

Bethel's Zimmermann, UST duo headline 2014-15 MIAC Men's Basketball Awards

Posted: Mar 05, 2015

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. - The 2014-15 Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) men's basketball season has certainly been one to remember and, Thursday, the top performers that delivered highlight after highlight all season long were honored with the announcement of the 2015 MIAC Men's Basketball Awards.

The top individual honor went to Bethel senior star Kyle Zimmermann (Champlin, Minn./Champlin Park), as the league's leader in scoring and rebounding was named the conference's Joe Hutton Player-of-the-Year. The other two top individual honors were claimed by the University of St. Thomas, which claimed its 10th-straight MIAC title in 2014-15. Junior guard Cortez Tillman (St. Paul, Minn./Cretin-Derham Hall) was named the Sixth Man-of-the-Year, and fourth-year Head Coach John Tauer received his second MIAC Coach-of-the-Year award.



In addition to the individual honors, the MIAC also announced the All-Conference Team, All-Defensive Team, All-Rookie Team, All-Conference Honorable Mention selections and the All-MIAC Sportsmanship Team. All awards are nominated and voted on by the MIAC's 11 head coaches.

Zimmermann starred all season for the Royals en route to his Player-of-the-Year award. He's the second Bethel player to claim the conference's top honor in the last three years, joining Taylor Hall in 2012-13. The forward's MVP season is even more impressive considering he came back strong after appearing in only nine games in the previous season before suffering a season-ending injury. Zimmermann also received his second career All-MIAC honor after also receiving the award in 2012-13, and he was named a member of the MIAC All-Defensive Team. The senior received the MIAC Athlete-of-the-Week award an astounding four times during the 2014-15 regular season.



Bethel's Kyle Zimmermann (33) received the MIAC's top individual honor in 2014-15. (Photo by Matt Higgins, MIAC)

four seasons as head coach. He now has an overall record of 98-18 (.845) and a MIAC mark of 70-10 (.875) since taking over prior to the 2011-12 season. He could reach the 100-win mark this weekend if UST can win its first two NCAA Tournament games in De Pere, Wis. This season, Tauer coached four players to All-MIAC honors, two more to All-Conference Honorable Mention accolades and one All-Defensive Team selection.

Balance has again been a key for St. Thomas, with four players scoring in double figures and six averaging at least 8.7 points per game. The Tommies lead the MIAC in scoring (75.3 ppg), 3-point percentage (43.1), offensive rebounds (12.3 per game), rebounding margin (6.4) and are in the top four in nearly every category. In conference play, UST led the MIAC in every scoring and rebounding category as

This season, Zimmermann's name was all over the MIAC leader board, as he led the conference in scoring (17.6 ppg), rebounding (9.6 per game), field goal percentage (60.7) and was second in free throws (107) and third in steals (44) in overall games. In MIAC games only, he was also the league leader in scoring (16.8 ppg), rebounding (9.7 per game), second in field goal percentage (58.8) and free throws (75) and eighth in steals (29). Zimmermann helped Bethel to a 19-9 overall record and a 13-7 mark in conference play, which was good for fourth place and a spot in the MIAC Playoffs. In the conference postseason, Zimmermann had three double-doubles while leading Bethel to the championship game, where it lost a 66-63 heartbreaker to St. Thomas.

Tillman and Tauer both received their honors for their role in another amazing regular season for St. Thomas. UST claimed its 10th-straight MIAC title with a 17-3 conference record, and the team will open NCAA Division III Tournament play Friday with a 24-3 overall mark. St. Thomas added its fourth MIAC Playoff title in the last five years and is currently ranked No. 3 in the nation by D3hoops.com.

The MIAC honored Tillman as the league's top sixth man, as the talented guard was a testament to the Tommies' incredible depth. The junior averaged 9.9 points, 2.2 assists and 2.0 rebounds per game off the bench for UST, while shooting 49.7 percent from the floor, 47.6 percent from three and 81.0 percent from the line. He ranked fourth in the MIAC in three-point shooting and assist-to-turnover ratio (2.9-to-1), and he came up big in the postseason with 14 points in each of UST's two MIAC Playoff victories.

Tauer has now led St. Thomas to at least a share of the MIAC title in each of his

well as assists, and the team was second in 3-point percentage (41.0) and turnovers (8.8 per game).

Zimmermann was one of five players to earn a second career All-Conference honor in 2014-15. Concordia's Jordan Bolger, Hamline's Dior Ford, St. Olaf's Sterling Nielsen, St. Thomas Conner Nord and Bethel's Brycen Wojta were all repeat selections on the All-MIAC team. Nielsen also earned his second-straight All-Defensive Team honor and Bethel's Bridgeport Tusler was named to both the All-MIAC and All-Freshman teams.

St. Thomas was honored for its conference championship season with the most All-Conference selections, as four Tommies were recognized to lead the 16-player team. St. Olaf and Bethel each had three players honored, Saint John's had two and Concordia, Carleton, Hamline and Macalester had one apiece. The team was made up of six seniors, seven juniors, two sophomores and one freshman.

As part of a conference-wide sportsmanship initiative, the MIAC also announced the ninth annual All-MIAC Sportsmanship team for men's basketball. Members of the All-MIAC Sportsmanship team are selected by their coaches and teammates as individuals who demonstrate ideals of positive sportsmanship both on and off the field of competition.

2014-15 MIAC Men's Basketball Awards

Joe Hutton Player-of-the-Year - Kyle Zimmermann (Sr., Forward, Champlin, Minn./Champlin Park)

Sixth Man-of-the-Year - Cortez Tillman, St. Thomas (Jr., Guard, St. Paul, Minn. / Cretin-Derham Hall)

Coach-of-the-Year - John Tauer, St. Thomas (Fourth season)

2014-15 MIAC Men's Basketball All-Conference Team

<u>Name</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Hometown/Previous School</u>
Marcus Alipate	St. Thomas	Sr.	Guard	Bloomington, Minn. / Jefferson
Jordan Bolger	Concordia	Jr.	Forward	Apple Valley, Minn. / Eastview
Ben Figini	St. Olaf	Jr.	Forward	Chisago City, Minn. / Chisago Lakes
Dior Ford	Hamline	Sr.	Forward	Tucson, Ariz./Sahuaro
Kareem Ismail	Macalester	So.	Center	Pasadena, Calif. / Flintridge Prep
Mitchell Kuck	Saint John's	Jr.	Wing	Lino Lakes, Minn. / Centennial
Shane McSparron	Carleton	Sr.	Guard	Apple Valley, Minn. / Eastview
Taylor Montero	St. Thomas	Jr.	Guard	Brooklyn Park, Minn. / Cretin-Derham Hall
Sterling Nielsen	St. Olaf	Sr.	Guard	Sioux Falls, S.D. / O'Gorman
Conner Nord	St. Thomas	Sr.	Forward	Eden Prairie, Minn.
Justin Pahl	St. Olaf	Jr.	Guard	Woodbury, Minn. / East Ridge
Ryan Saarela	St. Thomas	Jr.	Forward	Lakeville, Minn. / North
Alex Schmitt	Saint John's	Jr.	Guard	Waconia, Minn.
Bridgeport Tusler	Bethel	Fr.	Guard	Maple Grove, Minn. / Osseo
Brycen Wojta	Bethel	So.	Guard	Maple Grove, Minn.
Kyle Zimmermann	Bethel	Sr.	Forward	Champlin, Minn. / Champlin Park

2014-15 MIAC Men's Basketball All-Defensive Team

<u>Name</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Hometown/Previous School</u>
Riley Aeikens	St. Olaf	Jr.	Guard	Maynard, Minn. / Maccray
Shane McSparron	Carleton	Sr.	Guard	Apple Valley, Minn. / Eastview
Sterling Nielsen	St. Olaf	Sr.	Guard	Sioux Falls, S.D. / O'Gorman
Ryan Saarela	St. Thomas	Jr.	Forward	Lakeville, Minn. / North
Kyle Zimmermann	Bethel	Sr.	Forward	Champlin, Minn. / Champlin Park

2014-15 MIAC Men's Basketball All-Freshman Team

<u>Name</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Hometown/Previous School</u>
Kevin Grow	Carleton	Fr.	Forward	Circle Pines, Minn. / Centennial
Collin Olmscheid	Augsburg	Fr.	Forward	Buffalo, Minn.
Zach Smith	Hamline	Fr.	Guard	Burnsville, Minn.
Bridgeport Tusler	Bethel	Fr.	Guard	Maple Grove, Minn. / Osseo
Tyler Weiss	Saint John's	Fr.	Forward	Shakopee, Minn.

2014-15 MIAC Men's Basketball All-Conference Honorable Mention

<u>Name</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Hometown/Previous School</u>
Riley Aeikens	St. Olaf	Jr.	Guard	Maynard, Minn. / Maccray
Gary Cooper	Gustavus	Jr.	Guard	Detroit, Mich. / Denby
Parker Hines	Augsburg	Sr.	Guard	Lakeville, Minn. / Minnehaha Academy
Austin Johnson	Hamline	Sr.	Forward	Pine Grove, Calif. / Amador
Collin Olmscheid	Augsburg	Fr.	Forward	Buffalo, Minn.
Joe Risinger	Saint John's	Jr.	Wing	Shorewood, Minn. / Minnetonka
Grant Shaeffer	St. Thomas	So.	Guard	Eden Prairie, Minn.
Cortez Tillman	St. Thomas	Jr.	Guard	St. Paul, Minn. / Cretin-Derham Hall
Brody Ziegler	Gustavus	Jr.	Forward	Mankato, Minn. / East

2014-15 Men's Basketball All-MIAC Sportsmanship Team

Augsburg - Ryan Gilmer (Jr., Bloomington, Minn. / Jefferson)
Bethel - Kyle Zimmermann (Sr., Champlin, Minn. / Champlin Park)
Carleton - Patrick England (Jr., Richfield, Minn. / Southwest)
Concordia - Ryan Rude (Sr., Bemidji, Minn.)
Gustavus - Chris Narum (Jr., Eagan, Minn. / Eastview)
Hamline - Herbert Tarpeh (Jr., St. Michael, Minn. / St. Michael Albertville)
Macalester - Hans Erickson (Sr., La Crosse, Wis. / Logan)
Saint John's - Mitch Wollin (Jr., Litchfield, Minn.)
Saint Mary's - Connor Kaiser (So., Rockland, Wis. / Bangor)
St. Olaf - Sam Daly (Sr., Rochester, Minn. / Lourdes)
St. Thomas - Cullen Ogren (Jr., Stillwater, Minn. / Hill-Murray)

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