

2005 MIAC BASEBALL PREVIEW

It is safe to say that the 2005 season will be a competitive one for teams in the MIAC. With three teams entering conference play ranked very closely in the Midwest, the automatic bid into the NCAA Tournament could be anyone's. Teams have shown strong play in the preseason, whether their play will carry into the conference season will be the deciding factor in their ability to capture the MIAC title.

St. Thomas's win in the conference tournament last season marked the first time the MIAC Tournament champ was also the MIAC regular season champion. The Tommie's conference championship marked their fourth in five years, making them a strong favorite to contend for the title again. The Tommie's quest won't come without a fight. Concordia, Gustavus and St. Olaf made the MIAC Tournament last season with Bethel and Saint John's not far behind. These teams will be battling hard to earn their way into the top four spots in the conference. Augsburg, Macalester, and Saint Mary's finished the season in a three-way tie for eight place last year and are returning strong veterans who could help each team to a better finish this season. Carleton will look to veteran players and newcomers to make their run towards postseason play.

Augsburg: Head coach Keith Bateman hopes to take a page from his 2000 season when he was an assistant coach at Bethel. That year Bethel turned around a 7-13 conference finish the previous year by finishing 2000 14-6 in the conference; good enough for third place and a playoff berth. Bateman's hopes are that his young Augsburg team will compete hard for the school's first playoff run in school history. The Auggies hope seniors Jeremy Nelson (P) and Taylor Pagel (1B) will play to a similar level of last year and help lead the team into the postseason tournament.

Bethel: Head coach Greg Indlecoffer knows all too well that every game counts towards the playoffs. Last year's impressive 12-8 conference record was not good enough to make the MIAC tournament; Bethel missed the playoffs by just one game last season. Indlecoffer feels that the narrow miss has left his team even more motivated this season. He also is excited about the talent and attitudes his student-athletes will bring to the team. The return of seven starters from last season, along with a talented group of younger players should bring the team continued success.

Carleton: The Knights have a young and experienced team which Head Coach Bill Nelson hopes will help them contend for a top finish in the MIAC this season. Luke Muellerleile returns as their lone 2004 All-MIAC player and is coming off a strong season in which he batted .429 and reached base in all 29 games. Muellerleile also anchors the infield at shortstop while a number of players will compete to occupy the remaining positions. Brian Sharkey, the ace of the staff, and Matt Topeff return as the team's top two pitchers from a year ago. Coach Nelson and his Knights will need each player to contribute as they carry no seniors into the 2005 season.

Concordia: The Cobbers finished 2004 at 14-6 in the MIAC, only 3 games behind first-place St. Thomas. The team looks to repeat last season and make another playoff run by relying on potent offense and senior pitching. The Cobbers will return junior first baseman Ryan Hebrink, who started all 36 games and hit .328 with 11 home runs last season. Sophomore Chris Klabo also had a successful season by hitting .327 with 10 doubles and 22 RBI's. Look for senior pitcher Bryan Romsa to lead the Cobbers from the mound coming off of a 6-4 season. With student-athletes such as these, the Cobbers should have the makings of another strong playoff-bound season.

Gustavus: The Gusties will enter 2005 with a young team looking to repeat with another MIAC playoff run. After finishing the 2004 season at 13-7 in conference play, head coach Mike Carroll will need his offensive stars from a season ago to play at a similar level. Carroll should be pleased that outfielder Tony Kocinek is only a sophomore, after a year in which he hit .433 and led the MIAC with 54 RBI's. Senior outfielder Ash Larsen will give the Gusties veteran leadership along with strong offense. Larsen hit .360 with 4 home runs in 2004. Junior Ben Sherer ended last season with a .409 average and .679 slugging percentage. The Gusties' offensive firepower will be strong asset in their 2005 conference season.

Hamline: The Pipers hope their pitching experience will be the key to improving from last season and making the playoffs this season. Returning to the team are their top four pitchers from 2004 led by Aron Helm and Kyle Foster. In 2004 the two combined for an 8-9 record and 78 strikeouts. With Helm's senior leadership and sophomore Kyle Foster coming off his first year as a starting pitcher, head coach Jason Verdugo and his Pipers will be looking to them for strong performances again in 2005.

Macalester: Macalester will be returning most of its starters from a team that finished in a tie for 8th place in 2004. While the loss of Joel Brettingen will sting, the return of key pitching and defense should help the Scots continue to improve. Cormac Seely, Liam Bowen and Ted Kimble pitched the bulk of last season's innings and will bring their invaluable experience this season as well. Marc Rodwogin, a senior catcher, is coming off of a strong offensive season and will lead the team with his defense, as well as his offense.

Saint John's: The Johnnies finished last season in sixth place, a mere two games from a playoff berth. With the loss of some talented starters who were all either All-MIAC or All-Midwest Region team selections, other players will need to step up their performances. Look for sophomore Casey Haugen to have another strong year behind the plate as he was second in batting average on the team last season with a .404 average. Head coach Jerry Haugen will begin his 28th campaign as head coach and comes into the season as one of the top 25 active winning coaches in Division III. In Coach Haugen's last 17 years, he has led the Johnnies to 14 winning seasons. A feat he hopes to continue in 2005, along with a playoff run.


Saint Mary's: Ninth-year head coach Nick Whaley sees 2005 as a brand new year, after a disappointing 2004 season in which the Cardinals went 10-22 overall. The 2005 season won't be without challenges as the team has lost six seniors to graduation, although the return of some solid veterans will help alleviate any concern. Senior outfielders Matt Rink and Ryan Majerus are coming off solid seasons and should provide the leadership Whaley needs.


St. Olaf: The Oles' will be looking to continue their streak of competing in the conference tournament for six straight years. They have also set the bar high by never finishing lower than third place in MIAC play and winning 3 three regular season championships in the last eight years. Head coach Matt McDonald should feel confident about their chances this year with the returns of Eric Tobias and Will Huepenbecker.

Tobias brings ALL-MIAC credentials along with a 6-2 record and 2.57 ERA while Huepenbecker returns after elbow surgery. Brett Thoreson and Brett Berry meanwhile, will be looked towards to carry the offensive load.


St. Thomas: The Tommies have set their standards high after finishing the 2004 season at 17-3 in the MIAC and 38-3 overall. One of the student-athletes the Tommies will be banking on for leadership will be senior outfielder and Division III second team All-American Brett Olson. Olson led the MIAC in 2004 with a .477 batting average and a .519 on-base percentage. Senior leadership will also come from a familiar right arm in pitcher Brian Krause. Krause returns from a season in which he led the MIAC with 9 wins, 5 saves, and was second in the conference with 72 innings pitched. Head coach Dennis Denning and his team did lose six seniors from a year ago, but will bring back a strong group of student-athletes with varsity experience that will help play at a level they are accustomed to.


The 2005 MIAC Tournament will take place on May 14-15, 2005 in Northfield and Dundas, Minnesota. The top four teams at the end of the conference regular season qualify for the Tournament. The winner of the tournament receives the MIAC's automatic bid to the 2005 NCAA Tournament.


Augsburg College		
Head Coach:	Keith Bateman (2nd season)	
2004 Record:	6-22 overall (7-13 MIAC / 8th - tie)	
Key Returners:	<p>-- Jeremy Nelson (P, Sr., Maplewood, Minn./Roseville HS), All-MIAC in 2004, led team's regulars in ERA (2.91), record (5-4) and innings pitched (58.2); career totals of 3.51 ERA, 27-20 record, 299.2 IP (54 appearances).</p> <p>-- Andy Nelson (2B, Jr., Waseca, Minn.), led team in batting average (.391), hits (52) and stolen bases (16-of-18), career totals of .357 average, 58 runs, 81 hits, 13 2B, 34 RBI, .409 on-base percentage, 22-of-27 stolen bases.</p> <p>-- Darren Ginther (3B, Jr., Crystal, Minn./Robbinsdale Armstrong HS), hit .373 , .559 slugging percentage, also Augsburg's No. 2 pitcher (4.40 ERA, 3-6 record, team-high 35 strikeouts in 47.0 IP in 2004).</p> <p>-- Taylor Pagel (1B, Sr., Cannon Falls, Minn.), hit .373, team-high 33 RBI, .569 slugging percentage, .996 fielding percentage, career hitting totals of .319 average, 23 extra-base hits (15 2B, 1 3B, 7 HR), 54 RBI.</p> <p>-- Ricky Schreier (CF, Jr., St. Paul, Minn./Cretin-Derham Hall HS), hit .315 with 4 2B, 2 3B in 2004;</p> <p>-- Troy Deden (C, Jr., Northfield, Minn.), hit .314 with 4 2B and 3 3B, .410 slugging percentage in 2004.</p> <p>-- Josh Remme (P, Jr., Faribault, Minn.), 0-2 in 23.2 IP, 6.85 ERA, team-best .179 opponent batting average.</p>	
Season Preview:	<p>Augsburg College baseball head coach Keith Bateman says that his 2005 Auggies are reminiscent of another Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference team he is familiar with, his alma mater Bethel University's club of 2000.</p> <p>That season, not much was expected in the league race from Bethel, coming off a 7-13 conference campaign the year before with a very young squad. So all the Royals did was finish 27-15-1, 14-6 in MIAC play, while making the inaugural MIAC postseason tournament with a third-place league finish. Bateman was in his first year as an assistant coach on that club.</p> <p>"This team reminds me a lot of those 2000 Royals. Nobody expected anything out of them and they made the MIAC tournament that year," said Bateman, who enters his second season as Augsburg's head coach. "They had a lot of young players and just went out and competed. The makeup of our team this year reminds me of that team."</p> <p>Last season, the Auggies finished 16-22 overall, 7-13 in MIAC play, nearly reaching the number of wins the team had the previous two seasons combined -- 18. Bateman is aiming for continued progress, with a goal of making the four-team MIAC postseason tournament for the first time in school history.</p> <p>He will attempt to accomplish that feat with a very young Auggie squad, featuring just three seniors, eight juniors and 24 underclassmen. But there is enough experience returning -- six position-player starters return, along with nine pitchers who saw varsity action last year -- to give the Auggies confidence that improvement will continue.</p> <p>Complete Augsburg Season Outlook: www.augsburg.edu/athletics/baseball/0405preview.html</p>	


Bethel University		
Head Coach:	Greg Indlecoffer (3rd season at BU)	
2004 Record:	6-22 overall (7-13 MIAC / 5th)	


Key Returners:	-- Ryan Mahoney , Senior, Pitcher -- Dane Hansen , Junior, 1B -- Kirby Carr , Sophomore, CF -- Zach Ludvigson , Senior, 3B -- Alex Garee , Senior, RF
Season Preview:	<p>Bethel 's baseball team finished their 2004 season with an impressive 29-11 overall record setting a new school record for wins. A noteworthy accomplishment recognized by third year head coach Greg Indlecoffer, yet the Royals still fell one game short of the MIAC playoffs even with a 12-8 conference record. "Typically, a 12-8 conference record is a good enough finish to make the post season tournament" states Indlecoffer, "but this past season we missed it by one win...leaving us hungry and motivated to return and compete for a spot in the tournament this season." The coaching staff is encouraged with the type of physical talent and teachable attitudes demonstrated by the returning players and new recruits this fall. These character qualities will help to provide a solid foundation from which to build upon. Indlecoffer adds, "At the core, this program and team is all about transformation...both physically in the development of our God-given baseball skills as well as spiritually in the development of our attitude, outlook and love for our fellow teammate." Bethel returns to the line up seven starters from last season and will look to some young key recruits and transfers to fill in the gaps.</p> <p>Complete Bethel Season Outlook: http://cas.bethel.edu/athletics/Baseball//2005/preview.html</p>

Carleton College		
Head Coach:	Bill Nelson (10th season)	
2004 Record:	2-27 overall (1-19 MIAC / 11th)	
Key Returners:	-- Luke Muellerleile , Jr., SS, 2004 All-MIAC, .429 BA, 39 hits, 7 2B, 2 3B, .549 Slg.%, reached base in all 29 games, ranked in top 50 in DIII in batting average -- Ben Coopridier , Jr., OF/C, 29 GS/20 GP, .309 BA, 30 hits, 17 runs, 11 RBIs -- Matt Topeff , So., P/1B, .303 BA, 27 hits, 7 2B, 1 HR, 13 RBI, 1-7, 40.1 IP, 11 app., 9 GS -- Brian Sharkey , Jr., P, 1-10, 9.55 ERA, 12 App., 11 GS, 49.0 IP	
Season Preview:	<p>Carleton returns all but two of its starters from last season, including its lone All-MIAC performer, as it will try to improve upon last year's last-place finish. The team is experienced but youthful, as the team has no seniors in 2005.</p> <p>The Knights will be led by captain Luke Muellerleile, their lone 2004 All-MIAC player. The Knights' starting shortstop hit .450 in conference play last season, ranking him sixth in the league. Overall, he hit .429 overall and tallied 39 hits. Over the course of last season, Muellerleile posted two separate 11-game hitting streaks and reached base in all 29 of Carleton's games. His 12 multi-hit games were a team-high.</p> <p>Muellerleile's spot at shortstop is the only solidified position spot on the team - all of the other spots will be battled over. In the infield, Nicholas Shepard, Matt Bond, Matt Topeff, Rich Juelich, Ryan Mergenthal, and Roddy Theobald will battle for playing time. At the catching spot, the Knights return starters Fran Glover and Ben Coopridier. Coopridier was Carleton's second leading hitter last season, posting a .309 average while scoring 17 runs, tops on the team. Glover will get the majority of starts behind the plate since Coopridier can also play in the infield or outfield. In the outfield the Knights will have to replace the two lone seniors on last year's team. Eric Greenlee, Chris Parsons, Stephen Thompson, Andy Krominga and first-year Doug Sylvester will battle for the three outfield spots. On the mound, Carleton will return its top two pitchers from last season, including its ace, Brian Sharkey. Carleton is coached by Bill Nelson, who is in his 12th season as the Knights's head coach. The team will begin its season on March 17th by making its annual spring break trip to Texas.</p> <p>Complete Carleton Season Outlook:webapps.acs.carleton.edu/athletics/?sport=255&module=content&id=105541</p>	


<u>Concordia College</u>		
Head Coach:	Bucky Burgau (27th season)	
2004 Record:	22-15 overall (14-6 MIAC / 2nd)	
Key Returners:	-- tba	
Season Preview:	tba	


Gustavus Adolphus College		
Head Coach:	Mike Carroll (9th season)	
2004 Record:	29-15 overall (13-7 MIAC / 3rd - tie)	
Key Returners:	-- tba	
Season Preview:	tba	

Hamline University		
Head Coach:	Jason Verdugo (4th season)	
2004 Record:	15-23 overall (8-12 MIAC / 7th)	
Key Returners:	<p>-- Aron Helm, Sr., P, L-L, 5-11, 170, North Branch, Minn. – Pitched 56 innings with a 5-5 record and 4.82 ERA. Struck out 42 and walked 28.</p> <p>-- Aaron Thompson, So., OF, L-R, 5-10, 150, Vadnais Heights, Minn. (White Bear Lake) – MIAC All-Conference honorable mention in 2004. Batted .359 in conference play (23-for-64) with 8 2Bs, 1 3B, 16 R, 7 RBI</p> <p>-- Owen Waller, Jr., 3B, R-R, 5-11, 205, Maplewood, Minn. (Tartan) – Hit .314 (33-for-105) with 11 doubles, one triple, and four home runs. Leads all returners with 25 RBIs.</p> <p>-- Dan Ryks, Sr., CF, R-R, 6-0, 190, Renville, Minn. (RCW) – Hit .252 (28-for-111) with six doubles and two homers. Knocked in 19 runs last season.</p> <p>-- Andy Gagnon, Sr., OF, L-R, 5-11, 195, Waverly, Minn. (HLWW) – Two-time MIAC All-Conference honorable mention selection. .333 AVG.(19-for-57) with 4 2Bs and 10 RBIs. Led the MIAC in with 15 BB and .493 on base %</p>	
Season Preview:	<p>As the old baseball cliché goes, pitching wins championships. The 2005 version of the Hamline baseball squad hopes that saying is true as the team competes for a spot in the conference playoffs.</p> <p>The Pipers, who finished 15-23 a season ago, 8-12 in the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, return their top four starting pitchers from a season ago as well as added some powerful, first-year arms.</p> <p>Senior lefthander Aron Helm (North Branch, Minn.) and sophomore right-hander Kyle Foster (Apple Valley, Minn.) provide the nucleus of the starting rotation. Helm logged 56 innings last year with a 5-5 record and 4.82 earned run average. He struck out 42 and walked 28. Meanwhile, Foster was having a solid first-year campaign, pitching 40 1/3 innings with a 3-4 record with 36 strikeouts and 25 walks. The duo started 16 games last season for the Pipers.</p> <p>"There's definitely going to be a heavy burden on those two in terms of being able to win big games," fourth-year head coach Jason Verdugo said.</p> <p>Verdugo hopes that junior Anders Kronberg (Brooklyn Center, Minn.) can rebound after struggling with arm injuries in 2004. Kronberg still pitched 37 2/3 innings with a 5.5 earned run average. He also looks for improvement from junior Chris Parent (Forest Lake, Minn.). The right-hander was the Pipers' only hurler with a winning record last season. He was 3-0, including two conference wins over St. John's and Augsburg, with a 5.60 ERA.</p> <p>Complete Hamline Season Outlook: www.hamline.edu/hamline_info/athletics/baseball/2005_Season/outlook.html</p>	


Macalester College		
Head Coach:	Matt Parrington (6th season)	
2004 Record:	13-23 overall (7-13 MIAC / 8th - tie)	


Key Returners:	-- Mike Merrill (Sr., OF, Lititz, Pa.) honorable mention all-miac; .463 on-base pct., .366, 30 runs -- Adam Wedwick (So., 3B, Coon Rapids, Minn.) .319, 22 RBI -- Andrew Percival (Jr., IF, Seattle, Wash.) .311, 20 RBI -- Marc Rodwogin (Sr., C, Marlboro, N.J.) .280, tossed out 9 base stealers -- Liam Bowen (Jr., LHP, Silver Spring, Md.) 3-4, 4.19 ERA, 49 K's -- Cormac Seely (Sr., RHP, Stockton, Calif.) 4.61 ERA in 53 IP
Season Preview:	<p>Macalester loses career .400 hitter Joel Brettingen to graduation but most of the key players return from last year's 7-13 MIAC team.</p> <p>The pitching staff last season lowered its team ERA by more than two runs a game and lowered their opponent's batting average by 26 points from the year before and another step forward is expected with the return of Cormac Seely, Liam Bowen and Ted Kimble, a trio which accounted for over half the team's innings pitched in '04. Seely led the team in appearances (15) for the second consecutive season. Bowen had a breakout year, established himself as a go-to-guy and led the team in several categories, including complete games (4), innings pitched (58), wins (3) and strikeouts (49). Kimble, overcoming a pre-season ankle injury, led the staff with a .226 opponent batting average and ranked second in strikeouts (36).</p> <p>Macalester's infield is led by Andrew Percival, Chris Papalia and Adam Wedwick. These three keyed a defensive one-eighty that included 31 double plays on the season. Percival, who will see action at all four infield positions and in the outfield, posted a career-high batting average of .311. Captain Marc Rodwogin, who is coming off career highs in batting average (.280) and RBI (16) will anchor the team behind the plate with his strong defensive skills and leadership.</p> <p>Speedy center fielder Mike Merrill earned honorable mention all-conference honors for the second straight season as leadoff man and posted a team-leading .463 on-base percentage. He led the Scots in runs scored (30) and ranked second in batting average (.366). Looking to compete for other outfield jobs include Allen Combs, Kimble, Kyle Goerschler and John Simkins.</p> <p>Complete Macalester Season Outlook: www.macalester.edu/~baseball/news02/05_preview.html</p>

Saint John's University		
Head Coach:	Jerry Haugen (28th season)	
2004 Record:	18-18 overall (11-9 MIAC / 6th)	
Key Returners:	-- Chris Bell , Senior, Little Falls, Minn., third baseman (.292 avg. 31 hits, 14 rbi) -- Brett Hemmelgarn , Senior, St. Cloud, Minn., left fielder (.258 avg., 8 hits, 6 rbi) -- Alec Rolle , Senior, Nausau, Bahamas, second baseman (.219 avg., 21 hits, 9 rbi, 11 sb) -- Mark Dunnigan , Senior, St. Paul, Minn., first baseman (.328 avg., 40 hits, 13 rbi) -- Blake Cheeley , Junior, St. Cloud, Minn., pitcher (5.73 era, 3-3 record, 7 starts, 37.2 inn.)	
Season Preview:	<p>The Saint John's University baseball team enters the 2005 season with high expectations of improving following an 18-18 overall record in 2004. The Johnnies finished 11-9 in the MIAC in 2004, which placed them sixth in the final conference standings.</p> <p>SJU will open its 37-game schedule by playing two doubleheaders at the Metrodome in Minneapolis before an eight-day, nine-game trip to Port Charlotte, Fla. in mid-March. Conference play begins April 2 against Hamline in Collegeville. SJU has 12 scheduled home games this season.</p> <p>Jerry Haugen, SJU class of 1976, begins his 28th season as the Johnnies' head coach in 2005. Haugen currently has an overall record of 512-431, which places him in the top 25 on the NCAA Division III winningest active coaches win list. The Johnnies have had 14 winning seasons in the last 17 years.</p> <p>SJU's complete season can be found at www.gojohnnies.com/baseball/05preview.htm</p>	

Saint Mary's University		
Head Coach:	Nick Whaley (9th season)	
2004 Record:	10-22 overall (7-13 MIAC / 8th - tie)	

Key Returners:	-- Matt Rink (Sr. OF, Rochester, Minn. / .327 BA, 33 hits, 8 2B, 4 HR, 22 RBIs) -- Ryan Majerus (Sr., OF, St. Charles, Minn. / .280 BA, 26 hits, 7 2B, 10 RBIs, 2 SB) -- Jose Rueda (Sr., INF, Winona, Minn. / .294 BA, 15 hits, 3 2B, 7 RBIs) -- Jesse Pedersen (Sr., P, St. Charles, Minn. / 2-3, 7.06 ERA, 43.1 IP, 30 Ks)
Season Preview:	<p>Don't try to talk about the 2004 baseball season to Nick Whaley < the Saint Mary's University head coach has forgotten all about it.</p> <p>Every little detail of that 10-22 season has been wiped from his memory banks.</p> <p>No, Whaley did not suffer from a serve case of amnesia < he's just not about to dwell on the past, but rather look to the future.</p> <p>A future that most certainly can be brighter than the recent past.</p> <p>"It's a brand new year < good or bad, it's a brand new year," said Whaley. "We've got great seniors who are good, solid people and great leaders, and everyone is excited about the challenges that are in front of us."</p> <p>The biggest of which is improving on that 10-22 overall record.</p> <p>"That's yesterday's box score," Whaley said. "We're not about to worry about what's in the past, we're not worried about yesterday's box scores, we're worried about the box scores we're going to create today and in the future."</p> <p>Complete SMU Season Outlook: sports.smumn.edu/baseball/2005/newsletter/bbpreview.html</p>

St. Olaf College		
Head Coach:	Matt McDonald (11th season)	
2004 Record:	20-17 overall (13-7 MIAC / 3rd - tie)	
Key Returners:	-- Eric Tobias , P, Jr., Prescott, Wis. - All-MIAC in 2004 -- Will Heupenbecker , P, Jr., Madison, Wis./Edgewood -- Brett Berry , 1B, Jr., Northfield, Minn. -- Brett Thoreson , IF, Jr., Mendota Heights, Minn./Henry Sibley -- Tony DeLaHunt , OF/DH, Sr., Apple Valley, Minn. -- Evan Klefsaas , C, Soph., Eagan, Minn./Eastview	
Season Preview:	<p>The St. Olaf baseball team looks to continue their success and return to the conference tournament for the sixth straight year and improve on their third place tie in 2004. In the last eight seasons, St. Olaf has won three regular-season and one postseason MIAC title and finished no worse than third, compiling a 137-48 record in league play (.741).</p> <p>Lefthander Eric Tobias is back after an All-MIAC campaign last spring. Tobias was 6-2 with a 2.57 ERA and 59 strikeouts in 56 innings. The Oles also welcome the return of Will Huepenbecker. Huepenbecker, who is 5-2 in his career with a 3.63 ERA, sat out 2003 with Tommy John surgery and returned to throw just 29 innings in 2004. First-years Paul Johnson and Andy Dass will help on the mound as well.</p> <p>The St. Olaf offense lost four .300 hitters from last year's playoff team. St. Olaf will look to returning players Brett Thoreson (.292 in '04), Brett Berry (.292, team-best four HRs) and Tony DeLaHunt (.265) to lead the charge. Lafayette outfield transfer Brian Astry and first-years Andrew Schmiesing and Josh Maus will contribute as well.</p>	

University of St. Thomas		
Head Coach:	Dennis Denning (11th season)	
2004 Record:	38-8 overall (17-3 MIAC / 1st)	

Key Returners:	<p>-- Josh Howard (SR, OF, Shoreview, Minn./Mounds View HS); 2004: All-Region: 42 games, .394 BA, 54 hits, 34 runs, 33 RBI, 14 doubles, two triples, four homers and 17 walks; threw out four runners from the outfield and had only one error in 73 defensive chances; on career, 102 games, 108 hits, 55 RBI, 38 walks, 66 runs, 22 doubles, six triples, nine homers.</p> <p>--Brian Krause (RHP, Sr., Appleton, Wis.); 2004: All-Region, MIAC Tourney MVP; 9-5 W-L, 3.96 ERA, two shutouts, 43 strikeouts and 15 walks in 73 innings; on career, 64 appearances, 14-9 with 12 saves, 82 strikeouts and 33 walks in 121 innings.</p> <p>--Mike Kimlinger (SS, Jr., St. Paul, Minn./Cretin-Derham Hall); 2004: All-Region, 46 games, .364 BA, 64 hits, 35 runs, 35 RBI, 11 doubles, two triples and four home runs. Had 21 multiple-hit games and a 14-game hitting streak in March and April. In Toms' 13-2 closing run had one error in 67 defensive chances.</p> <p>--Brett Olson (CF, Sr., St. James, Minn.), 2004: All-American, 46 games, .447 BA, 71 hits, 45 runs, 29 RBI, 11 doubles, eight triples, four home runs, 21 walks and 28 stolen bases; Career: 124 games, 143 hits, 99 runs, 63 RBI, 18 doubles, 13 triples, five homers, 53 steals, 48 walks.</p>
Season Preview:	<p>Coach Dennis Denning's 2005 team comes into April 7-7 overall, including a 9-1 loss to Division I Minnesota; a 3-2 defeat to No. 3-ranked UW-Whitewater (now 14-0); a loss to No. 4 Wooster (Ohio); and a split with St. Scholastica, a 42-win team in 2004. UST has a young pitching staff, and its .295 batting average is its lowest in several seasons, so it will lean on defense and timely hitting.</p> <p>The Tommies return seven position players but must replace four starting pitchers from a team that finished 38-8 and reached the NCAA region finals. The 2004 Toms won 17 of their last 19 conference games then won three close MIAC playoff games to claim the postseason crown. The Toms were ranked 11th nationally in the final 2004 poll. They batted .362 and ranked in the top five nationally.</p> <p>Under Coach Dennis Denning, the Tommies have reached 30-plus wins in seven of the last eight seasons. They are 167-33 in the last 10 conference regular-seasons. In MIAC tournament play, they are 13-4 and have won four of five championships. Denning's 10-year postseason record is 44-22 (42-16 since 1999).</p> <p>Senior Brian Krause broke a St. Thomas record with 24 appearances last season and now has pitched in 71 games over three-plus seasons. Krause is on pace to finish in the top three in NCAA Division III history in career appearances. (UST career-record holder Mike Honsa ranks 11th on the Division III charts with 76 appearances).</p> <p>Senior All-American CF Brett Olson holds the UST career record for steals and triples. He reached base or had an RBI hit in his last 30 games of 2004. He ranked second in Division III in triples (eight), ninth in hits (71) and 17th in batting average (.447).</p> <p>The Tommies open MIAC play April 2 at home vs. Concordia-Moorhead.</p>