

2001-02 MIAC Men's Basketball Athletes of the Week

February 25, 2002

University of St. Thomas senior guard **Mark Buri** (St. Paul, Minn./Trinity HS) led the No. 5-ranked Tommies to two victories and the championship of the MIAC playoffs as he averaged 24 ppg, 6 apg, 4 rpg and 2 spg while playing all 40 minutes in both wins. In the 86-77 semifinal win over Macalester, Buri had 22 points and five assists. In the 73-61 championship win over Bethel, he had 17 of his 26 points in the first half and made four 3-pointers. In 104 career games, Buri has 1,469 points, 158 3-pointers, 380 assists, 335 rebounds and 253 steals. The Toms are 65-15 in his three seasons as a starter. Buri ranks sixth in UST career scoring, just 18 points out of fifth. He's also first in school history in career steals and assists. The Tommies are 24-3 and will host a second-round NCAA playoff game March 2.

February 18, 2002 -- Co-Players of the Week

Macalester College senior center **Doug Benson** (Maple Plain, Minn./Orono-Long Lake HS) averaged 22.0 points and 7.0 rebounds in the final three games of the regular season. He shot 50% from the field (17-for-34) and 83% from the foul line (32-39). Benson had 10 points and nine boards on Monday's triple-overtime loss at St. Thomas; followed that up with 20 points and nine rebounds in Wednesday's loss to St. Mary's; and closed the week with a career-high 36 points in Saturday's win over Hamline. His 20 free throws against the Pipers was just one short of tying the MIAC record established 44 years ago.

University of St. Thomas junior forward **Kevin Fitzgerald** (Centerville, Minn./St. Thomas Academy) played all 100 minutes in two overtime games, with many clutch plays, to help the Tommies go 2-0 and secure the undisputed MIAC championship. In Monday's 86-80 three-overtime win over Macalester, he played all 55 minutes had 13 points and 15 rebounds. His 3-pointer with 30 seconds left in the first overtime tied the score 70-70 and led to a second OT. With UST leading 82-80 in the third overtime, he grabbed a key offensive rebound with 19 seconds left. In Wednesday's 59-57 overtime win at Carleton, he played all 45 minutes and had 20 points and eight rebounds, including four of the team's six points in overtime. In the Tommies' current nine-game winning streak, Fitzgerald is averaging 14.3 ppg and 10.1 rpg while guarding the team's best offensive player. St. Thomas is 22-3 and ranked fifth nationally by d3hoops.com.

February 11, 2002

University of St. Thomas junior forward **Kevin Fitzgerald** (Centerville, Minn. / St. Thomas Academy) helped the first-place Tommies in a 2-0 week by averaging 16.5 ppg and 10.5 rpg. In Saturday's 91-76 win over St. Olaf, Fitzgerald had his fourth double-double of the season with 20 points and 13 rebounds. In Wednesday's 68-60 win at Concordia, he had 13 points and eight rebounds. Fitzgerald is averaging 12.2 ppg and 8.0 rpg for the 20-3 and No. 5-ranked Tommies. (2-Game Totals: 13-28 FG, 0-5 3FG, 7-10 FT, 4 assists, seven TOs, 1 block, 7 steals).

February 4, 2002

Macalester College junior forward **Patrick Russell** (Plymouth, Minn. / Wayzata HS) scored 62 points, grabbed 13 rebounds, dished out nine assists and shot 53% from the field to lead Macalester to wins over Augsburg and St. Olaf. Russell had 34 points, eight rebounds and four assists in Monday's 83-68 win at Augsburg, going 8-for-14 from three-point range. In Wednesday's 93-84 overtime win over St. Olaf, Russell had 28 points and five assists, going 4-for-8 on three-pointers and 12-for-12 from the foul line. For the week he was 19-for-36 from the field (.528), 12-for-22 from three-point territory (.545) and 12-for-12 from the foul line while playing 80 minutes. His final two points against St. Olaf moved him into second place on Macalester's career scoring list with 1,216 points.

January 28, 2002

Augsburg College sophomore guard **Travis Kalis** (Elysian, Minn./Waterville-Elysian-Morristown HS), a little-used point guard before the last two weeks, made the most of his new-found time in the varsity lineup, with two 20-plus-point performances in Augsburg's two victories, an 87-68 win over Concordia on Wednesday and a 74-63 win over Hamline on Saturday. He scored a career-high 23 points, hitting 3 three-pointers, in the win over Concordia, then scored 22 points, hitting 4 three-pointers, in the win over Hamline. In a crucial 20-8 second-half run to give Augsburg a commanding lead in Saturday's game, Kalis scored 16 points, hitting three 3-pointers and nailing 7-of-10 free throws. He scored 45 points on the week, hitting 12-of-21 FG (.571), 7-of-13 3FG (.538), 14-of-18 FT (.778), adding five steals and four assists. Augsburg has won three of its last four games to move to 9-9 on the season.

January 21, 2002

Saint John's University senior wing **Mike Nester** (Redwood Falls/Redwood Valley HS) averaged 19.7 ppg and 5.7 rpg in three wins for the Johnnies this past week. Nester was 22-of-37 (59-percent) from the field and 15-of-23 (65-percent) from the free throw line during the week. In a 56-54 win over Concordia-Moorhead on Jan. 14, Nester had 19 points and eight rebounds. At St. Mary's on Jan. 16, Nester had 17 points and four rebounds in a 61-41 win. The Johnnies returned home on Jan. 19 and defeated Macalester 69-48 as Nester had 23 points and five rebounds. On the season, Nester is averaging 18.3 ppg, 6.3 rpg and is currently the third leading scorer in the MIAC. SJU has won six straight games and is 9-7 overall, 7-4 in the MIAC.

January 14, 2002

Bethel College junior forward **Andy Gilbert** (Plymouth, Minn./Armstrong H.S.) was named MIAC player of the week for the second consecutive week. Gilbert averaged 28.7 points and 7.7 rebounds as Bethel went 2-1 on the week with wins over Carleton and Hamline, and a four-point loss to nationally ranked Gustavus. Gilbert shot 58.5% (31 of 53) from the field, including 70% (7 of 10) from behind the 3point-line in the 3 games. In the win over Carleton, Gilbert finished with 23 points (10 of 17 FG/2 of 2 3pt. FG) and 9 rebounds. In the win over Hamline, he finished with 24 points (5 of 13 FG/2 of 5 3pt. FG) and 7 rebounds. In the Royals 70-66 loss to Gustavus, Gilbert had a career high 39 points (16 of 23 FG, 3 of 3 3pt. FG) and seven rebounds. Gilbert is leading the MIAC in scoring with 21.5 points per game.

January 7, 2002

Bethel College junior forward **Andy Gilbert** (Plymouth, Minn./Armstrong HS) averaged 23 points and 6.5 rebounds as Bethel went 2-0 last week with wins over St. Olaf and Saint John's. For the week, he shot 56.25% from the field, 43% from 3pt range, and 87.5% from the free throw line. In the 90-57 win over St. Olaf, Gilbert finished with 23 points (9-13 FG, 2-4 3pt. FG, 3-3 FT) and 7 rebounds. In the victory over Saint John's, Gilbert again had 23 points (9-19 FG, 1-3 3pt. FG, 4-5 FT) and 6 rebounds. Bethel is 7-2 on the year and 3-2 in the MIAC.

December 31, 2001

Macalester College senior center **Doug Benson** (Maple Plain, Minn. / Orono-Long Lake HS) averaged 16.0 points and 11.5 rebounds while shooting 57% from the field (12-for-21) in a pair of games against Division I competition at the Furman University Poinsettia Classic in Greenville, South Carolina. Benson had 14 points and 12 boards in an 81-54 loss to Furman, and in Macalester's 90-82 upset win over Yale the next day had 18 points and 11 rebounds.

December 17, 2001

Saint Mary's University senior guard **Brett Johnson** (Onalaska, Wis./Onalaska HS) scored 45 total points in SMU's two games on December 9 and December 12. Johnson's 14th point against Concordia was the game winning free throw scored with no time remaining on the clock to give SMU a 59-58 victory (their first of the year). He followed this up on Wednesday with 31 points on 11 of 16 shooting in SMU's 83-71 loss at Bethel. Johnson is averaging 19.5 PPG in four MIAC games this year.

December 10, 2001

Gustavus Adolphus College sophomore guard **Eric Nelson** (Mendota Heights, Minn./Henry Sibley HS) tallied 10 points and six assists on 5-of-9 shooting in a 85-71 win over Carleton, and then recorded a career-high 21 points on 7-of-13 shooting in a 87-65 defeat of St. Mary's University. Nelson also ripped off seven steals and dished out seven assists in the two contests while grabbing six rebounds. First place Gustavus (8-0, 3-0) is currently ranked 6th in the nation according to d3hoops.com, and will travel to Moorhead to play Concordia College (4-3, 3-1) on Wednesday night.

December 3, 2001

University of St. Thomas junior guard **Brendan Finn** (Deephaven, Minn./Minnetonka HS) scored 17 of his game-high 23 points in the second half to help the Tommies score a 79-71 MIAC win over Bethel Saturday in a battle of expected MIAC title contenders. It was the second time in as many games in an eight-day span that Finn scored 23 points. He made 6-of-9 3-point baskets, including five in the second half. Two of those treys fueled a 20-5 run that erased a 49-44 Bethel lead. A first-year starter, Finn leads the 4-1 Tommies this season at 17.6 ppg and has made 15-of-16 at the foul line (94%) and 21-of-37 from 3-point range (57%).

November 26, 2001

Macalester College sophomore forward **Ben Van Thorre** (Minneapolis, Minn. / Washburn HS) led the Scots to a split against a pair of NAIA Division II nationally-ranked teams at the Daytona Beach News-Journal Thanksgiving Classic over the weekend, pumping in 49 points in the two games while shooting 50% from the field (16-for-32) and 88% from the foul line (15-for-17). Van Thorre had 23 points, seven rebounds and three steals in a 73-65 loss to No. 18 Flagler (Fla.). He led all scorers with 26 points the next night in an 85-80 come-from-behind victory over No. 3 Embry-Riddle (Fla.), going 8-for-16 from the field for the second straight game while dishing out three assists.

November 20, 2001 -- Co-Players of the Week

University of St. Thomas senior guard **Mark Buri** (St. Paul, Minn./Trinity HS) was named MVP of Wooster's Al Van Wie Classic after leading the Tommies to the championship with two victories. Buri also became the Tommies' 23rd men's basketball player to surpass 1,000 career points as he totaled 37 in two games and now has 1,029 on his career. In Friday's 70-63 win over Randolph-Macon, Buri played all 40 minutes and had 16 points, 5 assists, 4 steals and 3 rebounds. In Saturday's 76-66 upset of No. 6-rated Wooster (24-4, NCAA qualifier last season), Buri played all 40 minutes and had 21 points, seven rebounds, four steals and two assists. He combined to make 14-of-25 from the field, 4-of-8 3pts and 5-of-7 FTs. He has scored in double figures in 25 consecutive games and started 55 consecutive games.

Augsburg College junior guard **Adam Kotewa** (Mankato, Minn./Mankato West HS) earned tournament MVP honors with 49 points in two games, as Augsburg won the season-opening Wisconsin-Eau Claire Tip-Off Classic over the weekend with wins over Dakota Wesleyan (S.D., 77-69) and host Wisconsin-Eau Claire (75-61), the No. 26 team in the D3hoops.com preseason national poll. Kotewa had 28 points -- 17 in the second half -- with five 3-pointers in the win over Dakota Wesleyan, and led the Auggies with 21 points and eight rebounds in the win over Wisconsin-Eau Claire. He hit eight 3-pointers on the weekend. These were Kotewa's first Auggie games, after playing his first two seasons at Bethany Lutheran