th)	
Key Returners:	Joel Brettingen (Sr., 2B, Minnetonka, Minn.) All-MIAC, 2002 All-America, .379, .596 slg., 25 RBI, 10 SBs Mike Merrill (Jr., OF, Lititz, Pa.) .379, .478 oba., 21 runs	


Season Preview:	<p>The 2004 Macalester baseball team is looking to regain its winning ways. The return of all-conference performers Joel Brettingen (All-American '02 and All-Midwest Region in '02 and '03), and Mike Merrill give the Scots reason for optimism. Brettingen once again led the Scots in nearly every offensive category, including batting average (.379) and stolen bases (10). Merrill, the talented leadoff hitter, led the team in walks (21) and was second in batting average (.373).</p> <p>In addition to Merrill, the outfield will feature Paul Odegaard and Steve Derrington, both of whom will be looked upon to ignite the offense. The infield will be an area of intense competition, with veteran middlemen Brettingen and Andrew Percival anchoring the group. Freshmen Adam Wedwick and Chris Papalia will push the veterans and based on their performance in fall workouts. Kier Palmer-Klein, Josh Ortiz and Sam Polglase will once again compete for time at first base and the designated hitter position. Marc Rodwogin has a leg up in the catching competition. Derrington, an all-conference performer as a sophomore, and Cormac Seely, who made 13 appearances for the Scots last year, will lead the pitching staff. Junior Erik Hankin and sophomores Jacob Beckley, Liam Bowen, Jason Tanzman and Jared Hillman will push for innings.</p> <p>Complete Macalester Preview</p>
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Saint John's University		
Head Coach:	Jerry Haugen (27th season)	
2003 Record:	23-15 overall (12-8 MIAC / 4th-tie)	
Key Returners:	Cole Deibele, Senior, Sleepy Eye, designated hitter/pitcher Jed Riegelman, Senior, Red Wing, outfielder Chris Bell, Junior, Little Falls, third baseman John Hoffer, Senior, Eden Prairie, shortstop Matt Johnson, Senior, Plymouth, pitcher Barry Folkens, Senior, Hector, pitcher	
Season Preview:	<p>The Saint John's University baseball team enters the 2004 season following a 23-15 overall record and its first appearance in the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference tourney in 2003. The Johnnies finished 12-8 in the MIAC, which placed them fourth in the conference standings. SJU went 2-2 in the MIAC Tournament to finish second.</p> <p>The 2004 Johnnies will take up the task of replacing second baseman Matt Pilon, first baseman Justin Holmgren, catchers Todd Jahnke and Dusty Upgren, pitcher Geoff Karel and outfielder Charlie Carr.</p> <p>For the complete season preview go to http://gojohnnies.com/baseball/04preview.html</p>	

Saint Mary's University		
Head Coach:	Nick Whaley (8th season)	
2003 Record:	15-15 overall (10-10 MIAC / 6th)	
Key Returners:	Tony Cicalello (Sr., 2B, All-MIAC, Third-Team All-Region, .405 BA, 19 R, 45 H, 10 2B, .495 slugging %) Rob Kimlinger (Sr., SS, .333 BA, 30 H, 11 2B, 1 HR, 7-7 SB) Nick Steig (Sr., P, 0.60 ERA, 4 saves) Rob Hollnagel (Sr., P, 1.50 ERA, 1-0, 8 Ks)	

Season Preview:	<p>The Saint Mary's University baseball team put themselves in the ideal position heading into their final two games of the season in 2003 sweep Concordia in their regular-season finale, and the Cardinals were all but assured of a third straight Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference tournament berth.</p> <p>Unfortunately, a not-so-funny thing happened on the way to the conference's post-season dance — the Cardinals' offense suddenly came down with a serve case of amnesia.</p> <p>They forgot how to score runs.</p> <p>The result? A Concordia sweep — 4-0 and 6-1 — and the Cardinals were on the outside looking in when the MIAC's post-season invitations were handed out.</p> <p>This year, the Cardinals aren't about to be the odd man out.</p> <p>"Offensively, we should be just fine," said Whaley, whose team hit .270 with 80 extra-base hits — including 11 triples and 14 home runs. "But you really never know — every year is different, so we'll just have to wait and see.</p> <p>"One thing is for sure, we've got to do a better job of moving the baseball — we have to make better contact and strike out less," said Whaley, whose team struck out 176 times a year ago. "We aren't going to win games with one swing of the bat, we need to concern ourselves with making contact, moving runners and manufacturing runs wherever possible.</p> <p>"We've got a lot of pieces — now what we have to do is put them all together," continued Whaley. "The league is going to be as tough as it's been in a long time. Our job is to do the things we are good at — and do them well. Hopefully, that will put us in a position at the end of the year to compete for a spot in the (conference) tournament."</p> <p>Complete Saint Mary's preview</p>
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St. Olaf College		
Head Coach:	Matt McDonald (10th season)	
2003 Record:	27-14 overall (16-4 MIAC / 2nd)	
Key Returners:	Charlie Ruud rhp (Sr., Cannon Falls, Minn.) Jon Haugen rhp (Sr., Mantomedi, Minn.) Eric Tobias lhp (So., Prescott, Wis.) Matt Green rhp (Jr., Minneapolis, Minn.) Will Huepenbecker rhp (Jr., Madison, Wis.) Dan Hansen lhp (Jr., Eden Valley, Minn.) Brad Baglien c (Sr., Arden Hills, Minn.) Joe Pavelko of (Sr., Richfield, Minn.) Brett Thoreson ss (So., W. St. Paul, Minn.)	
Season Preview:	St. Olaf enters the 2004 season having won three MIAC Championships and one Conference Tournament championship in the last four years. The Oles overall MIAC record is 69-11 since 2000. The St. Olaf program has a strong tradition and has captured 16 MIAC titles. Look to senior leadership of Charlie Ruud, Jon Haugen, Brad Baglien and Joe Pavelko to lead the way for the Oles this spring. Pitcher Charlie Ruud was named to the All-Midwest Region First Team last year while Pitcher Haugen and outfielder Pavelko were named to the NCAA Division III All-Regional Tournament team. St. Olaf will again need to rely on pitching and defense if they hope to contend for the 2004 conference title. St. Olaf head coach, Matt McDonald, in his tenth season, has guided the Oles to an impressive 241-109 career record. McDonald has won MIAC Coach of the Year honors twice and has earned Midwest Region Coach of the Year honors as well. He most recently served as the Chair of the Division III NCAA Baseball committee and has had four St. Olaf graduates sign professional baseball contracts since 2000.	

University of St. Thomas		
Head Coach:	Dennis Denning (10th season)	
2003 Record:	28-11-1 overall (17-3 MIAC / 1st)	
Key Returners:	Sean Lindstrom, SR, RHP (3-Yr. Career: 38 app., 159.2 IP, 16-6 W-L, 94K, 34W) Mike Ramthun, SR, RHP (3-Yr. Career: 36 app., 137.1 IP, 11-5, 82 K, 41 W) Brian Krause, JR, RHP (2-Yr. Career: 40 app., 7-5, 32K, 23W, 68 IP) Ryan Ashner, SO, RHP (2003: 6-1, 2.02 ERA, 10 app., 41.2 IP, 26K, 3 W) Brett Olson JR, OF (2-Yr. Career, .301BA, 88 games, 72 hits, 54 runs, 32 RBI, 27 W) Mike Kimlinger SO, SS (2003: .306, 37 games, 33 hits, 24 RBI, 23 runs, Josh Howard JR, OF (2003: .378, 28 games, 28 hits, 17 runs, 12 x-base hits, 12 W) Jordan Roering, SO, OF (2003: .356, 30 games, 36 hits, 25 runs, 14 RBI, 14 W) Sean Young, SO, 1B (2003: 36 games, 30 hits, 17 runs, 22 RBI, 10 2B) Casey Garven, SR, Util (3-Yr. Career: 82 games, 60 hits, 49 runs, 39 RBI)	

Season Preview:	<p>St. Thomas coach Dennis Denning starts his 10th season with 20 players back from last year's 28-11-1 team that won the conference regular-season crown, led the MIAC in lowest earned-run average, made the postseason for the ninth year in a row, and won at 28 games for the ninth consecutive season.</p> <p>The Toms have won either the MIAC playoff or regular-season title eight consecutive seasons. Senior captains Mike Ramthun and All-MIAC honoree Sean Lindstrom lead the starting pitching staff with junior All-Region honoree Brian Krause (school-record five saves, 23 appearances) leading the bullpen. Soph Jordan Roering and juniors Brett Olson, Erik Maursetter, Josh Howard lead the outfield returners. Senior Casey Garven, who missed 2003 with an injury, and sophs Sean Young, Mike Kimlinger and Nick Bellmont will play infield spots.</p> <p>A new face expected to contribute is catcher Zach Goldberg, a transfer from Iowa Western Community College. The Toms also elevated several players from last year's junior-varsity team.</p> <p>St. Thomas is 10-2 on the season through March 25. They opened 3-1 in a pair of Metrodome doubleheaders vs. Division II foes (sweep of South Dakota, split with Minnesota-Duluth). The Toms started 7-1 in Florida, including a split with No. 26-ranked UW-Whitewater, a 35-9 finisher in 2003.</p> <p>UST won the MIAC championship at 17-3 and made the conference postseason tournament for the fourth time in the four-year history of the event. That came despite having nine freshmen and sophomores playing key roles. But the Tommies, who were ranked as high as No. 14 nationally, saw their offense go quiet in a frustrating last week of the season. They managed only six runs and 19 hits in losing three of their last four games.</p> <p>In the process, St. Thomas saw two long streaks end -- consecutive NCAA playoff berths (ended at eight) and consecutive 30-win seasons (ended at six).</p> <p>After a 4-5-1 start -- which included four one-run defeats -- the Tommies won 23 of their next 26 games. A 7-0, two-hit shutout win in game two of a May 3 road doubleheader at Concordia-Moorhead gave the Tommies the outright MIAC championship for the fifth time in eight seasons. That boosted their overall record to 27-8-1. There was no shame when the Big Ten-champion Minnesota Gophers one-hit the Tommies 6-0 on May 6. But the Tommies went 1-2 in the conference tournament and managed just six runs in the three games. On May 9, they held off St. John's 2-1 and lost 3-1 to St. Olaf. A 6-3 losers'-bracket loss to St. John's on May 10 ended their season and snapped a streak of consecutive MIAC tournament championships at three.</p> <p>The Tommies had nine regulars bat over .300 on the season, and their unproven pitching staff finished with an impressive 3.17 ERA.</p> <p>In 20-game conference stats, Tommie pitchers ranked first in ERA (1.90) and opposing batting average (.245); fewest runs (54), triples (2) and HRs (three) allowed; and first in fewest hit batsmen (11). UST also led the conference in slugging percentage, home runs (15), extra-base hits, triples (10), sacrifice bunts (21) and fewest strikeouts (70).</p> <p>Denning surpassed 300 career wins and was named MIAC Coach of the Year. He comes into 2004 with 314-92 (.773) record, including a 150-30 MIAC mark.</p> <p>The Toms graduated three key players -- 3B Tom Carroll, OF Luke Sather and SS Matt Buzzell -- who had big contributions to the 2001 NCAA title team and finished with a 134-47-1 record in their era. Carroll, an Academic All-American, became just the third Tommie to reach 200 career hits (201) following All-Americans Jake Mauer (243) and Steve Pignato (208). In 154 career games Carroll also had 132 runs, 130 RBI, 15 home runs, 29 doubles, five triples, 39 walks and 15 HBP while batting .388. Sather batted a team-best .413 in 2003 with 50 hits, and his 17 doubles were just one off the school season record. Sather had a 20-game hitting streak in March and April and finished his career with 117 RBI, 108 runs, 23 home runs, 40 doubles, six triples, 33 walks, 21 HBP in 138 games. Buzzell, a four-year starter, played in 157 career games and closed with 166 hits, 144 runs, 99 RBI and 32 doubles. He just missed two school career records with 79 walks (record 82) and 10 triples (record 12). In 2003, he had four hits in the MIAC tournament and finished with 38 hits, 36 runs and 22 walks and a .309 batting average in 39 games. He tied for first in the MIAC in walks (14).</p>
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