

2011 MIAC Football Season Preview and Preseason Coaches' Poll

8/25/2011

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ST. PAUL, Minn. -- The Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference's nine football teams are set to kick off the 2011 season on Saturday, Sept. 3, and anticipation has been building all summer for another spectacular and suspenseful season in the MIAC, led by a trio of nationally-ranked teams that will once again headline the conference's talented field.

The 2010 season culminated with Bethel University (12-2, 7-1 MIAC) defeating the University of St. Thomas (12-1, 8-0 MIAC) in the NCAA Division III National Quarterfinals on a snowy December Saturday in St. Paul that embodied the conference's quality of play, competitive balance and emergence on the national stage. The Royals' 12-7 victory served as an appropriate exclamation point to end a season filled with unforgettable games, fantastic finishes and enough highlights to fill an entire season of SportsCenter.

As 2011's kickoff draws near, defending MIAC champion St. Thomas appears to be the favorite once again, with Bethel and perennial power Saint John's University (7-3, 6-2 MIAC) prepared to engage in another epic three-team brawl for the conference crown. A year ago, the three regular-season games played by that trio were decided by a total of eight points, and all three open the 2011 season with endless optimism bolstered by spots for all three in the national rankings. However, the MIAC should once again be a very deep conference, with all nine teams looking to build on what they accomplished in 2010.

Tommies atop MIAC Coaches' Poll

The MIAC coaches conferred that the Tommies, Royals and Johnnies are expected to again be the class of the conference with their votes in the 2011 MIAC Football Preseason Coaches' Poll. St. Thomas was tabbed to repeat with six of the nine first-place votes and a total of 62 points, but Bethel and Saint John's also received first-place votes and are predicted to again claim the top three spots in the conference standings. The Royals received two first-place votes and a total of 56 points, and the Johnnies claimed the other first-place vote and 53 total points.

Based on the coaches' voting, and last year's standings, there appears to be three fairly distinct tiers in the MIAC in 2011 with St. Thomas, Bethel and Saint John's at the top. St. Olaf College (6-4, 4-4 MIAC), Concordia College (5-5, 4-4 MIAC) and Gustavus Adolphus College (4-6, 3-5 MIAC) make up the second tier as the middle-of-the-pack teams hoping to jump into the upper echelon and factor into the title discussion. St. Olaf was picked fourth in the coaches' poll with 40 points, Concordia was fifth with 36 and Gustavus was sixth with 30 points, however all three of the MIAC's middle teams could be interchangeable after showing plenty of promise in 2010.

The final three-team tier includes Augsburg College (4-6, 2-6 MIAC), Carleton College (3-7, 2-6 MIAC) and Hamline University (1-9, 0-8 MIAC), all of which are hoping to show progress in 2011 and build on their strengths. The Auggies were predicted to finish seventh with 21 points in the poll. The Knights came in eighth with a total of 15 points, and the Pipers rounded out the poll with 11 points.

Trio of Top-10 teams

In addition to receiving the top three spots in the MIAC poll, St. Thomas, Bethel and Saint John's have all received national accolades heading into the season with each receiving at least one top-10 national. The Tommies enter the season ranked fourth by The Sporting News, No. 5 by D3football.com and seventh by Lindy's Sports. The Royals are ranked No. 4 by Lindy's Sports, seventh by D3football.com and No. 15 by The Sporting News. The Johnnies hold the No. 9 ranking in The Sporting News poll and the No. 25 spot in the D3football.com poll. The AFCA Division III poll will begin during the regular season.

[D3football.com 2011 Preseason Top 25](#)

What's new?

From a coaching standpoint, there was very little turnover in the MIAC during the offseason, save for one move. Hamline said goodbye to head coach **Jim Good** following the 2010 season, and hired **John Pate** to be the Pipers' next head man. Pate brings plenty of collegiate success to Hamline, after helping Georgia Southern win five NCAA Division I-AA National Championships in seven trips to the title game as an assistant and associate head coach. In addition to his 15 years over two stints at Georgia Southern, he has also been the head coach at Union College (NAIA) Lees-McRae College (Division II) and was most recently 20-8 in two seasons as the head coach at West Montgomery (N.C.) High School.

In addition to the coaching change, the Pipers will also undergo a style makeover heading into 2011. The previously pass-happy team will take to the ground with an option attack. Hamline's philosophy shift will put them in a power-running category with Bethel and Concordia, as most of the other MIAC schools run more of a pro-style offense.

The other new twist to MIAC football in 2011 will be its expanded radio exposure. During the offseason, St. Thomas announced a two-year agreement with WCCO - the former home of University of Minnesota football. St. Thomas' deal with one of the Twin Cities' most recognizable stations will bring all the Tommies' game - which includes one game against each MIAC team to a state and even regional audience. Saint John's also solidified a new radio deal with The Bear, WBHR-660 AM, for football, men's basketball and men's hockey, meaning there will be plenty of MIAC action on the airwaves this fall.

Who's back?

The MIAC saw some significant stars graduate after the 2010 season, including the conference's all-time leading rusher in Bethel's **Logan Flannery**, longtime Saint John's starting quarterback **Joe Boyle** and All-American defensive lineman **Kyle Schroeder**, St. Thomas stars **Josh Ostrue** (C), **Brady Ervin** (DB), **Ben Wartman** (RB) and **Tommy Becker** (LB), Augsburg wideout **Muneer Al-Hameed** and many more. However, the cupboard certainly isn't bare as many of the MIAC's marquee players return for another collegiate season.

in 2011, 14 MIAC First-Team All-Conference selections return (eight offense, six defense) and 21 Second-Team selections (nine offense, 12 defense) are all back to give the league plenty of star power. Headlining the offensive returnees are 2009 MIAC MVP **Fritz Waldvogel**. The dangerous St. Thomas playmaker earned First-Team honors both at receiver and utility last year for his impact in both the passing and return games. Two of the league's top running backs also return in St. Olaf's **Leon Clark** and Carleton's **Jon Lien**. Bethel's **Mitch Elliot** is the top returner up front on the offensive line, and Hamline kicker **John Broback** will be a special teams weapon for the Pipers again in 2011.

The league is also deep at quarterback with First-Team selection **Dakota Tracy** back under center for St. Thomas. Tracy has only lost one game as a starter in his career. Both Second-Team selections - Augsburg's **Marcus Brumm** and St. Olaf's **Dan Dobson** also return and Bethel's **Josh Aakre** helps to headline a strong group of returning signal callers throughout the league. Several other top rushers are receivers also return including St. Thomas RB **Colin Tobin**, Gustavus RB **Jeffrey Dubose**, Concordia WR **Bronson Shepard**, Saint John's WR **Sam Pederson** and Gustavus WR **Muresuk Mena**.

On defense, the top returners are at linebacker and in the secondary. St. Thomas's linebacking duo of **Tony Danna** and **Willy Baregi** were both First-Team picks last year, as was Bethel LB **Billy Morgan**. Johnnies' First-Team DB **Ian Goldsmith** is back this year, as is another Tommie First-Team defender, DB **Ryan Deitz**. Carleton's **Mark Skoglund** is another one of the league's top returning linebackers, along with St. Olaf's **Matt Olson** and Bethel's **Brett Skoog**.

Up front, Concordia's **Reed Hefta**, Hamline's **Eric Klaers** and St. Olaf's **Brian Albrecht** were all Second-Team selections on the defensive line in 2010. Four of the five Second-Team defensive backs return as well - Bethel's **David Vavra** and **Ethan Anderson**, Gustavus' **Brad Kruckeberg** and St. Olaf's **Ben Dobson**.

Awards watch

St. Thomas' Waldvogel and **Chad Vandergriff** were joined by Bethel's Elliot on the North Offense First Team of the [D3 Senior Classic 2011 Preseason All-American Football Team](#). St. Olaf's Clark, Carleton's Skoglund and Gustavus' Kruckeberg were all Second-Team selections. Elliot (guard) and UST's Vandergriff (tackle) received [D3Football.com Preseason All-American](#) honors as a second-team offensive linemen. Saint John's kicker **Jimmie Mattson** was named to the [Fred Mitchell Award Watch](#) List.

Also, St. Thomas' Waldvogel, St. Olaf's Clark and Saint John's **Andrew Rotschafer** were selected as nominees for the [2011 Allstate AFCA Good Works Team](#), which honors collegiate football players for their "good works" in the community.

In addition to the standout players, the MIAC also has a host of award-winning coaches back on its sidelines. Last year, St. Thomas' **Glen Caruso** was voted the [2010 NCAA Division III Liberty Mutual Coach-of-the-Year](#), as well as the MIAC and Region Coach-of-the-Year. College football's all-time wins leader, Saint John's **John Gagliardi** was a [National Sportsmanship Day](#) honoree, and he was also called a "[Coaching Model](#)" by former Presidential candidate Ralph Nader. Also, Bethel head coach **Steve Johnson** was honored by the [Minnesota Football Coaches' Association](#) as their "Man of the Year" for his contributions to football in the state.

New in the rulebook

There are a few new rule changes in the NCAA this year that will slightly alter the way the game is played, and hopefully each change will be a positive. The first isn't a huge factor in Division III, but now unsportsmanlike conduct penalties can be treated as live-ball fouls. That means if a player is flagged for taunting on his way into the end zone, the penalty will be enforced from the spot of the foul and negate the score, where in the past it was a dead-ball foul and would be enforced on the extra point or kickoff.

The other changes include a modification to the blocking below the waist rule, to eliminate low hits to unsuspecting players to hopefully reduce injuries, and now coaches are allowed to have a live-feed monitor of the game in their booth, but it must be a live feed only and both coaching staffs must be provided the same opportunity.

Looking ahead

The long-awaited 2011 season kickoff will take place Saturday, Sept. 3, with seven of the MIAC's nine teams in non-conference action. Conference play will begin Saturday, Sept. 17, and the regular season will conclude on Saturday, Nov. 12.

The three-team round robin between the conference's nationally ranked teams will occur over a four-week stretch in October. The annual St. Thomas/Saint John's showdown, which drew the largest crowd in Division III history last year, will take place on the Tommies' home field on Oct. 1. The following weekend, Oct. 8, Bethel travels to Collegeville to face the Johnnies, and the series wraps up Oct. 22 when St. Thomas heads to the Royals' campus.

The annual St. Olaf/Carleton Northfield rivalry game will take place Oct. 15 on the Oles' home field. Hamline and Augsburg will renew their rivalry Sept. 17 in St. Paul for Pate's home coaching debut. There will be another important game on Oct. 1 as Concordia travels to St. Peter to take on Gustavus in the Gusties' homecoming and another of the MIAC's top early-season matchups.

Below are complete details from the 2011 MIAC Football Preseason Coaches' Poll, helpful links and complete season previews for each of the conference's nine teams. The MIAC will produce a weekly football preview, which will appear on the conference Web site every Thursday afternoon, and the site will also provide up-to-date scores, standings and links to live stats and broadcasts throughout the season.

2011 MIAC Football Preseason Coaches' Poll

MIAC head football coaches voted for every team in the conference except their own. Points were assigned for each vote (eight for a first-place vote, nine for second, etc.) Teams are ranked in order of highest point total to lowest with vote totals listed and first-place votes shown in parentheses.

2011 MIAC Football Preseason Coaches' Poll		
Rank	Institution	Total
1	St. Thomas (6)	62
2	Bethel (2)	56
3	Saint John's (1)	53
4	St. Olaf	40
5	Concordia	36
6	Gustavus	30
7	Augsburg	21
8	Carleton	15
9	Hamline	11

2011 MIAC Schedule | 2010 MIAC Statistics | MIAC Recordbook | MIAC Archives |



Augsburg

Coach: Frank Haege

Career Record: 20-40 (6 seasons)

2010 Finish: Tied 7th (2-6 MIAC, 4-6 overall)

Augsburg Season Preview

For the past four seasons, the Augsburg College football team has hovered around the .500 mark, finishing 5-5 in both the 2007 and 2008 campaigns, while finishing 4-6 each of the last two years.

But head coach Frank Haege says that it's time for the Auggies to shed its recent "middle of the road" finishes and take command of their own destiny in the always-competitive Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

"We've been at or around .500 for the last four years, so we've got to break out. We need a breakout season," said Haege, entering his seventh season as the Auggies' mentor. "With our quarterback and skill players back, this will be as good a season as any to do it."

Returning 13 starters, including the bulk of the Auggies' trademark high-flying passing offense, along with several key defensive starters, hopes are high for improvement in the 2011 campaign. Augsburg enters fall camp with nearly 90 players on the preseason roster, a high-water mark in recent years. Forty-nine letterwinners are among the large group at fall camp.

The theme of the 2011 Auggie season is "Taking Care of Business," a tribute to former Auggie assistant coach Chris Bergstrom, who died on April 20, 2011 at the age of 37. Bergstrom served as an offensive line coach for the Auggies from 2002-09, and the slogan was one of his favorite sayings, Haege said.

After hosting its first four games at Edor Nelson Field last season, Augsburg opens the 2011 campaign on the road for its first three games this season. The Auggies have home games at Edor Nelson Field in four of the five Saturdays in October. Augsburg will make a return visit to the Metrodome for its final home game on Nov. 12 against Bethel, after ending a string of 20 straight seasons with a game at the Minneapolis domed stadium last year.

The 2011 campaign marks the 80th season of Augsburg football. Augsburg started its football program in 1926 and competed until 1934. The Auggies resumed football from 1939-42, and have fielded teams every year since 1945.

Brumm healthy, ready to lead Auggie offense

Quarterback Marcus Brumm (SR, Lakeville, Minn./Lakeville South HS) enters his senior season healthy, after missing the final three games of 2010 with a shoulder injury. Despite playing in only seven games, his 191 pass completions, 2,161 passing yards and 18 passing touchdowns were all second-most among MIAC players in overall statistics, and his 326 passing attempts led the league. After earning All-MIAC first-team honors in 2009, he was an All-MIAC second-team selection in 2010.

While losing D3football.com All-America honorable-mention selections Muneer Al-Hameed and Josh Pronschinske from the receiving corps to graduation, Augsburg still returns a solid group of receivers, led by returner Hakeem Bourne-McFarlane (SO, Bloomington, Minn./Kennedy HS). In his first season at Augsburg after transferring from Division II Winona State where he redshirted, Bourne-McFarlane produced solid numbers for the Auggies, catching 40 passes for 459 yards and five touchdowns.

In the backfield, Waylon Hartwick (SR, Minneapolis, Minn./South HS) returns to the Auggie lineup after a year's absence. He gained 291 yards on 68 carries with five touchdowns in the 2009 season. David Murray (JR, St. Paul, Minn./Harding HS) also returns to the Auggie backfield.

Up front, four starters return to the offensive line -- center Nick DeVet (SR, Shoreview, Minn./Mounds View HS), tackles Eric Dooley (JR, Eagan, Minn.) and Brian Rud (JR, Lonsdale, Minn./Montgomery-Lonsdale HS) and guard Josh Beck (SR, Rush City, Minn.). The quartet has been part of a line that has protected an offense producing an average of 345.7 yards per-game over the last two seasons, while giving up just 21 quarterback sacks in 20 games.

Defense: Depth at all positions

There's solid depth throughout the Auggie defense, which has five starters and several key reserves returning.

On the defensive line, end Tony Rickoff (SR, Winona, Minn.) is the lone starter back, after accumulating 41 tackles (11 solo) and a sack last season. Several key reserves last season will move into more prominent roles, including Aaron Perry (JR, Lino Lakes, Minn./Centennial HS), who had 22 tackles (10 solo) and two sacks last year. Edmond Smith (JR, Minneapolis, Minn./North HS) finished fifth on the team in tackles last year with 56 (31 solo), including six tackles for loss.

The linebacking corps has always been a strength of Augsburg's defense, and it should continue to be the case this year, with two key starters back in Bryce Vee (JR, Coon Rapids, Minn./Blaine HS) and Adam Sonntag (JR, Green Lake, Wis.). Sonntag finished second on the team in tackles last year with 82 (35 solo), including three sacks and a team-best seven tackles for loss. Vee was fourth on the team in tackles last year with 59 (18 solo).

A key addition to the linebacking unit will be Phil Putratz (SO, Mazeppa, Minn./Zumbrota-Mazeppa HS), who moves to defense after spending last year as Augsburg's top running back, gaining 524 yards with a team-best eight touchdowns.

Haegel notes that there should be a good competition for time in the secondary, with two starters returning in cornerback Tyler Phillips (SR, Lino Lakes, Minn./Centennial HS) and safety Cameron Krugerud (JR, Plymouth, Minn./Wayzata HS). Last year, Phillips stood third on the team in tackles with 62 (41 solo), along with two interceptions and five passes defended. Krugerud finished the season with 25 tackles (15 solo) and an interception.

Special teams: New kicker/punter stepping into play

The biggest question for the Auggies will be who will fill the kicking and punting duties this season after the graduation of four-year veteran kicker/punter Jack Christopherson, who set Augsburg's school records for career kicking points (161) and career points-after-touchdown (110).

Wide receiver Waytashek will likely fill the team's kicking and punting duties, Haegel said, and will also likely fill the kick return role, after returning 14 kicks for a 20.9-yard average last season. Bourne-McFarlane will likely fill the punt return role this season.

| [Augsburg Football Website](#) | [Augsburg Roster](#) | [Augsburg Schedule](#) |



Bethel
Coach: Steve Johnson
Career Record: 156-74-1 (22 seasons)
2010 Finish: 2nd (7-1 MIAC, 12-2 overall)

Bethel Season Preview

The 2010 Bethel Royals turned heads around the nation as they rampaged through the playoffs and made it to the DIII national semifinal game. Focusing on utilizing star players on offense and stopping the run on defense, the Royals surprised football fans from coast to coast. The Royals posted a record of 12-2 overall (7-1 MIAC) and outscored opponents by an average of 14 points per game. After coming up just short of the MIAC regular season title, Bethel took out conference rival St. Thomas in the national quarterfinal game. This year's squad has to cope with losing several seasoned leaders but is replenishing the roster and reloading with young talent for a promising 2011 season.

Bethel does have some shoes to fill, due to graduation of many veterans. The team does return 15 starters, nine of those starters on the offensive side of the ball. The 2011 Royals will look to continue to make electrifying plays on offense and to be one of the top 10 defenses in the nation. Coach Steve Johnson and his staff will look to remain a top team in the MIAC and again be a contender for the DIII national title this year.

OFFENSE

The main question everyone wants to know is, "Who will replace Logan Flannery?" Many coaches think they will be breathing a sigh of relief because the MIAC's all time leading rusher has graduated. Coaches around the league will be gasping when they take a glimpse at Flannery's replacement, Brandon Marquardt (Fr., Champlin Park, Minn.). Marquardt is a transfer from Minnesota State-Mankato who was selected as the DIII newcomer of the year by Lindy's Sports magazine.

Bethel has been known in years past for their dominant mix of running and passing games, this year will be more of the same. The quarterback position will be upheld by three-year starter, Josh Aakre (Sr., Dawson, Minn.). Aakre has the physical ability, leadership, and football IQ to lead the Royals deep into the playoffs once again. The main receiver for the Royals was awarded a medical redshirt during the 2010 season. Jay Hilbrands (So., Clara City, Minn.) plans to pick up right where he left off, burning defenses with his blazing speed, and leaving audiences in awe with his leaping catches. Keep an eye on Hans Duinick (Jr., Tulsa, Okla.) who will be playing the receiving position opposite of Hilbrands, and Alex Wright (Sr., Minnetonka, Minn.), to pull down multiple touchdown grabs.

The Royals offensive line paved the way to lead the Royals to be the most productive rushing team in the conference. Weighing on average nearly 305 pounds it would be hard to imagine that changing. A player to watch is offensive tackle, Mitch Elliot (Sr., Brooklyn Park, Minn.). Standing 6'4" and having amazingly nimble feet, Elliot has been selected as a preseason All-American by SportingNews.

DEFENSE

In 2010, Bethel held claim to arguably the best defense in the MIAC. The Royals were ranked in the top two in the conference, in passing defense, rushing defense, points given up, and takeaways. Ranking 7th in all of DIII in total defense was by no mistake. This year's team does have to replace five starters, but will do that flawlessly.

The defense is held together by all MIAC and all Region selection, Billy Morgan (Sr., Rosemount, Minn.). Morgan led the team in tackles with 86 and ranked 3rd in the MIAC in sacks among linebackers last season. Look for linebacker Brett Skoog (Jr. Long Lake, Minn.) to make an impact by regularly stopping opponents in the backfield.

The team returns Senior David Vavra (Sr., Cambridge, Minn.) in the secondary. Vavra is a ball hawk who led the team in interceptions with 6 and was the team's third leading tackler. Surrounding Vavra in the secondary is nothing but talent with 2nd team all MIAC Ethan Anderson (Sr. Mapleton, Minn.) at the corner position.

Last season the Royals held opponents to an astounding 2.6 yards per carry and less than 74 yards per game on the ground. This is due in part to the defensive line. The line is led by defensive end Jason Hofmeyer (Sr., Hospers, Iowa.). Hofmeyer recorded 25 solo tackles and 3 sacks in 2010.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Two experienced kickers lead the Royals on special teams. Punter Ben Jameson (Sr., State College, Penn.) gives Bethel a big boot in the kicking game when he is called upon. Jameson led the MIAC in punt yardage last season. The kicker for the Royals this season will be Matt Wetherell (Sr., Glen Ellyn, Ill.). Wetherell has experience and knows what it takes to kick game winners for the Royals. In back to back years, 2008 and 2009, he downed Hamline with last second field goals.

Carleton

Coach: Kurt Ramler

Career Record: 20-30 (5 seasons)

2010 Finish: Tied 7th (2-6 MIAC, 3-7 overall)

Carleton Season Preview

In 2011, Carleton College's football program will look to head to higher ground. The team will look to an experienced senior class to lead the way. That group should be ready for just about anything, as they've experienced the full gamut of possibilities during their time at Carleton.

Last fall, the rising tide of the nearby Cannon River flooded and caused extensive damage to Laird Stadium, wreaking havoc on the Knights' season. The squad turned into a nomadic tribe as they were forced to use other locker room and practice facilities on campus and re-located a trio of home games to other sites. The guidance of head coach Kurt Ramler helped the program navigate these extra challenges, as the Knights won their first two games following the flood, and they prevailed in two of the contests moved from Laird Stadium

On-field leadership this year will be provided by the team's four captains: linebackers Mark Skoglund (Sr./Murdock, Minn.) and Dylan Gessner (Sr./Briarcliff Manor, N.Y.), offensive lineman Tanner Martin (Sr./Tempe, Ariz.) and running back Jon Lien (Sr./Lindstrom, Minn.).

"All of those guys are rocks; steady, steady performers who give it everything they have every chance they get. If our team can adopt that mentality and mind-set, it will mean great things for our program," stated Ramler.

Some of the biggest questions for the Knights in 2011 will be regarding the defense, as the MIAC has perhaps never boasted of so many potent offensive attacks. "Our defensive performance will be key to our success this year," says Ramler. "We need to establish a defensive identity of physicality and confidence."

Leading the way is Skoglund, a pre-season All-American, who looks to lead the way with his ferocious play. The MIAC's top tackler in 2010, he finished the season with 102 stops, the highest total by a Knights linebacker in nearly a decade. Skoglund was also Carleton's top tackler in 2009 and is joined at inside linebacker by Gessner, Braeden Ducharme (So./Blooming Prairie, Minn.), Andy Zweber (Jr./Elko, Minn.), Andrew Campbell (Brooklyn, N.Y.) and incoming transfer Luke Reppe (Northfield, Minn.)

Both Justin Rotman (Sr./Minnetonka, Minn.), the defense's most productive playmaker in 2010, and Jon Rowe (Jr./St. Cloud, Minn.) will likely see time at the outside linebacker position.

Paul Hoffer (Jr./Plymouth, Minn.) makes the switch from cornerback to safety and joins DeAngelo Williams (Sr./Minneapolis, Minn.), Mike Elder (Jr./San Antonio, Texas), Tsubasa Matsui (Sr./Ellicott City, Md.), Jordan Soteros (So./Scottsdale, Ariz.), and Kyle Jacobs (Sr./Mequon, Wis.) in the secondary.

Interior defensive lineman Andrew Wolter (Jr./Elysian, Minn.) was hampered by injury last year, and if healthy, could make a tremendous impact upon this year's team. Caleb Hyde (Jr./Rogers, Minn.) and Adan Nunez (So./Phoenix, Ariz.), formidable in their own rights, join Wolter up the gut. A fierce competition looms at defensive end as Tyler Richards (Sr./Appleton, Wis.), Jens Lillehei (Jr./Minneapolis, Minn.), Curtis Vamarasi (So./Evanston, Ill.), and former linebacker Keenan Hartert (Jr./Glenwood Springs, Colo.) compete for playing time. To provide the Knights with added depth, Ryan Denenberg (So./Portola Valley, Calif.) transitioned to the defensive line during pre-season camp.

On offense the team will look to co-captains Lien and Martin for direction. Both players return for their senior seasons having contributed mightily in each of their first three campaigns. The biggest challenge for the offense in 2011 will be putting together a great offensive line, after stalwarts Brad Eckelmann, Ted Longabaugh, and Will Taylor departed via graduation. Bill Estes (So./Tucson, Ariz.) returns after starting every game last year and is joined by veterans True Overholt (Sr./Edina, Minn.), Pete McNeely (Jr./Montclair, N.J.), Jordan Conroy-Austin (So./Tucson, Ariz.), Cole Rystedt (So./Coon Rapids, Minn.), and Andrew Schneider-Adams (Jr./Ellsworth, Wis.) Offensive line coach McHugh said, "This will be a key unit. How they come together will have a profound impact upon our offensive fortunes in 2011."

The Knights hope to have an explosive running attack this year. Lien was fourth among MIAC backs in rushing and ranked seventh in the conference with 102.7 all-purpose yards. He is joined in the backfield again by Jordan Butler (Jr./El Mirage, Ariz.) and John Baker (So./Minneapolis, Minn.).

The 2010 campaign saw the emergence of talented tight end Brian Frett (So./Wilmette, Ill.), who started every game as a rookie and provides a versatile running/catching/blocking threat. Joining him at the position are Derek Turner (Jr./St. Paul, Minn.) and Ted Lozier (So./Des Moines, Iowa). The receiving corps welcomes back starters C.J. Dale (Jr./Fox Island, Wash.) and Chase Gottschalk (So./Independence, Minn.), both of whom had moments of brilliance in 2010, as well as Brian Kaletka (Sr./Belle Plaine, Minn.) and C.J. James (So./Decatur, Ga.). When injuries impacted the team's depth at the position during training camp, sophomore Conor Lynch (Salem, Ore.) picked up the slack. He played five games at quarterback in 2010—starting once—and provides another athletic option at his new position.

Despite Lynch's shift to receiver, the still Knights have a great battle going on at the quarterback spot. As the three remaining QBs on the roster bring something to the table. Vaughn Schmid (Sr./Mahtomedi, Minn.) finished fourth in the conference in total offense during the 2010 campaign and started 18 contests over the previous two years. Carleton

possessed the second-best passing offence in the MIAC at 225.2 yards/game. Despite those distinctions, Schmid has been pushed hard in training camp by junior Mike Hartwell (Lakeville, Minn.) and sophomore Danny Shields (Richfield, Minn.)

Carleton's special teams units welcome back several seasoned specialists, including punter Bill Moritz (Sr./Hutchinson, Minn.) and kicker Eric Murphy (Sr./Stillwater, Okla.). "You've gotta be a little crazy to kick or punt, and these guys fit that mold," jokes Ramler. "Fortunately they're also great guys and highly competent at what they do."

Soteris handled the bulk of the punt return duties in 2010, while Williams and Matsui are both back after ranking among the MIAC's top 10 kick returners a year ago.

The Knights welcome a talented class of 17 rookies, all of whom will help the squad and many of them will have a chance to see significant action this year.

"It's going to be an exciting season," Ramler said. "We'll have a chance to be good, and there's not much more that you can ask. Just how good is contingent upon how great of a team ethos we can develop. We'll need a team-first committed collective. The coaches and I have confidence that this is the direction we're headed."

| [Carleton Football Website](#) | [Carleton Roster](#) | [Carleton Schedule](#) |



Concordia

Coach: Terry Horan

Career Record: 67-37 (10 seasons)

2010 Finish: Tied 4th (4-4 MIAC, 5-5 overall)

Concordia Season Preview

The 2011 Cobbers will be looking to play the role of streak stoppers. For a program that is used to competing for the MIAC championship, the string of two consecutive fourth-place finishes hasn't set very well. As CC head coach Terry Horan enters his 11th season at the helm, he will once again have to figure out a way to avoid early-season losing skids that force the Cobbers to run off extended winning streaks at the end of the year just to get back to the .500 level. Concordia has posted a combined mark of 1-7 in their first four conference games of the past two seasons. The good news is that Horan has done a great job of keeping the Cobbers "on task" and they have ended the year by going 6-2 in their final four games in 2009 and 2010.

The schedule makers have once again put Concordia up against a wall to start the year as they open MIAC play by hosting perennial league power St. John's on Sept. 17 and then defending conference champion St. Thomas on Sept. 24. If the Cobbers are to make a run at their first top 2 finish since 2005, they will need to knock off at least one of the preseason nationally ranked teams.

The preview numbers look pretty impressive for the Cobber offense as they return nine starters from last year's team that averaged 367.7 total yards and 25.0 points per game. Unfortunately those numbers are heavy on the "skilled" positions and slightly less impressive for the offensive line. Concordia returns five of their six starting backfield members from a year ago. Two-year starting quarterback Michael Dunham (Sr., Willmar, Minn.) returns after a record-setting season in 2010. Dunham set the school record for passing yards, completions and attempts in a single season and needs only 1,650 more passing yards to eclipse the school's all-time career passing mark. Making things even brighter for the CC offense is that Dunham's two favorite targets from last year are back in camp. Bronson Shepherd (Sr., Brainerd, Minn.) and Mike Starke (Jr., Annandale, Minn.) both return after breakout seasons in 2010. Shepherd was named to the MIAC All-Conference Second Team and led the team in receptions, yards and TD's. Starke caught at least one pass in all 10 games and finished the year with 35 receptions. CC also returns their top two leading rushers in Trent Johnson (So., Moorhead, Minn.) and fullback Brett Baune (Fargo, N.D./Fargo South). Johnson rushed for 411 yards last year while Baune led the team in rushing touchdowns.

The defense will see the biggest changes as first-year defensive coordinator Kyle Bakken inherits a crew that allowed an average of 369.2 yards and 25.3 points per game. The biggest area for improvement will come on pass defense where CC was ranked eighth in the MIAC and allowed almost 250 passing yards per game. To make matters even tougher, the Cobbers lost their lone First Team All-Conference selection, safety Zach Debeltz, to graduation. Concordia will have to replace seven starters on defense. One of the bright spots for the newly crowned Cobber "Black Shirts" will be the return of linebacker Matt Moenkedick (Jr., Verndale, Minn.), who played in only five games in 2010 due to an injury, and 2010 sack leader Reed Hefta (Jr., Falkirk, N.D./Underwood HS). Moenkedick had 25 tackles, 2.5 tackles for a loss and 1.0 sacks in his short stint last year while Hefta came away with a league-best 8.0 QB takedowns. Overall CC lost their top two tacklers from 2010 but return linebacker Josh Herzog (Sr., Detroit Lakes, Minn.) who was third on the team in tackles with 52 tackles and defensive back Brent Rysdahl (Jr., Marshall, Minn.) who had 37 tackles.

The defensive backfield will have a mixture of youth and experience. Joining Rysdahl will be senior Tyler Spiczka (Sauk Rapids, Minn.), junior Seth Lage (Pelican Rapids, Minn.) and sophomore Bryce Hentges (Sauk Centre, Minn.). All three saw extended time at the end of last season and with Spiczka being the most experienced - having played in nine games in 2010.

The special teams units will also feature the "something experienced, something new" theme. Kicker Porfirio Diaz (Sr., Pelican Rapids, Minn.) returns for a second season. Diaz was 29-for-32 on extra points and 3-for-7 on field goal attempts. A year of experience will help Diaz acclimate from the very start of the season. The Cobbers will have to replace punter Alex Jensen who was lost to graduation. The frontrunner for the position is sophomore Brett Harmelink (Moorhead, Minn.). Harmelink has shown impressive leg strength in the early part of the preseason.

| [Concordia Football Website](#) | [Concordia Roster](#) | [Concordia Schedule](#) |



Gustavus

Coach: Peter Haugen

Career Record: 8-12 (2 seasons)

2010 Finish: 6th (3-5 MIAC, 4-6 overall)

Gustavus Season Preview

After back-to-back 4-6 seasons, the Gustavus football team looks for a turnaround year in 2011. With a total of 33 letterwinners returning, 17 on offense and 16 on defense, Head Coach Peter Haugen has confidence in his squad's mix of upperclassmen leadership and young talent. The Gusties finished sixth in the MIAC last season with a record of 3-5.

Senior defensive back Brad Kruckeberg (Ellendale, Minn.) and junior offensive lineman Lyle Opdahl (Young America, Minn.) are Gustavus' returning All-Conference performers from a year ago, as both players took home All-MIAC Second Team honors.

The Gustavus defense brings back six starters from last year's team. The biggest question mark for the defense will be the linebacker position due to the vacancy left by the graduation of staples Dustin Kammerer, Paul Stommes, Jade Kotila, and Zach Lundquist. Coach Haugen expects to see a competitive battle at linebacker throughout camp and anticipates a wide open field leading up to the first game.

Where the linebacking corp lacks experience, the defense line consists of a group of battle-tested veterans. The depth at defensive tackle consists of top returning seniors Tom Einberger (West St. Paul, Minn.) and Colby Peterson (Paynesville, Minn.), junior Cory Colvard (Centerville, Minn.), and sophomore Donte Green (Minneapolis, Minn.). At defensive end are seniors Todd Kremmin (Cottage Grove, Minn.), Dane Mellgren (Cologne, Minn.), and Matt Miller (Cleveland, Minn.). The defense allowed 149.2 yards per game on the ground last year, ranking sixth in the MIAC.

The secondary, which ranked third in the MIAC in pass defense last season after allowing 170.6 yards per game, also features a solid group of returners. Brad Kruckeberg, who finished first in the MIAC in both interceptions (6) and passes defended (12) last season, will reprise his role at free safety for his senior year. Kruckeberg will be complimented at strong safety by sophomore Beau Bachmann (St. Peter, Minn.) and senior Mitch Kleinschrodt (Alden, Minn.). At the corners are returning senior starters Dan Opitz (Burnsville, Minn.) and Jason Cook (Lakefield, Minn.). Opitz had 30 tackles and one interception last season, while Cook had 29 tackles and three picks.

Gustavus ranked fourth in the league in total defense last season, allowing 319.8 yards per game, while giving up an average of 20.0 points per game.

A total of nine familiar faces return to the starting offensive lineup, including a complete core of skill players. Gustavus ranked eighth in the league in total offense (311.7 ypg), running for an average of 153.8 yards per game and throwing for an average of 157.9 yards per game.

Senior Logan Becker (Easton, Minn.) returns as the full-time signal caller for the second straight season. Becker proved to be both a threat through the air and on the ground last season. He was 159-for-268 for 1529 yards with 12 touchdowns and 12 interceptions. Becker was also the team's second leading rusher with 586 yards on 144 carries for an average of 41.7 yards per game.

The trio of senior Elliot Herdina (Blooming Prairie, Minn.), and juniors Andre Creighton (St. Paul, Minn.) and Muresuk Mena (Inver Grove Heights, Minn.) at wide receiver boasts speed and quickness, allowing for a variety of options in the passing game. Mena led the Gusties in catches last season with 59, compiling 354 yards, averaging 35.4 yards per game and scoring three touchdowns. Creighton made 17 catches for 233 yards (23.3 ypg) and two touchdowns. Herdina will look to get back on track after missing seven games due to injury last season. He led the team in receiving as a sophomore with 46 catches for 555 yards and seven touchdowns.

Sophomore Jeffrey Dubose (St. Paul, Minn.) returns as the number one running back after having a breakout year in his rookie season. Dubose ran 147 times for 721 yards last season, averaging 4.9 yards per carry and 72.1 yards per game.

The offensive line features the return of four of its five starters from a year ago. Senior Robbie Porter (Lakeville, Minn.) returns at center with senior Ryan Steele (Maple Grove, Minn.) and junior Brian Grundmeyer (Inver Grove Heights, Minn.) making up the guard combo. Sophomore Lance Erickson (Pelican Rapids, Minn.), who worked into a starting role late last season, will return at right tackle, while the battle at left tackle is still wide open.

Seniors Darin Wagner (Hayfield, Minn.) and Cody Williams (Welcome, Minn.) round out the offense at tight end. Wagner brought in 12 catches for 132 yards and one touchdown last season, while Williams had two catches for 10 yards.

Junior Tom Heupenbecker (Verona, Wis.) will anchor the kicking game as both the place kicker and punter. Heupenbecker was 3-for-7 on field goal attempts and 20-for-25 on extra point tries last season. The Gusties ranked seventh in the MIAC in punting last year with a net average of 28.9 yards per punt. The team ranked second in the league in punt return average at 11.9 yards per return, as Brad Kruckeberg had 10 returns for 98 yards (9.8 avg/ret.).

The Gustavus football team will open the 2011 season on the road against Wartburg College on Saturday, Sept. 10 at 7:00 p.m. in Waverly, Iowa. Wartburg defeated the Gusties 27-6 on Hollingsworth Field in last season's opener, going on to a 10-1 overall record and making the NCAA Playoffs after winning the IIAAC with an 8-0 mark.



Hamline

Coach: John Pate

Career Record: 0-0 (First season)

2010 Finish: 9th (0-8 MIAC, 1-9 overall)

Hamline Season Preview

The coaching staff is new. The offense is new. The defense is new. There are more than two dozen fresh faces on board. Before the first practice was even held, it was obvious the 2011 Hamline University football season will look decidedly different than its predecessors. First-year head coach John Pate wouldn't have it any other way. Having been involved with five NCAA Division 1-AA championship teams at Georgia Southern, Pate is looking forward to the challenge of running a team in one of the best Division III conferences in the country, the MIAC.

"We will be more athletic than they were last year," Pate said. "I can promise you that. We will be young and inexperienced in some areas. But we will grow together. If you are athletic and mobile, you can accomplish a lot of good things on the field. And that is what we are looking to accomplish in 2011."

45 players return for Pate and his staff. Among them is a pair of senior quarterbacks – Adam Meyer (Cold Spring, Minn.) and Connor Sathre (Waconia, Minn.) Meyer saw the majority of the action last season, throwing for 1583 yards and nine TDs. Sathre appeared in nine games and finished second on the team in rushing yards. Both will be pushed hard for the starting job by transfer Michael Van Leer (So-Woodbury, Minn.) Van Leer comes to HU from Winona State but he is better remembered around the Twin Cities for his slashing running and passing efforts during a successful prep career at Minneapolis DeLaSalle that saw him play two years in a row in the MSHSL AAA Prep Bowl title game.

Van Leer may be well suited to Pate's option-oriented offensive attack. "Adam and Connor know the league better than I do. That's important because they can tell us coaches things that aren't always apparent on film," Pate said. "Michael is a very mobile fellow. I'm excited to see what he can do."

Speed is of the essence in the option. Tim Queck (Sr-Annandale, Minn.) has moved from a wide receiver position into the backfield and joins junior Blake Cook (Fridley, Minn.) as the top returnees. First-year players Zach Deitchman (Phoenix, Ariz.), Corey Touchette (Bainbridge Island, Wash.), Hoyfal Adam (Brooklyn Park, Minn.) and sophomores Peterson Pierre (Saint Paul, Minn.) and Joey Propati (Borrego Springs, Calif.) are also in the mix. "It's going to be an interesting, open competition," Pate said.

With Queck, who caught 41 passes last year, likely to move to the backfield, new faces will likely abound in the receiver positions. Dessalien Similhomme (So-Rochester, Minn.) and Terry Schwartz (Sr-Saint Paul, Minn.) may get the first looks but there are plenty of first-year players in the mix. One of the most interesting transitions may occur at tight end where former OL Andrew Viereck (Sr-Prior Lake, Minn.) may battle with junior Ben Del Greco (Jr-Sandstone, Minn.). "It's all about athleticism," Pate said. "We really won't know for sure until we see them in training camp for a few days."

Fortunately, a veteran offensive line, anchored by center Jimmy Stone (Sr-Taylors Falls, Minn.) returns. Guards Morgan Scheper (Sr-Carleton, Ore.) and Joe Morelli (So-Linwood, Wash) and tackles Patrick Chilton (So-Hesperia, Calif.) and Stephen Girard (Jr-Milaca, Minn.) are accustomed to the MIAC grind. In all, there are a dozen offensive linemen in camp. "This could be the strength of the team," said Charlie Hopkins, the team's offensive line coach. "We need these guys to be leaders for us."

As is the case on offense, the Piper defense will feature some familiar faces in new roles. Cory Olsen (Sr-Elk River, Minn.), who was third on the Pipers in tackles in 2010 as a linebacker, will get a look at the end position. "He runs well for a guy who is 6-5, 250," Pate said. Eric Klaers (Jr- Elk River, Minn.), a second team All-MIAC pick a year ago, is being moved to a tackle spot as well. He and senior Nick Wyatt (Jonesboro, GA) offers size and agility up front. "It looks like we may have some depth there, too," Pate said. "That's a definite plus."

There is movement as well in the linebacking corps. Alex Ferguson (Jr- Kent, Wash.) had a terrific spring after being moved up from the secondary where he had eight solo tackles last year. Josh Bain, a fifth year senior (Grand Meadow, Minn.) and Olajuwan Stiffler (So-Troutdale, Ore.), who was fourth in tackles in 2010, have the early inside advantage for starting jobs.

In the secondary, FS John-Michael Vandenberg (So-Bothel, Wash.), who led the Pipers in tackles, breakups and deflections in 2010, returns. From there, however, new faces may emerge. Marc McDonald (Jr-Portland, Ore.) had a solid spring after moving from cornerback to strong safety. This leaves openings for new corners. "That is the biggest unknown we have going in," Pate said. "This could be the most competitive battle in training camp."

John Broback, the first team All-MIAC placekicker and second team punter in 2010, has graduated. Ferguson currently has the inside track on the punting and placekicking duties. Queck tied for the team lead in kickoff returns last year. Deitchman and sophomore Peterson Pierre (Saint Paul, Minn.), who is also a backfield candidate, will get looked at there as well.

The 2011 schedule is an interesting mix. The Pipers drew the league's first week bye, meaning they opened camp a week later than their conference rivals. The lidlifter is September 10 when HU visits western power Pacific Lutheran. A year ago,

HU nearly topped PLU, falling by a tight 27-20 score. HU then returns home September 17 to face Augsburg, who stuck HU with the most heart-rendering loss of the 2010 season, a come-from-behind 42-38 affair.

That is one of just four games the Pipers will play at Klas Field. HU will also face Gustavus Adolphus, Concordia and finished the season with perennial power St. John's. They visit Northfield twice to face Carleton and St. Olaf and also have conference road dates at NCAA Division III quarterfinalists St. Thomas and Bethel. Their other game is the traditional non-conference meeting at Macalester.

"I've heard a lot of good things about MIAC football," Pate said. "And I'm very impressed with what I have seen on film. But I like this team. We have some very good athletes here who are hungry to win. There will be a bit of an adjustment period for all of us. But the players are excited to get going and so am I. We're all ready to begin a new era here."

| [Hamline Football Website](#) | [Hamline Roster](#) | [Hamline Schedule](#) |



Saint John's

Coach: John Gagliardi

Career Record: 454-123-10 (58 seasons at Saint John's)

2010 Finish: 3rd (6-2 MIAC, 7-3 overall)

Saint John's Season Preview

Here's a football prediction that history says you can bank on: The Saint John's University football team will make the NCAA Division III football playoffs in 2011.

The Johnnies missed the NCAA Division III playoffs for only the fourth time in the last 18 years, and for the first time since 2004, last fall. But here's where history comes in: The Johnnies have earned a trip to the postseason each of the last eight seasons (1985, 1987, 1989, 1991, 1993, 1996, 1998 and 2005) following a year in which they did not, including conference titles in seven of the eight.

Need more history? The 2010 season marked the Johnnies' 24th straight winning season and 43rd consecutive season without a losing record after finishing third in the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference with a 6-2 record (7-3 overall). Those three losses were by a total of seven points.

The Johnnies return six offensive starters, seven defensive starters and both special-teams specialists for the 2011 season, but will need to replace All-America defensive lineman Kyle Schroeder and a trio of All-MIAC selections in quarterback Joe Boyle and offensive linemen Jeff Gilbertson and Tim Juba.

Legendary head coach John Gagliardi enters his record-63rd season and 59th at SJU as college football's all-time wins leader with a 478-129-11 (.782) career record and a 454-123-10 (.782) mark with the Johnnies.

Here's a look at the 2011 Johnnies, by position:

OFFENSE

Last fall, Saint John's led the MIAC (conference games only) in total offense (489.0 ypg.), pass offense (292.5 ypg.) and pass efficiency rating (172.9). The team's overall pass efficiency rating of 166.3 was good for sixth overall in NCAA Division III, while the 469.7 yards of total offense per game put the Johnnies 11th. SJU converted nearly half of its third-down conversions (49.2 percent, 62-for-126), including 51.0 percent (49-96) in conference play.

Quarterback

The front-runner to replace Joe Boyle, a two-time All-MIAC and three-year starter at quarterback, is junior John Ries (6-foot-2, 200 pounds; Plymouth, Minn./Wayzata). Ries totaled 259 passing yards and two touchdowns as Boyle's backup each of the past two seasons, including a 2-0 record as the starting signal-caller.

Ries is expected to be pushed for the starting job by sophomores Connor Bruns (6-3, 215; Baltimore, Md./Loyola Blakefield), Tyler Greguson (5-11, 175; Rochester, Minn./Lourdes) and Ben Krebsbach (5-11, 190; Plymouth, Minn./Benilde-St. Margaret's).

Running Back

The Johnnies return each of their top four rushers from last season; a group that combined for 1,627 yards and 18 touchdowns on 311 carries (5.23 avg.). Three of the four backs posted at least 725 yards or more from scrimmage (combined rushing and receiving yardage).

Senior Jakob Reding (6-1, 225; Eden Prairie, Minn.) returns to the SJU backfield, thanks to a medical hardship waiver granted from the Air Force Academy, as the Johnnies' leading rusher each of the past two seasons. He gained 512 yards on 96 carries with seven touchdowns and added another score on 26 catches for 225 yards to earn a spot on the All-MIAC second team for the second straight year last season. Junior Stephen Johnson (6-0, 200; Mahtomedi, Minn.) returns to the SJU backfield after accumulating 1,019 yards on 223 carries (4.6 avg.) over the past two seasons. Although his 99 carries

for 455 yards were both lower than his freshman year totals, Johnson added 280 yards and four touchdowns on 27 catches as a sophomore last fall.

Sophomore Nick Schneider (6-0, 225; St. Cloud, Minn./Rocori) bounced back after missing all but two games of the 2009 campaign due to a knee injury. He led the Johnnies with nine total touchdowns last fall. Schneider totaled 752 all-purpose yards, averaging 6.4 yards per carry (66 attempts for 437 yards) and 16.9 yards per catch (18 receptions for 304 yards). Schneider set a new SJU freshman rushing record with 179 yards and three scores on 14 carries in the Johnnies' 33-13 win over Gustavus Adolphus Oct. 23.

Wide Receiver

In similar fashion to the Johnnies' experience in the backfield, the 2011 depth chart at wide receiver should provide ample support to the new starting quarterback. SJU returns a pair of senior wideouts in Sam Pederson (6-0, 185; La Crosse, Wis./Aquinas) and Brent Graboski (6-4, 210; Woodbury, Minn.). Graboski entered the starting lineup following his breakout game against Concordia and caught 23 passes for 385 yards and four touchdowns, while Pederson was named to the All-MIAC second team after posting 485 yards receiving on 24 catches. His lone touchdown was an 86-yard reception in the season finale against Hamline.

Tight End

The lone skilled position for Gagliardi to replace is at tight end, where Josh Overman served as one of the team's leading receivers each of the last three seasons. The Johnnies will turn to a pair of big bodies in juniors Taylor Freetly (6-6, 240; Kerkhoven, Minn./Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg) and Wade Powers (6-4, 245; Hawick, Minn./New London-Spicer) to replace him. Powers was the backup in 2009 and suffered a season-ending injury last August. Freetly, the 2010 backup, caught three passes for 45 yards in his first season with the Johnnies last fall.

Offensive Line

The backbone of SJU's offense needs to replace Juba, a three-year starter at center, as well as left tackle Gilbertson and right guard Matt Detloff. Gilbertson and Juba were both named to the D3football.com All-West region third team after earning All-MIAC first-team honors last season. Luckily for SJU, injuries enabled the staff to play a number of different players on the line last year. On top of that, the 2010 starter at left guard and the 2009 starter at right guard return. Senior Andrew Ghostley (6-1, 280; Champlin, Minn./Champlin Park) started all 10 games at left guard last season is back, while fellow senior Eric Dirkes (6-3, 335; Avon, Minn./Albany) returns after missing the majority of last season due to a back injury.

Sophomores Jack Hedlund (6-3, 280; St. Cloud, Minn./Tech) and Pete Schwarz (6-4, 285; New Ulm, Minn./Cathedral) are expected to take over at both tackle positions after playing most of the season as freshman transfers last year. Another senior, Jimmy Stodolka (6-2, 280; Mendota Heights, Minn./St. Thomas Academy), is the frontrunner to fill Juba's shoes at center.

DEFENSE

The Johnnie defense looks to rebound following a "down" year in SJU standards in 2010. For the first time since 1995, SJU did not finish in the top two of the MIAC (conference games only) in scoring defense and also failed to do so in total defense for the first time since 2001. Defensive coordinator Jerry Haugen aims to restore the Red and White's defense prowess with the return of seven starters and a number of experienced players this season.

Defensive Line

Just as Penn State is known as "Linebacker U," perhaps Saint John's should be properly labeled as "D-Line U." The Johnnies have had at least one All-American on the defensive line 10 of the last 11 seasons. With this solid pattern, the question is who will be next? SJU has plenty of options to get the job done, though the Johnnies need to replace three experienced linemen from last year in two-time All-American Schroeder, Griffin Hayes and David Burns.

SJU returns junior Connor Grill (6-3, 230; Plymouth, Minn./Wayzata), while senior Evan Cobb (6-1, 225; Becker, Minn.) makes the full transition from linebacker to defensive end this fall. Cobb tallied 33 tackles, including 28 solo, and finished second on the team with 7.5 tackles for loss. Grill, meanwhile, came on strong in the second half of the season with 12 tackles, including two for a loss and half a quarterback sack. In addition to those two, senior Jack Daggett (6-7, 250; Hutchinson, Minn.), junior Ben Hillman (6-4, 250; Duluth, Minn./East) and sophomores Jeremy Hill (5-10, 210; Shoreview, Minn./Mounds View) and Paul Plombon (6-3, 250; Rice, Minn./Sartell-St. Stephen) all return after contributing in the trench last fall.

Linebacker

The Johnnies need to replace Billy Lawrence and John Stanton, their top two tacklers a year ago. To do that, Haugen and linebacker coach Brandon Novak will turn to seven familiar faces.

Junior Ian Goldsmith (6-1, 200; Shoreview, Minn./Mounds View), an All-MIAC first-team selection a year ago, as well as fellow junior Jake King (6-1, 230; Mounds View, Minn./Totino-Grace) both return. Goldsmith made the transition from safety to linebacker with ease halfway through the season and is expected to rotate between the two positions this fall. King appeared in all 10 games last season and posted 20 tackles.

Seniors Luke Sweeter (5-11, 230; Sartell, Minn./Sartell-St. Stephen) and Nick Zweber (5-10, 210; Elko, Minn./New Prague), and juniors Taylor Dammermann (6-1, 210; Spicer, Minn./New London-Spicer) and John Gans (6-1, 210; Rice, Minn./Sauk Rapids-Rice) are all expected to supply depth and battle for the third linebacker spot.

Secondary

SJU returns three of its four starters from last year's secondary, including junior cornerback Alex Powell (5-10, 170; Hopkins, Minn.), senior safety Andrew Rotschafer (6-1, 185; Eden Prairie, Minn.) and junior safety Kevin Wenner (5-11, 185; St. Cloud, Minn./Cathedral). An All-MIAC outfielder this past spring, Powell returns for his third season as a starting cornerback this fall after tying for the team-lead with three interceptions. Powell and Wenner tied for sixth on the team with 38 tackles apiece, while Rotschafer made 16 tackles (10 solo) with two interceptions.

Junior Bobby Fischer (5-11, 180; Plymouth, Minn./Osseo), the team's fastest player, is expected to replace the lone departure, cornerback Mike Bonynge.

Special Teams

Junior Jimmie Mattson (6-2, 210; Eau Claire, Wis./Memorial) led the Johnnies in scoring with 64 points with a perfect 7 of 7 field goals and 43 points-after touchdown last fall. An All-MIAC second-team selection, Mattson led all conference kickers (MIAC games only) in both scoring (49 points) and field-goal percentage (100.0). He begins the 2011 campaign on the Fred Mitchell Award Watch List, which includes 50 Football Championship Subdivision (FCS), Division II, III, National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) and National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) collegiate place-kickers that were nominated by their colleges for excellence on the football field and in the community.

Ramey averaged 37.6 yards on 28 punts last fall, including five of which were 50 yards or further. He only punted 19 times in eight conference games.

The Johnnies return all but one player from last season's return game. On punts, Wenner is back after averaging five yards on 26 punt returns last season. Fischer, Rotschafer and Voshell are expected to be in the mix as well. On kickoffs, SJU needs to replace Bonynge but returns Awe. Fischer, Rotschafer and Voshell will likely contend to flash their speed at this spot as well.

| [Saint John's Football Website](#) | [Saint John's Roster](#) | [Saint John's Schedule](#) |



St. Olaf

Coach: Jerry Olszewski

Career Record: 17-13 (3 seasons)

2010 Finish: Tied 4th (4-4 MIAC, 6-4 overall)

St. Olaf Season Preview

The St. Olaf College football team will look to an explosive backfield, solid signal caller and experienced defense in 2011.

OFFENSE

Running Back

The Oles will feature senior Leon Clark (Rochester, Minn. / Century), who has established himself as one of the top running backs in school history and a legitimate All-America candidate for his final season. Clark is coming off of back-to-back 1,000-yard seasons. He rushed for 1,046 last season moved him into fourth on the career list at St. Olaf. The Oles used Clark to catch passes as well last year (23 receptions for 221 yards, touchdown) and could do the same this fall.

Sophomore Michael Thai (Blaine, Minn.) will be the primary backup. If healthy, senior Kevin Foss (Sr., Woodbury, Minn.) would also see snaps. Foss had a handful of carries in 2010 and 65 for 228 yards in 2009. Marco Ortiz (Fy., Elva, Wis. / Regis) has also looked good in camp and could see some snaps.

Quarterback

Dan Dobson (Jr., Mankato, Minn. / West / UMD) will be in his second season as the starter at St. Olaf. Dobson was magnificent in his first season at St. Olaf. Dobson, a second team All-MIAC selection, threw for 2,051 yards and 24 touchdowns against only six interceptions. He led the league in touchdown passes and was fifth in total offense.

Junior Spencer McMillan (St. Paul, Minn. / St. Paul Academy) will be the Oles' No. 2. McMillan appeared in a few games in 2010.

Wide Receiver

St. Olaf will look to Jake Schmiesing (Soph., Stillwater, Minn.), Stephen Asp (Soph., Edina, Minn.) and Cameron Smith (Soph., Orlando, Fla. / Timber Creek). Schmiesing and Asp saw limited action last year, while Smith is moving from the defensive backfield. Schmiesing had eight receptions and a touchdown, while Asp had four catches and a score.

The Oles could also get help from Marco Silvera (Jr., Melbourne, Fla. / Air Academy), Alex Nelson (Fy., Golden Valley, Minn. / Edina), Ian Burrell (Soph., Colorado Springs, Colo. / St. Mary's) and Peter Rogotzke (Soph., Charles City, Iowa).

Tight Ends

Keith Nederhoed (Sr., Palm Bay, Fla.), junior Tim Bauer (Blaine, Minn.) and transfer Beau Illikainen (Jr., Plymouth, Minn. / Wayzata) will be the Oles go-to guys at tight end. Nederhoed was the Oles' starter last season, catching seven passes -- including four touchdowns -- for 86 yards. Illikainen appeared in six

games for MSU-Mankato last season.

Offensive Line

Ethan Smith (Jr., St. Louis Park, Minn.) will anchor the Oles' offensive line at center. To start, the guards will likely be Garrett Dick (Soph., Yukon, Okla.) and Alex Hsu (Soph., Woodbury, Minn.). The tackle spots will be held down by Shea Corrigan (Soph., Hutchinson, Minn.) and Daine Jensch (Sr., West Concord, Minn. / Triton). St. Olaf will also use Carl Stone (Sr., Melbourne, Fla. / Central Catholic) at each of the guard spots, Michael Yanckello (Soph., Oviedo, Fla.) at tackle and Michael Atherton (Soph., Fort Worth, Texas / SW Christian) at center if necessary.

DEFENSE

The St. Olaf defense has an experienced core back in 2011, led by its secondary which returns each of its four starters.

Cornerback

The duo of Nick Nazarian (Jr., Minnetonka, Minn.) and Andrew Lockrem (Sr., Frazee, Minn.) return as starters to anchor the corner spots. St. Olaf will also use Reggie Woods (Jr., Palm Coast, Fla./Flagler Palm Coast) and Cameron Bateman. Nazarian had a team-bests in passes defended and break ups last season.

Safety

Senior Nick Brandjord (Stillwater, Minn.) and junior Ben Dobson (Jr., Mankato, Minn./West) will patrol the safety spots. Dobson, a second team All-MIAC selection in 2010, and Brandjord had three and two interceptions to go with a combined 96 tackles last fall. Sophomore Matthew Michaelson (Pequot Lakes, Minn.) will also see some snaps in a reserve role.

Linebackers

Wes Lynch (Sr., Apple Valley, Minn.) will lock up the middle linebacker spot after a stellar junior season. Lynch was fourth on the team in tackles, and had 5.5 for a loss including two sacks.

The outside linebacker spots will be held down by Micah Johnson (Sr., Maple Grove, Minn.) and Jimmy Gildea (Soph., Minnetonka, Minn.). The Oles have also moved Drew Eid (Sr., Big Lake, Minn.) from safety, where he started last season, to linebacker. Joey Alarie (Soph., Orlando, Fla./Olympia) and first year Colin Brown (Orlando, Fla./Timber Creek) could also see action.

Defensive Line

The Oles will look to Brian Albrecht (Sr., Hutchinson, Minn.) and Colin Ferrian (Sr., St. Paul, Minn./STA) at defensive end. Albrecht led the team with 9.5 tackles for a loss, including seven sacks, in 2010. Ferrian had four sacks to go with 37 tackles, which was second among linemen. Matt Olson, who was All-MIAC as a linebacker in 2010 will also play at each defensive end spot.

Inside, St. Olaf will use Lordson Jonassaint (Jr., Orlando, Fla./Freedom) and Dustin Heiser (Jr., Orlando, Fla./Olympia) at the tackle spots. Jonassaint and Heiser each played extensively last fall. The Oles could also turn to first year Kyle Foster (Blaine, Minn.).

SPECIAL TEAMS

Jason Obarski (Jr., Apple Valley, Minn.) will return as the team's punter and kicker. Obarski was All-MIAC as a punter last year after averaging 38.9 yards/punt. He went 6-for-11 on field goals and made

32-of-36 PAT tries.

Clark, Woods and Thai will likely be the Oles go-to return men. Clark had a team-best 24.0 yards/return on kicks, including a 91-yarder for a score.

| [St. Olaf Football Website](#) | [St. Olaf Roster](#) | [St. Olaf Schedule](#) |



Coach: **Glenn Caruso**
Career Record: **30-10 (3 seasons)**
2010 Finish: **1st (8-0 MIAC, 12-1 overall)**

St. Thomas Season Preview

There's an age-old argument in sports -- is it more difficult to climb to the top, or to stay on top? Coach Glenn Caruso and his 2011 Tommie football team will find out first hand this fall.

St. Thomas has achieved one of the best turnarounds in college football in Caruso's three seasons as head coach. After UST's uncharacteristic 2-8 record and seventh-place conference finish in 2007, Caruso was hired as head coach in January 2008. His first two St. Thomas teams finished as conference runners-up with overall marks of 7-3 and 11-2.

The 2010 Tommies broke through and posted the football program's first 10-0 regular-season finish in 106 varsity seasons. In the process the Tommies won the program's first MIAC solo crown since 1983. UST made its second consecutive trip to the NCAA playoff quarterfinal round but took a five-point loss and closed the season 12-1. The Tommies had one of the most balanced offenses in college football -- in 10 regular-season games they averaged 208 rushing yards and 206.5 passing yards per game. The St. Thomas defense allowed less than 12 points a game. UST avenged its only two 2009 losses with overtime wins at St. John's and at home vs. Linfield. In all, UST defeated three other conference champion teams -- St. Norbert, Benedictine (Ill.) and Linfield

St. Thomas will face another rugged road in the MIAC, a conference which has three teams ranked nationally in the top 25. UST has starters back at 16 of 24 positions, including eight players voted to the 2010 All-MIAC first- or second-teams.

On offense, Carsuo returners seniors with starting experience at quarterback, running back, both wide receiver spots, and both offensive tackle spots, plus two underclassmen who have started at tight end. On defense, the Toms graduated four fifth-year senior standouts but bring back two accomplished linebackers, three experienced cornerbacks, and two defensive linemen who saw extensive time last season.

St. Thomas' special teams rank among the best in Division III. UST boasts one of the nation's best kick returners in senior All-American Fritz Waldogel (seven career return touchdowns). The Toms received solid play last year by young starters at placekicker and punter, and have blocked 19 kicks in the 36 games of the Caruso era.

Caruso is excited about his 2011 recruiting class. His preseason camp roster includes 71 returners, six transfers and 44 freshmen. Thirteen members of the recruiting class are 240 pounds or larger. Several players from that newcomer group are already pushing to break into the Tommies' two-deep roster.

The Tommies were ranked fifth in the D3Football preseason poll and have been ranked in that group's top 10 for 18 consecutive polls dating back to 2008.

WCCO Radio will carry all Tommie home and away games live on 830 AM and also via a live internet audio stream. WCCO, which has called Saturday college football games live since 1924, boasts a booming radio signal to all corners of Minnesota as well as into the Dakotas, Iowa, Wisconsin and Canada.

St. Thomas will open its 2011 season at home Sept. 3 against St. Norbert, the Midwest Conference preseason favorite. Its first road game is Sept. 10 at Wisconsin-River Falls, and it starts MIAC play at home on Sept. 17 against St. Olaf.

After traveling to Collegeville to play rival St. John's in each of the last two seasons, the Tommies will be at home to face the Johnnies on Oct. 1. That clash could challenge the O'Shaughnessy Stadium record attendance of 8,541. It will be the 60th consecutive year these two teams have played in football, and the 80th all-time meeting in their series. It also will come 110 years since these teams first played in football, on Thanksgiving Day 1901 at St. Paul's Lexington Park.

| [St. Thomas Football Website](#) | [St. Thomas Roster](#) | [St. Thomas Schedule](#) |