

# 2007 MIAC BASEBALL PREVIEW

The 2007 MIAC baseball season will once again be a competitive one with teams battling to claim one of only four MIAC playoff spots. Four-time reigning MIAC regular season champion St. Thomas, will once again be looking to defend its title. The Tommies will look to their six co-captains to lead them to the post season. St. Olaf, defending MIAC playoff champions, return a sophomore All-American on the mound, another All-MIAC pitcher, and a two-time All-Region third baseman. They will look to this experience as they make their run for the 2007 MIAC title. Gustavus, Hamline and Concordia make up the remaining top five spots in the MIAC preseason coach's poll. The Gusties will be led at the plate by senior Tony Konicek who led the team last season in batting average, slugging percentage and on base percentage. Hamline, who had a school record 26-win season and first-ever appearance in the MIAC Championship game last season has high aspirations for the 2007 campaign. In their quest for a second consecutive playoff appearance, the Pipers will look to a pitching staff that returns their top three starters from a season ago. Concordia will also be battling for a playoff appearance. The Cobbers will look to senior power-hitting outfielder Chris Klabo to lead them at the plate.


The remaining six teams, Bethel, Saint John's, Augsburg, Macalester, Carleton and Saint Mary's will all be looking to improve upon last seasons finishes as they contend for a spot in the playoffs. The Royals will look to a solid core of returning players to lead a team that missed the playoffs by only one game in the 2006 season. The Johnnies will use a good balance of youth and experience to help them improve on their conference finish from a year ago. The Auggies will rely on depth as their key to success in the 2007season. Augsburg returns 23 players and five starters from last season. Macalester has many of its top players back for last year's team and they plan to use this experience to break into the top half of the conference standings. Carleton will look to the dynamic trio of Doug Sylvester, Ethan Guevin, and Jay Melson to lead them to a winning season in 2007. Rounding out some very talented MIAC teams is the Saint Mary's Cardinals. The Cardinals will use a talented group of freshmen to add depth and improve on last seasons finish.

The 2007 MIAC Playoffs will take place on May 11-13, 2007 in Northfield and Dundas, Minnesota with the winner receiving the MIAC's automatic bid to the 2007 NCAA Tournament. The top four teams at the end of the conference regular season will qualify for the playoffs.

## 2007 MIAC Preseason Baseball Coach's Poll

(First Place Votes in Parentheses)


1. St. Thomas (8)
2. St. Olaf (3)
3. Gustavus
4. Hamline
5. Concordia
6. Bethel
7. Saint John's
8. Augsburg
9. Macalester
10. Carleton
11. Saint Mary's

<b>Augsburg College</b>		
<b>Head Coach:</b>	Keith Bateman , 4th Season	
<b>2006 Record:</b>	8-12 MIAC (Tied - 7th Place) / 18-20-1 Overall	
<b>Key Athletes:</b>	<b>Ricky Schreier</b> (Sr., OF, St. Paul, Minn./Cretin-Derham Hall)  <b>Andy Nelson</b> (Sr., SS, Waseca, Minn.)  <b>Jeff Stomberg</b> (Jr., OF, Lino Lakes, Minn./Centennial)  <b>Brian Bambenek</b> (Sr., OF, St. Charles, Minn.)  <b>Tyler Kraft</b> (Sr., P, Savage, Minn./Burnsville)  <b>Nate Jackson</b> (Sr., P, Richfield, Minn.)	


<b>Season Preview:</b>	<p>Depth will be the key for success for the Augsburg College baseball team in 2007. Augsburg returns 23 players, including five starters, on its 41-player roster. There is significant depth at just about every position on the field.</p> <p>And Augsburg head coach Keith Bateman, entering his fourth season on the Auggie bench, is confident that the team can show improvement and return to the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference postseason playoffs after a year's absence.</p> <p>Returning to the four-team conference postseason playoffs is a definite goal for the Auggies, who finished 18-20-1 overall, 8-12 in MIAC play last season.</p> <p>With five starters returning, including the entire outfield and two key players in the infield, Bateman has confidence in the quality of his position players, in particular his nine seniors.</p> <p>The Auggies return all three starters to what could be the top returning outfield in the MIAC, in leftfielder Ricky Schreier (Sr., Maplewood, Minn./Cretin-Derham Hall HS), centerfielder Jeff Stomberg (Jr., Lino Lakes, Minn./Centennial HS) and rightfielder Brian Bambenek (Sr., St. Charles, Minn.). Schreier hit .357 last season with 15 RBI in his spot at the top of the batting order, earning All-MIAC honorable-mention honors. He hit .391 in conference play. Stomberg had a solid .316 season at the plate, and Bambenek hit .264 with a .379 on-base percentage. The trio was also solid defensively, with a combined two errors in 174 chances (.989 fielding percentage).</p> <p>In the infield, two starters return. Andy Nelson (Sr., Waseca, Minn.), a second baseman throughout his career at Augsburg, will shift to the shortstop position for his senior season. Bateman noted that Nelson played shortstop throughout his high school career. A career .326 hitter, Nelson hit .258 last season, but had a team-high 12 stolen bases in 13 attempts.</p> <p>At first base, Nate Jackson (Sr., Richfield, Minn.) had a solid first season as a starter, hitting .319. Aaron Hazen (Sr., Burnsville, Minn.) saw some action as a reserve last year, while Keith Canter (Jr., West St. Paul, Minn./Henry Sibley HS) also returns.</p> <p>Filling Nelson's spot at second base will likely be Bobby Hager (So., Forest Lake, Minn.), who hit .281 in 18 games last season.</p> <p>The third base position is "wide open," Bateman said. Mark Bauer (Sr., Hastings, Minn.) had a very solid season as a reserve last year, hitting .438 in 14 appearances. Mark Pederson (Jr., Lexington, Minn./Centennial HS) transfers to the program from St. Mary's University, and Shawn Sanders (So., St. Charles, Minn.) returns after having a solid junior varsity season last year.</p> <p>Augsburg's pitching staff, though relatively deep in numbers, is a mostly inexperienced group on the varsity level. But there are several newcomers who should make an impact right away. The key returner to the pitching staff is Tyler Kraft (Sr., Savage, Minn./Burnsville HS), who has established himself as one of the top relievers in the MIAC. He made 18 relief appearances with a 4.01 earned-run-average last season. Bateman may shift Kraft from his closer role to more of a middle-relief/long-relief role this season, in order to utilize his talents more.</p>
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<b>Bethel University</b>			
<b>Head Coach:</b>	Greg Indlecoffer, 5th Season		
<b>2006 Record:</b>	12-8 MIAC (5th Place) / 18-19 Overall		
<b>Key Athletes:</b>		<p><b>Kirby Carr</b> (Sr., OF, Fergus Falls, Minn.)</p> <p><b>Brandon Carr</b> (Jr., 3B, Fergus Falls, Minn.)</p> <p><b>Mike Gaustad</b> (Sr., 2B, Fergus Falls, Minn.)</p> <p><b>John Buteyn</b> (Jr., RHP, Eden Prairie, Minn.)</p> <p><b>Matt Pokorn</b> (Sr., RHP, Wheaton, Ill.)</p> <p><b>Isaac Hamilton</b> (Jr., RHP, Chaska, Minn.)</p>	


<b>Season Preview:</b>	<p>Bethel's baseball team finished their 2006 season in MIAC conference play at 12-8 (5th place / 18-19 overall) just one win short of the conference playoffs for the second time in the past four seasons. Coach Indlecoffer states "we're inching our way closer to a shot at the conference championship knowing that the adversity we face builds team character and resolve." The program seeks to play an aggressive schedule against some of the best competition in the region as well as in the nation while in Florida on their spring trip. The Royals said goodbye to four seniors in 2006 but have a solid core of returning players to anchor the squad. The coaching staff is encouraged with the type of physical talent and teachable attitudes demonstrated by the returning players and new recruits. These character qualities 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 six starters from last season and will look to some new players to fill in the gaps.</p> <p>Leading the way on the mound will be All-Conference honorable mention junior right-hander Isaac Hamilton (Chaska, Minn.). He will be joined by veteran senior captain RHP Matt Pokorn (Wheaton, Ill.), LHP Chuck Zak (Pine City, Minn.) and junior captain RHP John Buteyn (Eden Prairie, Minn.). Other returnees looking to compete for some mound time include senior RHP Chris Nordell (Roseville, Minn.), sophomore LHP Travis Adams (Chanhausen, Minn.). First year players looking to make an impact include RHP Jake Minks (Meadow Creek HS) and RHP Tony Cocchiarella (Concordia Academy HS). Other newcomers to the mound include sophomore Adam Beck (Blackduck, Minn.), Paul Morley (Northwood HS) and Kyle McCracken (Johnston HS).</p> <p>Junior Jared Bangs (Fergus Falls, Minn.) returns to anchor the Royals behind the plate. He will be pushed by sophomore Ben Turnwall (Burnsville, Minn.) at the varsity level and first year players Stephen Krueger (Jordan HS) and Matt Harten (Meadow Creek HS) at the JV level. Senior Garrett Kramer (Maplewood, Minn.) will play a key role in the development of on field leadership and work ethic of this group.</p> <p>Junior shortstop Tyler Kramer (Maplewood, Minn.) and senior All-Conference honorable mention second basemen and captain Mike Gaustad (Fergus Falls, Minn.) will provide solid defense up the middle for the Royals. Junior Clint Nelson (Monticello, Minn.) and sophomore Aaron Bernstetter (Holdingford, Minn.) will provide solid back-up. First year players Bob Tokar (Elk River HS), Reid Velo (Nashwauk-Keewatin HS), Mark Therrien (Spring Lake Park HS), Nels Leafblad (Moundsview HS) and Tim Churchill (Prospect HS) will round out the middle infield core.</p> <p>Junior All-Conference and All-Midwest region player Brandon Carr (Fergus Falls, Minn.) returns to third base looking for another solid year (.468, 4 HR, 20 RBIs). First year player Bjorn Anderson (Moundsview HS) and Tim Oesterlin (Rochester John Marshall HS) will provide solid back-up at the corner. Junior transfer Dana Hegman (Point Loma Nazarene) will compete for a starting job at first base. Junior John Buteyn will fill any voids and contribute in role situations. First year players Matt Jollie (Meadow Creek HS) and Ryan Iverson (Spring Lake Park HS) look to develop at the JV level.</p> <p>Anchoring the outfield will be three-time year All-Conference and two-time All-Midwest region senior centerfielder Kirby Carr (Fergus Falls, Minn.). Carr, the all-time HR leader at Bethel, finished with another successful season last year batting .405 with 7 HR and 31 RBI as he closes on multiple school records. He will be joined by senior Ted Erickson (Blaine, Minn.) and junior Kris Pulford (Richfield, Minn.) in right field, and senior Stephen Krause (Plymouth, Minn.) and sophomore Ryan Doheny (Anoka, Minn.) in left field. First year player Rob Lang (Johnston HS) will look to push this talented and veteran core of outfielders.</p>
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<b>Carleton College</b>		
<b>Head Coach:</b>	Aaron Rushing, 2nd Season	
<b>2006 Record:</b>	5-15 MIAC (10th Place) / 9-25 Overall	
<b>Key Athletes:</b>	<p><b>Doug Sylvester</b> (Jr., LHP/OF, Fargo, N.D./North)</p> <p><b>Ethan Guevin</b> (So., RHP/2B, Davis, Calif.)</p> <p><b>Jay Melson</b> (So., 3B, Cottage Grove, Minn./Park)</p> <p><b>Rob Trettin</b> (So., OF, Superior, Wis.)</p> <p><b>Shane Henfling</b> (So., RHP, Watkins, Minn./Eden Valley-Watkins)</p> <p><b>Nick Shepard</b> (Sr., C, New York, N.Y./Fieldston)</p>	


<b>Season Preview:</b>	<p>After graduating nine seniors a year ago, Carleton head coach Aaron Rushing knew that he had to reload for the 2007 season. He did so, recruiting a talented crop of ten first-year players. The strength of this year's team will be its youth, as a group of youngsters will look to follow up outstanding rookie seasons, while others will hope to crack the starting lineup. This young talent has Rushing excited about this year's team.</p> <p>"We took a big step up in competitiveness a year ago, this year we're going to expect to win the close ones," Rushing said.</p> <p>Carleton will be led by a trio of dynamic players. Junior Doug Sylvester (Fargo, N.D./North) and sophomores Ethan Guevin (Davis, Calif.) and Jay Melson (Cottage Grove, Minn./Park) had outstanding seasons a year ago. The lefty Sylvester hit .344 and led the team with 20 runs scored while playing centerfield and batting leadoff, Guevin was the unquestioned ace of the Knights pitching staff with a hard-luck 3-5 record and 4.20 era, while hitting .284 as a middle infielder, and Melson hit .319 and was second on the team with 16 RBI as the starting third baseman.</p> <p>Sylvester anchors the outfield and will be joined by the powerful Rob Trettin (So./Superior, Wis.) who started 17 games and hit .271 a year ago. Brookes Baumberger (Jr./Evansville, Wis.), who hit .292 in 2006, will see some time in left field when he is not the designated hitter. Also fighting for time in the outfield will be Andy Krominga (Sr./LeSueur, Minn./LeSueur-Henderson), Cameron McDonald-Hyman (So./Muir Beach, Calif./Tamalpais), and first-year Aaron Troyansky (Lubbock, Texas).</p> <p>The infield will have a new look from a year ago. Melson will be the anchor at third, with senior speedster Eric Greenlee (Missouri City, Texas/Episcopal) at second and Matt Topeff (Sr./Andover, Minn./Blaine) at first. First-year Russ Fujisawa (Riverwoods, Ill./Deerfield) figures to be the shortstop, and fellow freshman Ryan Hulstrand (Edina, Minn./Blake) will backup the infield spots. When Topeff is on the mound, the Knights will turn to Geoff King (Fy./Corvallis, Ore.) at first base.</p> <p>Nick Shepard (Sr./New York, N.Y./Fieldston) returns at catcher after an outstanding junior campaign. One of the top defensive catchers in the league, he helped the Knights give up 56 fewer stolen bases than the previous season. Backing up Shepard will be first-year Mat Tinley (Denver, Colo./Kent Denver), an all-state selection as a senior in Colorado.</p> <p>The pitching staff looks stronger and deeper than it has been in years. It will be anchored by Guevin and the Knights top reliever, sophomore Shane Henfling (Watkins, Minn./Eden Valley-Watkins). Henfling led the team with a 2.63 era. They will be joined by veterans Sylvester and Topeff on the pitching staff. Newcomers Troyansky, a lefty, and Dan Matthews (Tulsa, Okla./Holland Hall), a righty, will battle for spots in the rotation. Jake Riss (White Plains, N.Y.) adds a strong arm out of the pen after a season in which he was slowed by injuries. First-years Sam Cross-Knorr (Seattle, Wash./Nathan Hale) and King will look to solidify the bullpen, as will seniors Darren Caspers (Bemidji, Minn.) and Adam Rossow (Byron, Minn./LeSueur-Henderson), two members of Carleton's football team who are playing their first season of baseball for the Knights.</p>
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<b>Concordia College</b>		
<b>Head Coach:</b>	Bucky Burgau, 29th Season	
<b>2006 Record:</b>	11-9 MIAC (6th Place) / 20-17 Overall	
<b>Key Athletes:</b>	<b>Chris Klabo</b> (Sr., DH, Brainerd, Minn.)  <b>Ryan Emter</b> (Sr., OF, Alexandria, Minn/Jefferson)  <b>Kevin Engebretson</b> (Sr., RHP, Alexandria, Minn./Jefferson)	


<b>Season Preview:</b>	<p>Young and exciting. Those will be two of the words used to describe the 2007 Concordia baseball team. Two other words will be inexperienced and inconsistent. The Cobbers have 12 freshmen on their opening day roster which is the most since the 1987 season when they had 14. Of the 12 freshmen listed on the 2007 roster, seven are pitchers which will give long-time head coach Bucky Burgau a chance to mold a pitching staff for the future. Burgau, who is entering his 29th season at the helm of Concordia, will be called on to blend a talented freshman class with a group of upperclassmen that showed glimpses of outstanding play in 2006.</p> <p>Concordia will return several top players from last year's squad that was only two games shy of the conference tournament. Power-hitting outfielder Chris Klabo (Sr., Brainerd, Minn.) returns for a final season after leading CC in slugging percentage (.594), home runs (7) and RBIs (33) in 2006. Klabo, who was an MIAC Honorable mention selection in 2005, was also fourth in the MIAC in RBI's. He will be called on to provide one of the lone deep treats to the Cobber offense.</p> <p>Fellow senior outfielder Ryan Emter (Alexandria, Minn./Jefferson HS) will once again give Concordia one of the top defensive centerfielders in the league. Emter's ability to track down balls in either gap, will give the Cobber pitching staff the confidence they need in conference play. He finished with a perfect fielding percentage with 70 putouts and two assists last season and has not made an error in his last 49 games heading into the 2007 season. Emter also upped his offensive production in 2006. He hit a career-best .353 last year and finished third on the team in hitting.</p> <p>Other top returning starting players from last year include first baseman Scott Halupczok (Sr., St. Cloud, Minn./St. Cloud Cathedral HS) and second baseman Erick Sykora (So., Rapid City, S.D./Stevens HS). Halupczok is a solid fielding first baseman who hit .278 last year and started all 37 games for the Cobbers. He was also named to the 2005 MIAC All-Tournament Team. Sykora is another outstanding defensive player. His range at second base will give Concordia one of the best left side defenses in the league.</p> <p>Joining those three mainstays in the CC lineup from 2006 will be senior Brian Knoblauch (St. Cloud, Minn./St. Cloud Cathedral), junior Matt Youngquist (Brooklyn Park, Minn./Champlin Park HS) and sophomore Kyle Johnson (Cambridge, Minn./Cambridge-Isanti HS). Knoblauch will get the call in right field. He is another solid outfielder than can occasionally provide pop with his bat. Youngquist will make the move to third base after spending last season as one of the team's outfielders. He has shown improvement at the plate, hitting .273 in the team's first 14 games of 2007 after hitting just .222 last year. Johnson, who is one of four players on the team with the same last name, will be the team's starting catcher.</p> <p>Several freshman position players could also crack the Cobber lineup in 2007. The top first-year prospect is Jake Krause (Moorhead, Minn.) whose speed and athleticism will give CC a legitimate leadoff hitter. Krause hit .294 in the team's first 14 games of the year and has made only three errors in 54 chances as the team's starting shortstop.</p> <p>The biggest question mark for the Cobbers will come from the pitching staff. Senior Kevin Engebretson (Alexandria, Minn./Jefferson HS) is the only returning starter from a year ago. He led the team in appearances in games started in 2006 and finished with a 4.06 ERA. The two-year varsity member has made 15 starts in the past two seasons. Joining Engebretson as the team's No.1 and No.2 starters will be sophomore Scott Schumacher. Schumacher, the younger brother of CC standout Brian Schumacher, made only four appearances in his freshman season and will be helped by his conversion to being just a pitcher for the upcoming campaign.</p> <p>After Engebretson and Schumacher, Burgau will rely on his seven freshmen and a trio of upperclassmen to help add the depth. The team's closer role will go to Adam Johnson (Pelican Rapids, Minn.) who has posted a 3.77 ERA in his first seven appearances in 2007 and has picked up a pair of saves.</p>
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<b>Gustavus Adolphus College</b>	
<b>Head Coach:</b>	Mike Carroll, 11th season
<b>2006 Record:</b>	14-6 MIAC (3rd Place) / 28-12 Overall
<b>Key Athletes:</b>	<p><b>Tony Konicek</b> (Sr., OF, Rochester, Minn.)</p> <p><b>Shea Roehrkas</b> (Jr., C, Jackson Hole, Wyo.)</p> <p><b>Mike DesLauriers</b> (So., SS, Minnetonka, Minn.)</p> <p><b>Tyler Kaus</b> (Jr., OF, St. James, Minn.)</p> <p><b>Dave Wold</b> (Jr., P, Woodbury, Minn.)</p>

<b>Season Preview:</b>	<p>Head Coach Mike Carroll returns six of eight position players from a year ago, including 2006 MIAC MVP and First Team American Baseball Coaches Association (ABCA) All-American Tony Konicek in center field, but Gustavus will need to fill holes at both corners, as well as in the top two positions in the pitching rotation, in order to qualify for the MIAC Playoffs for a second consecutive season.</p> <p>Konicek, the National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association (NCBWA) Midwest Region Position Player of the Year, finished fourth in Division III last season in batting average (.484), fifth in slugging percentage (.828), and eighth in runs batted in per game (1.41/gm) en route to all-league, all-region and all-America honors. Konicek, who also led the team in hits (59), doubles (16), home runs (8), and RBI (48), is joined in the outfield by junior Tyler Kaus. Kaus hit .337 with 33 hits, 16 RBI and 15 walks from his right field position. Fellow junior Robby Wiens gets the call in left field after playing in 17 games in a reserve role in 2006. Freshman Andrew Woitas could see time as a reserve.</p> <p>The Gusties also return a solid tandem in the middle infield in sophomores Mike DesLauriers and Nate Ruff. DesLauriers led the team in double plays fielded with 22 from the shortstop position and finished second on the team with a .354 average. Ruff figured in 13 double plays at second base and looks to be the Gusties' leadoff hitter, batting .286 with 18 runs batted in and 17 walks. Catcher Shea Roehrkaske, a junior, finished fifth on the team with a .331 batting average, knocking in 30 runs on 43 hits. Roehrkaske also finished with a .986 fielding percentage, committing only three errors in 221 chances.</p> <p>Junior Pat Siering, who hit .318 in 33 games last season primarily as a designated hitter, will be the top choice at first base. A battle has emerged at third base, though. Sophomore Jake Bohnen, a .167 hitter in 42 at-bats last season, will be challenged by freshmen Tory Herman and Alan Woitas for the vacant spot.</p> <p>Dave Wold, a junior southpaw, logged the most time on the mound last season of any returning Gustie pitcher, accumulating a 5.10 ERA and a 4-1 record with 24 strikeouts in nine starts. Juniors Kraig Olson and Andrew Hoffer and sophomore Brandon Knoll look to log a number of innings on the mound, as do freshmen Jake Kruegel and Tory Herman.</p>
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<b>Hamline University</b>	
<b>Head Coach:</b>	Jason Verdugo, 6th Season
<b>2006 Record:</b>	13-7 MIAC (4th Place) 26-14 Overall
<b>Key Athletes:</b>	<p><b>Andrew Bennett</b> (Jr., SS, St. Paul, Minn./St. Paul Academy)</p> <p><b>Josh Roiger</b> (Jr., LHP/OF, West St. Paul, Minn./Sibley)</p> <p><b>Kyle Foster</b> (Sr., RHP, Apple Valley, Minn./Eastview)</p> <p><b>Dan Kaczrowski</b> (So., 2B, St. Anthony, Minn.)</p> <p><b>James Bachmeier</b> (Jr., C, St. Paul, Minn./St. Paul Academy)</p> <p><b>Brian Martin</b> (Jr., LHP, Golden Valley, Minn./Hopkins)</p>
<b>Season Preview:</b>	<p>If building a successful team is like climbing a mountain, what do you do when you reach the summit? If you're the Hamline University baseball team, the answer is simple – you find a bigger mountain.</p> <p>Instead of resting on their laurels after a school record setting 26-win season and first-ever appearance in the MIAC Championship game, the Pipers haven't missed a beat in preparing for the 2007 campaign.</p> <p>"This team is the hardest working team I've been with in my six seasons," head coach Jason Verdugo said. "All of the offseason and individual work that they do, they really get after it."</p> <p>Verdugo, whose teams have set the school record for wins twice in his tenure, will welcome back a young, but experienced squad that is hungry after the success of 2006. "More than anything last season gives our guys confidence, and they realize that the time and effort that they put into the offseason needed to be repeated in order to play at that high level again this season," Verdugo said.</p> <p>In 2007, the Pipers will rely on their team defense – an area that was instrumental in their rise to the conference playoffs. "Defensively, at every position, we are very solid," Verdugo said. "Our fielding percentage last year was the highest it's been since I've been here, and in this preseason, we've really focused on that aspect of our game. Defensively, we are stronger than ever before."</p> <p>That defense starts with a pitching staff that returns their top three starts from a season ago. Senior Kyle Foster (Apple Valley, Minn.) and juniors Josh Roiger (West St. Paul, Minn.) and Brian Martin (Golden Valley, Minn.) all logged at least 55 innings last season.</p>

<b>Macalester College</b>		
<b>Head Coach:</b>	Matt Parrington, 8th Season	
<b>2006 Record:</b>	6-14 MIAC (10th Place) / 15-18-1 Overall	
<b>Key Athletes:</b>	<p><b>John Simkins</b> (Jr., P/OF, Galesburg, Ill.)</p> <p><b>Ted Kimble</b> (Sr., P/OF, Pine Island, Minn.)</p> <p><b>Adam Wedwick</b> (Sr., 2B, Coon Rapids, Minn.)</p> <p><b>Chris Papalia</b> (Sr., SS, Pickering, Ont./Notre Dame)</p> <p><b>Allen Combs</b> (Sr., C, Bethesda, Md./Walt Whitman)</p>	
<b>Season Preview:</b>	<p>Macalester has many of its top players back from last year's team and is ready to break into the top half of the conference. Five seniors are four-year regulars in the daily lineup, making this one of the most experienced Mac squad in years.</p> <p>Lefties John Simkins (Jr., Galesburg, Ill.) and Ted Kimble (Sr., Pine Island, Minn.) lead the pitching staff, which will be asked to carry a big load again this season. Simkins made the All-MIAC team as a utility player and went 3-4 with a 3.72 ERA, walking just 11 batters in 48.1 innings. Kimble had a team-leading 40 strikeouts in 52 innings and has 110 career strikeouts in 130 innings.</p> <p>Simkins and Kimble are also key ingredients in the lineup and in the outfield. Simkins hit .333 while ranking second on the team in hits and extra base hits. Kimble batted .313. Second baseman Adam Wedwick (Sr., Coon Rapids, Minn.) finished with a .385 average and .598 slugging percentage. Wedwick collected a school-record seven triples and went 14-for-15 in stolen bases. Chris Papalia (Sr., Pickering, Ont. / Notre Dame) has played nearly every game at shortstop over the last two years. Another four-year regular who helps provide the Scots with experience is catcher Allen Combs (Sr., Bethesda, Md. / Walt Whitman). With Combs slated to play some in the outfield, the Scots will look towards Benjie Achtenberg (Sr., San Francisco, Calif. / Urban School) and St. Thomas transfer Joe Borer (Jr., St. Paul, Minn. / Central) to catch.</p> <p>Rookies James Murrey (Fr., Western Springs, Ill. / Lyons Township) and Eric Robinson (Fr., San Francisco, Calif. / Urban School) are likely candidates to join Kimble and Simkins in the starting rotation. The team is looking for some solid production out of the bullpen from the likes of Brad Johnson (So., Mt. Laurel, N.J. / Lenape), as well as position players Wedwick and Jake Seltzer (Jr., New York, N.Y. / Fieldston School).</p>	

<b>Saint John's University</b>		
<b>Head Coach:</b>	Jerry Haugen, 30th Season	
<b>2006 Record:</b>	8-12 MIAC (Tied - 7th Place) / 16-18-1 Overall	
<b>Key Athletes:</b>	<p><b>Jay Kasner</b> (Sr., OF/1B, Rochester, Minn./Lourdes)</p> <p><b>Josh Hollenhorst</b> (Sr., P, St. Cloud, Minn./Cathedral)</p> <p><b>Casey Haugen</b> (Sr., C, St. Cloud, Minn./Apollo)</p> <p><b>Shawn Schoenberg</b> (Sr., OF, Melrose, Minn./Melrose Area)</p> <p><b>Adam Johnson</b> (Jr., P, Elbow Lake, Minn./West Central Area)</p> <p><b>Matt Meyer</b> (Jr., 3B, Avon, Minn./Albany)</p>	




<b>Season Preview:</b>	<p>The 2007 season will include a good balance of youth, experience, and optimism as the Saint John's University baseball team looks to improve on last season's 16-18-1 overall record. The Johnnies finished 8-12 in the MIAC for seventh place finish in the final 2006 conference standings.</p> <p>Key position players returning for the Johnnies include senior outfielder/first baseman Jay Kasner (Rochester, Minn./Lourdes), senior catcher Casey Haugen (St. Cloud, Minn./Apollo), senior outfielder/pitcher Shawn Schoenberg (Melrose, Minn./Melrose Area) and senior outfielder Christian McPherson (Billings, Mont./Central).</p> <p>Kasner led the Johnnies last year with a .358 average at the plate and 20 RBIs, and Schoenberg batted .322 with 14 RBIs. Haugen contributed 21 steals with a .439 on-base percentage in 2006. McPherson started 20 games in 2006 without committing an error in the outfield.</p> <p>Pitchers looking to lead SJU to a successful season are senior Josh Hollenhorst (St. Cloud, Minn./Cathedral), junior Adam Johnson (Elbow Lake, Minn./West Central Area), and the sophomore trio of Bryan Flood (Richfield, Minn./Richfield), Michael Crees (Wayzata, Minn./Wayzata) and Paul Eich (St. Cloud, Minn./Apollo).</p> <p>Hollenhorst led the pitching staff with 55.1 innings (2-5 record), 12 appearances (9 starts) and picked off 8 base runners. Johnson made his debut in the starting rotation last season and led the Johnnies with 39 strikeouts in 34.2 innings of work.</p> <p>Juniors Brandon Royce-Diop (Minneapolis, Minn./DeLaSalle) and T.J. Nelson (St. Louis Park, Minn./St. Louis Park) will also see work on the mound this season.</p> <p>Senior second baseman Jeff Ostrom (St. Anthony, Minn./St. Anthony Village) and senior pitcher Dusty Wilfahrt (Hanska, Minn./New Ulm Cathedral) return to the Johnnies this year after an injury-plagued 2006 season. Ostrom is coming back from a knee injury and Wilfahrt returns from tearing his labrum last spring. Wilfahrt recorded the Johnnies' lone shutout and posted a 2.70 ERA in two starts (1-0) before suffering the injury.</p> <p>Head coach Jerry Haugen will also look for junior catcher/second baseman Lincoln Haugen (St. Cloud, Minn./Apollo), junior third baseman/pitcher Matt Meyer (Avon, Minn./Albany) and junior shortstop John Heinbigner (Stillwater, Minn./Stillwater Area) to contribute significantly this season.</p> <p>Key losses from the 2006 squad include pitcher Nathan Deutz (Ghent, Minn./Marshall), pitcher Blake Cheeley (St. Cloud, Minn./Saint John's Prep), first baseman/pitcher Garrett Flood (Richfield, Minn./Richfield) and shortstop/third baseman Ryan Stark (Jamestown, N.D./Jamestown), who all graduated.</p> <p>Jerry Haugen, SJU class of 1976, begins his 30th season as the Johnnies head coach in 2006. Haugen currently holds an overall record of 545-466-5 (.539), which places him on the NCAA Division III winningest active coaches list. Under Haugen, the Johnnies have had 14 winning seasons in the last 18 years.</p>
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<b>Saint Mary's University</b>		
<b>Head Coach:</b>	Nick Whaley, 10th Season	
<b>2006 Record:</b>	2-18 MIAC (11th Place) / 6-28 Overall	
<b>Key Athletes:</b>	<p><b>Kevin Black</b> (Sr., 2B, Mahtomedi, Minn.)</p> <p><b>Nick Winecke</b> (Sr., 1B, St. Paul, Minn.)</p> <p><b>Robbie Johnson</b> (So., C, Lake Elmo, Minn.)</p> <p><b>Brady Knutson</b> (Sr., OF, Racine, Wis.)</p>	



<b>Season Preview:</b>	<p>You can ask Saint Mary's University baseball coach Nick Whaley about last year, but don't expect to get much of an answer.</p> <p>It's not that Whaley is avoiding the question, it's just that - like every member of the Cardinal team - Whaley has erased 2006 from his memory bank.</p> <p>That was then - this is now.</p> <p>If you want to talk about 2007, take a seat and listen up, Whaley has plenty to say.</p> <p>"We're not dwelling on (2006) that was last year's box score and what we're trying to do now is focus on creating new box scores in 2007," said Whaley, whose Cardinals struggled to a 6-28 overall record a year ago, dropping its last nine games. "We've got 15 new players who weren't a part of our past, and our just excited to be here and eager to help this program move forward."</p> <p>Yet, while Whaley &amp; Co. are eager to leave the 2006 season in their review mirror, he also admits that there are aspects of last year that can benefit the Cardinals' future.</p> <p>"As much as we'd like to just forget about (2006), we want to take last year and use those struggles to fuel our focus - to energize us so that we can meet the challenges that lie ahead," said Whaley. "It's a balancing act - on one hand, you want to bury the past and forget it and move on, but on the other hand, you hope that what happened a year ago has left a bad taste in everyone's mouth and pushes them harder to improve."</p>
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<b>St. Olaf College</b>			
<b>Head Coach:</b>	Matt McDonald, 13th Season		
<b>2006 Record:</b>	15-5 MIAC (2nd Place) / 30-10 Overall		
<b>Key Athletes:</b>	<b>Chris Terrazas</b> (Sr, IF, Prescott, Wis.)  <b>Andrew Schmiesing</b> (Jr, OF, Stillwater, Minn.)  <b>Todd Mathison</b> (Soph., P/IF, Northfield, Minn.)  <b>Paul Johnson</b> (Jr, P, Hudson, Wis.)		

<b>Season Preview:</b>	<p>The 2007 version of the St. Olaf College baseball team has plenty to look forward to. The squad returns a sophomore All-American on the mound, another All-MIAC pitcher, a two-time All-Region third baseman and one of the region's best all-around outfielders.</p> <p>"We return experienced players at every position that have competed in championship pressure situations," said 13th-year head coach Matt McDonald. "We expect to play very hard every game, and compete for a conference and conference tournament championship."</p> <p>In McDonald's tenure St. Olaf has won at least 20 games in every year and 30 twice, including last year's 30-10 campaign that ended at the NCAA Midwest Regional.</p> <p>Third Team ABCA All-America pick Todd Mathison (So., Northfield, Minn.) had one of the best freshman seasons on the hill in the nation last spring, going 9-0 with a miniscule 1.40 ERA.</p> <p>Paul Johnson (Jr., Hudson, Wis.), who pitched the Oles to complete game wins in the MIAC Tournament Championship against Hamline and a second round NCAA match against IAC champ Coe, is back too. Johnson was an All-MIAC selection, leading the league in strikeouts and making the top five in numerous statistical categories.</p> <p>The Oles will have to fill the void left by the MIAC's Pitcher of the Year, Eric Tobias who graduated, and once All-MIAC starter Dan O'Malley. Tobias and O'Malley combined for 20 starts and 101 innings last season. Tobias was 6-1 with a 2.30 ERA and O'Malley 4-4 with a 3.99 ERA.</p> <p>"A key for us is the development of our 3-8 pitchers," said McDonald. "We need a number of pitchers to step forward in '07."</p> <p>Juniors Andy Dimick (Northfield, Minn.) and John Sopiwnik (Cuberland, Wis.) and sophomores Alex Beckman (Jordan, Minn.) and Alex Sommer (Tonka Bay, Minn./Holy Family) could each see a few more innings this year.</p> <p>First Team All-Midwest Region standout Andrew Schmiesing (Jr., Stillwater, Minn.), who has started every game (80) in his two years at St. Olaf, tops a group of experienced outfielders. Schmiesing led the team in almost every offensive statistical category and had a team-best five outfield assists. The Oles also return Josh Shultheis (Sr., Shoreview, Minn./Mounds View) and Brian Astry (Sr., Eden Prairie, Minn.), who hit .352 and .310 last spring.</p> <p>Two-time team MVP Chris Terrazas will anchor the middle of the lineup and third base. Terrazas, a two time Third Team All-Midwest Region and All-MIAC pick, hit a team-best .410 last year. He had 17 multi-hit games and was an impressive 11-for-16 at the NCAA Midwest Regional.</p> <p>Tyler Johnson is the leading candidate to hold down first base again this year. Johnson won the job last year and hit .328 with a pair of homers and 22 RBIs.</p> <p>Up the middle, Mathison will likely play shortstop when he's not on the mound. Luke Gagnon and Josh Maus will compete for the second base spot and one could move to short when Mathison is hurling.</p> <p>Senior Kyle McDermott and sophomore Pat Wadzinski will split catching duties, at least early on. McDermott was the starter by season's end last year. He hit .254 in just over 60 plate appearances.</p>
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<b>University of St. Thomas</b>	
<b>Head Coach:</b>	Dennis Denning, 13th Season
<b>2006 Record:</b>	16-4 MIAC (1st Place) / 31-11 Overall
<b>Key Athletes:</b>	<p><b>Riley Bosch</b> (Sr., RHP, White Bear Lake, Minn.)</p> <p><b>Chris Bullis</b> (Jr., RHP/OF, Waconia, Minn.)</p> <p><b>Matt Pexa</b> (Jr., C, New Prague, Minn.)</p> <p><b>Mark Boland</b> (Jr., SS, West St. Paul, Minn./Cretin-Derham Hall)</p> <p><b>Dan Leslie</b> (So., RHP/3B, West St. Paul, Minn./Henry Sibley)</p> <p><b>Louie Salmen</b> (So., 2B, St. Paul, Minn./Cretin-Derham Hall)</p>

<b>Season Preview:</b>	<p>The St. Thomas baseball team was ranked 14th in the Division III preseason top 30 rankings by Collegiate Baseball News. The 2006 Tommies finished 31-11, reached the NCAA playoffs for the 11th time in 12 seasons, and posted 30 or more wins for the 10th time in 11 seasons.</p> <p>The 2007 Tommies played five tough games in the Metrodome in March and faced several ranked teams on their 11-game trip to Florida March 17-24. The Toms are scheduled to play 12 games this season vs. teams that reached the 2006 Division III NCAA playoffs.</p> <p>Denning surpassed 400 career wins last season. This March he'll coach his 1,000th game of his 30-year career at Cretin-Derham Hall and UST. His .771 winning percentage at UST leads all active Division III coaches. His 2006 Tommies won the MIAC regular-season title for the fourth year in a row -- a feat never accomplished before in the conference's 86-year history.</p> <p>St. Thomas finished second nationally in earned-run average (2.29) last season. That included a 1.58 ERA in 20 MIAC games. The Toms allowed just 36 runs in 20 games -- believed to be a conference record since the MIAC went to a 20-game schedule in 1984. Pitching will again be the Toms' strength with four proven starters -- sophomores Dan Leslie and Erik Olson, senior Riley Bosch and junior Chris Bullis. Olson was 4-2 with a 1.71 ERA and a remarkable strikeout-to-walk ratio of 29-to-4 in 53 innings. Junior Lonnie Robinson (7-0 career) was a starter on the Toms' nationally-ranked basketball team. Senior Will Montgomery will fill the closer role. Freshmen Jake Kramer of Prior Lake and Matt Schult of Robbinsdale Armstrong are pushing for innings.</p> <p>UST graduated a solid defensive trio in SS Mike Kimlinger, 2B Nick Bellmont and 1B Sean Young. Bellmont started three seasons while Cretin-Derham Hall grads Kimlinger and Young started all four. The Tommies will insert two other Cretin-Derham Hall grads in middle-infield spots with junior Mark Boland at shortstop and sophomore Louie Salmen at second base.</p> <p>The Tommies have just three seniors in their 32-man varsity -- Bosch, Montgomery and 1B-OF Bryan Johnson. At least six players up from the junior-varsity team will contribute, and at least six freshmen are getting extensive playing time led by OF Matt Olson of Anoka, 1B Tom Wippler of Sauk Rapids and IF Roy Larson of Eagan. Transfer Bobby Gregoire, a Wayzata native and two-year starter at St. Cloud State, adds infield depth.</p> <p>St. Thomas is a combined 128-14 vs. conference foes in baseball and softball over the last three seasons (72-3 softball, 56-11 baseball), including a 15-1 postseason run.</p> <p>The Tommies will look to continue their home-field success. St. Thomas is 35-5 in its last 40 home games on campus. The Toms are playing on a artificial-turf infield installed in 2006 at their remodeled home field renamed Koch Diamond to recognize a major gift by UST trustee and ex-Tommie pitcher David Koch (Class of 1952).</p>
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