

2010-11 MIAC Men's Basketball Season Preview

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ST. PAUL, Minn. – The top question entering the 2010-11 Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) men's basketball season is a familiar one. Can anyone beat the University of St. Thomas?

The Tommies enter the season as the favorite to capture their sixth-straight MIAC championship, which would be just the second time in conference history a men's basketball team has won that many consecutive titles (Hamline, 1946-53). Last year UST finished 23-4 overall and a near-perfect 19-1 in conference play, and this season 11 of its top 14 players return for head coach **Steve Fritz**, who enters his 31st season.

According to the MIAC coaches, expect history to repeat itself, as St. Thomas took the top spot in the 2010-11 MIAC Men's Basketball Preseason Coaches' Poll with nine first-place votes and 99 points. However, it wasn't unanimous as the conference coaches identified Saint John's University (one first-place vote, 85 points), defending MIAC Playoff champion Carleton College (one first-place vote, 79 points) and Gustavus Adolphus College (76 points) as the Tommies top challengers in 2010-11.

The coaches predict Augsburg College (60 points) and Concordia College (56 points) will also earn a spot in the MIAC Playoffs, while Saint Mary's University (41 points), St. Olaf College (40 points) should also be in contention for a bid to the postseason. Hamline University (33 points), Bethel University (25 points) and Macalester College (11 points) rounded out the poll.

However, heading into the MIAC season, what's not to like about St. Thomas. In addition to its five-straight titles, No. 11 national ranking and brand-new arena, the Tommies have a ton of talent back this season. MIAC Player-of-the-Year and All-American guard **Tyler Nicolai** is back for his senior season after averaging 14.1 ppg last year, and the Tommies are 76-10 in his previous three seasons. Sharpshooter **Alex Healy** joins Nicolai in the backcourt and senior **Teddy Archer** anchors the interior.

The Johnnies also return an strong nucleus, and will be led by their frontcourt in 2010-11 as they challenge the Tommies for MIAC supremacy. All-Region and All-MIAC selection **Aaron Burtzel** and fellow senior forward **Chris Schwartz** are four-year starters at SJU, and both could join the 1,000-point club this season. Guards **Andy Burns** and **Sam Blank** will bring balance to the Johnnies' line up and could key the team's improvement from last year's 14-12 (11-9 MIAC) finish.

Last spring, Carleton won the MIAC Playoffs and advanced to the NCAA Division III Playoffs, and it hopes that momentum can carry over into 2010-11. All-MIAC selections **Seth Jonker** and **Jeremy Sutherland** will ease the loss of **Bryan Rosett**, and four-year starter **Carter Biewen** provides long-range shooting from the guard position. The Knights hope last season's magical late-season run provides the foundation and experience for them to challenge UST for the MIAC title this year.

Gustavus is another team that enters the season with championship aspirations after tying for second a season ago with a 13-7 MIAC record. The Gusties' strength is in their backcourt, as senior guards **Dan Schmidtknecht** and **Phil Wirtjes** headline the team's seven returners. The return of star post player **Bobby Johnson** – who missed 2009-10 with a knee injury – also bolsters Gustavus' hopes heading into the season.

Under the direction of MIAC Coach-of-the-Year **Aaron Griess**, Augsburg tied for second in the MIAC last season and brings back an experienced frontcourt in 2010-11. **Andy Grzesiak-Grimm**, **Cory Polta** and **Brett Sorenson** will help the Auggies work from the inside out this season as they try to replace a pair of All-MIAC guards. Concordia's experienced frontcourt is also a big reason for optimism in Moorhead, as the Cobbers welcome back all five starters for the second-straight season. All-Region post **John Fraase** and Buffalo, Minn., natives **Darrin Olmscheid** and **Karl Olson** all return for Concordia.

Saint Mary's also returns everyone from its 2009-10 squad, including a pair of 1,000-point scorers and four-year starters. **Will Wright** and **Lukas Holland** were both named All-MIAC First Team last season and hope to close their stellar careers in a big way. St. Olaf is in a similar situation with two seniors, a bevy of gifted juniors and some talented additions leading the way. Junior guard **Bobby Fong** will be one of the teams top scoring options, along with **Nate Krosschell** and **Stu Neville** in the front court.

Senior **Carl Hipp** will be the focal point for an otherwise young team at Hamline. Hipp is among the school's all-time leaders in points, rebounds and blocked shots, and All-Rookie team selections **Jordan Schmidt** and **Noah Aguirre** hope to take a step forward this season. Bethel senior **Zach Hurd** returns to lead the Royals, along with **Daniel Baah** and **Greg Meyer**, and super sophomore **Pierce Peters** will be the key offensive player on an experience Macalester squad that also features four-year contributor **Colin Keeley**.

The 2010-11 regular season began in mid-November, and MIAC play opens Wednesday night with a slate of great games to start the conference season. The six-team MIAC Playoffs will be held Feb. 23, 25 and 27, with the championship game moving from Saturday night to Sunday afternoon this season.

The 2010-11 MIAC Men's Basketball Preview continues below, with complete results from the 2010-11 MIAC Men's Basketball Preseason Coaches' Poll as well as complete team previews for each of the conference's 11 teams.



2010-11 MIAC Men's Basketball Preseason Coaches' Poll

Coaches voted for every team in the conference except their own team. Points were assigned for each vote (10 for first, 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.

2010-11 MIAC Men's Basketball Preseason Coaches' Poll		
Rank	Institution	Total
1	St. Thomas (9)	99
2	Saint John's (1)	85
3	Carleton (1)	79
4	Gustavus	76
5	Augsburg	60
6	Concordia	56
7	Saint Mary's	41
8	St. Olaf	40
9	Hamline	33
10	Bethel	25
11	Macalester	11

2010-11 MIAC Men's Basketball Playoff Dates

Quarterfinals (Wednesday, Feb. 23), Semifinals (Friday, Feb. 25), Finals (Sunday, Feb. 27).

| [2010-11 MIAC Schedule](#) | [2009-10 MIAC Statistics](#) | [MIAC Recordbook](#) | [MIAC Archives](#) |



Augsburg

Coach: Aaron Griess

Career Record: 60-69 (5 seasons at Augsburg)

2009-10 Finish: Tied 2nd (13-7 MIAC, 19-8 overall)

Augsburg Season Preview

The Augsburg College men's basketball team, under the direction of MIAC Coach of the Year Aaron Griess, is coming off back-to-back trips to the MIAC playoff semifinals. The Auggies boast an improved record for the past five consecutive seasons, and are coming off their highest conference finish since the 1999-00 season.

A veteran frontcourt returns to anchor the Auggie lineup in 2010-11. Andy Grzesiak-Grimm (JR, Wyoming, Minn./St. Francis HS), Cory Polta (JR, Spring Lake Park, Minn.) and Brett Sorenson (JR, Lakeville, Minn./Lakeville South HS) were the top three rebounders for the Auggies a season ago, combining for 15.5 boards per-game. Polta and Grzesiak-Grimm were also a shot-blocking force for the Auggies, finishing second and fourth in the MIAC respectively in blocks per-game.

In addition to his rebounding presence, Sorenson was the Auggies top defender last season, leading the team in steals (32) and being named to the MIAC All-Defensive team. Sorenson also provides a nice touch for the Auggies from the outside, finishing second on the team in three-point field-goal percentage (.441).

At the guard position, Augsburg graduated All-MIAC players Jon Cassens and David Olson. Cassens and Olson both finished among the top players in program history, holding numerous statistical school records. Despite the loss, coach Griess has a talented group of players ready to step in.

Matthew Quammen (SR, Victoria, Minn./Holy Family HS) returns as the Auggies' leading sharpshooter. Quammen finished 33-of-70 from beyond the arc (.471) and 18-of-20 from the charity stripe (.900) last season. Anthony Humphrey (JR, Minneapolis, Minn./DeLaSalle HS) and Tyler Schmidt (SO, Le Sueur, Minn./Le Sueur-Henderson HS) also return for the Auggies at the guard position. Humphrey is a dynamic player who has the ability to shoot from outside or drive the lane and create his shot. Schmidt saw action in 13 games last year and will look to capitalize on that experience.

Newcomer Parker Hines (FY, Lakeville, Minn./Minnehaha Academy) is expected to fill the role of point guard for the Auggies this season while Andy Seidlitz (FY, New Hope, Minn./Robbinsdale Armstrong HS) and David Weber (FY, Plymouth, Minn./Robbinsdale Armstrong HS) will add depth at the guard position.

**Bethel****Coach:** Jeff Westlund**Career Record:** 65-40 (4 seasons at Bethel)**2009-10 Finish:** 9th (7-13 MIAC, 11-14 overall)**Bethel Season Preview**

The 2010-11 season is getting started, and the Royals are looking to make big improvements this year. Coming off a year in which the Royals faced significant adversity, which culminated in missing the conference playoffs for the first time in 12 years, the Royals look to rebound with a solid crew of returners.

The Royals 2010-11 season will be led by Zach Hurd, Daniel Baah, Greg Meyer, and Kellen Dahlquist. Hurd, the only senior in the group, is the team's lead guard. A great defender, Hurd does an excellent job at pulling the team together and bringing intensity to the group. He also adds value as a 3-point shooter. Daniel Baah is a returning starter from last season. Baah is a skilled shot maker, who has a combination of speed and quickness that match perfectly with his intuition for the game. Baah averaged just over 10 points per game last season. Greg Meyer will be a key scorer for the Royals, averaging 9.1 points per game last year, including 22 3-point field goals.

Kellen Dahlquist, a junior guard, will set the tone for the defense. Dahlquist's work ethic sets him apart, and it is apparent in his intensity and competitiveness as a rebounder and shooter, averaging 2.8 rebounds per game and 2.8 points per game a year ago.

These four key players will be joined by several key additions and newcomers. Eric Hildebrandt, a junior guard, will bring a sense of poise and intensity to the team along with a good shooting range that averaged a .467 shooting average a year ago. Both JD Robinson and Taylor Hall, who were injured a year ago, rejoin the team bringing a sense of intensity and instinct of the game. Robinson's strong shooting range averaged .688 percent in his limited playing time a year ago, while Hall averaged 8.6 points per game while only playing in 5 games. Elliot Risbrudt will also be a key addition for the Royals as a player that creates shots for others and brings leadership qualities to the floor.

**Carleton****Coach:** Guy Kalland**Career Record:** 364-302 (26 seasons)**2009-10 Finish:** 4th (12-8 MIAC, 19-10 overall)**Carleton Season Preview**

After a heady run through the conference's second half and then winning the MIAC Playoffs a year ago, Carleton returns looking to continue that success.

The main missing feature off last year's squad is Bryan Rosett '10, but All-MIAC picks Seth Jonker (Sr./Apple Valley, Minn./Eastview) and Jeremy Sutherland (Sr./Eagan, Minn./St. Bernard's) return. Sutherland led the Knights in scoring (14.6 ppg), assists (3.6 apg), and steals (1.4 spg) while also earning one of the five spots on the MIAC's all-defensive squad. Jonker, in his first year as a starter, averaged 14.2 points and 5.4 rebounds per game while shooting 55.7 percent from the floor.

In the backcourt, Carter Biewen (Sr./Golden Valley, Minn./Robbinsdale Armstrong) moves into his fourth year as a starter and has ranked in the conference's top five in three-point shooting accuracy each of the last two seasons. Tom Sawatzke (So./Monticello, Minn.) will start at the point-guard slot.

Scott Theisen (So./Champlain, Minn./Champlain Park) and Tyler Goetz (So./Chaska, Minn.) are both players that possess solid size and shooting. Rookie guard Danny Geiger (New Prague, Minn.), a three-time All-Missota pick who scored 1,500 points in his high-school career, should see significant action.

For the Knights, managing the anticipation of this season brought on by last year's success will perhaps serve as the season's major challenge.

"I think we'll need to handle the expectations by being mentally tough and mature and understanding how hard we had to work last season to get where we did," Kalland said. "If our defensive stats from last year aren't proof in the pudding of what we need to be doing, I don't know what is. I feel we have a mature senior class that wants to get a lot going and knows how hard we have to work to get there and what it takes."

**Concordia****Coach:** Rich Glas**Career Record:** 24-26 (2 seasons at Concordia)**2009-10 Finish:** 7th (9-11 MIAC, 13-12 overall)**Concordia Season Preview**

The 2010-11 Concordia men's basketball season has been circled on the calendar of many players and head coach Rich Glas as the "Year of Promise". The reason for the optimistic outlook is that for the second straight season, the Cobbers return their entire starting lineup. It gets even better for the 2010-11 squad as they return their top 10 scorers from last year's team that won their last five games and missed out on the MIAC playoffs by a single spot.

However, with the bright outlook of having so much experience back on the team, comes a dark side. The Cobbers have stumbled through multiple-game losing streaks in each of the past two seasons. The losing skids have cost them a chance at earning a spot in the conference playoffs and have left a bad taste in the mouth of the six seniors. In 2009-10 Concordia lost eight straight games in January which erased any playoff hopes. In 2008-09 it was a slide where they lost six of seven that led to their tournament demise.

The word of the year for Glas and his six seniors will be consistency. Concordia will need to get a consistent effort in every game and they will need to have the best players play at a consistently high level all season. In the five-game winning streak to close out last season, the Cobbers averaged 72.2 points per game, held their opponents to 61.4 points per contest and had 14 fewer turnovers. They also shot 48.8% from the floor and 36.8% from behind the arc. In the eight-game losing stretch that pushed CC to the bottom of the league standings, Concordia scored at an average of 61.4 points per game while their opponents were piling up an average of 73.2 points a game. They also committed 40 more turnovers during that stretch and shot 40.3% from the field and 34.5% from 3-point range.

The top returning player for the Cobbers in 2010-11 will senior All-Region post player John Fraase (Bismarck, N.D./Bismarck Century HS). Fraase has averaged double-digit points and rebounds the last two seasons and has posted 24 double-doubles in the past two years. Like the team, Fraase fits into the category of being counted on to play at a consistent level. When the Cobbers closed out the season with five wins, Fraase averaged 19.2 points, 12.4 rebounds, 14 shots per game and shot 52.9% from the field. In the eight-game losing skid in January he averaged 10.5 points, 9.0 rebounds, 11.3 shots per game and shot 44.9% from the floor. Fraase's work ethic and selfless team attitude will go a long way in helping this year's team keep an even keel and make a push for the top spots in the conference.

Another player that will look for consistency is senior forward Darrin Olmscheid (Buffalo, Minn.) who is one of the toughest match-ups for an opposing team of any player in the conference. Olmscheid averaged 13.3 points per game last year and led the team in scoring. He was second on the team in rebounds and was named to the MIAC All-Conference Honorable Mention Team. He scored in double figures in 18 games last season and had at least 20 points in five games. His ability to carry the offense single-handedly will be counted on when the rest of the team is struggling to find the basket.

Senior guard Karl Olson (Buffalo, Minn.) will lead the Cobber backcourt. He was third on the team in scoring last season, averaging 10.4 points per game and led the team in 3-point field goals and 3-point field goal percentage. Olson will have to hit shots from the outside on a consistent basis in order for opposing defenses to stop doubling Fraase in the post and rotating their wing players to stop Olmscheid.

One of the key factors for Concordia in 2010-11 other than being consistent will be finding a point guard that can get Fraase and Olmscheid the ball, avoid turnovers and be able to hit a shot from the outside on a more regular basis. The Cobbers did not have a player in the top 14 of the league in assists or assists-to-turnover ratio last year. CC's top assist person in 2009-10 was Fraase.

Junior Johnathon Molina (Dilworth, Minn./D-G-F HS) has shown flashes of being able to give defenses fits at the point. He scored at least seven points in eight different games last year and had at least one assist in all but four games. Molina will also need to be more consistent. In the team's five-game stretch to close out the year he averaged 5.4 points, shot 50.0% from the floor and turned the ball over only three times. In the eight-game losing skid, he averaged 2.5 points, shot 27.3% from the field and had at least two turnovers in three games. Battling Molina at the point will be sophomore Andrew Martinson (Chaska, Minn.). Last year he averaged 3.7 points per game and showed glimpses of his ability to shoot from the outside as he finished the year by shooting 53.7% from behind the arc.

Another key factor for Glas and the Cobbers will be their depth and scoring off the bench. Two players will also play important roles in CC's drive to the playoffs. Senior Erik Lien (Moorhead, Minn.) has battled through injuries and is another player that can take over a game with his athletic ability and scoring touch. Last year he was fourth on the team in scoring and had at least eight points in eight games. Sophomore Ebo Nana-Kweson (Coon Rapids, Minn.) has an explosive first step to the basket and he scored in double figures in three of the final six games in 2009-10. If he can continue his scoring threat in 2010-11 that will Glas another option to attack defenses when his big two players are having an off night.

If Concordia can play consistently throughout the entire 25-game schedule then a trip to the MIAC postseason and a legitimate run at the top of the league standings is not out of the reach of the team that is facing a year of promise.



Gustavus

Coach: Mark Hanson

Career Record: 387-164 (20 seasons)

2009-10 Finish: Tied 2nd (13-7 MIAC, 16-11 overall)

Gustavus Season Preview

Senior guards Dan Schmidtknecht and Phil Wirtjes will lead the 2010-11 Gustavus men's basketball team, which returns seven players from a squad that compiled a record of 16-11 overall and finished second in the regular season MIAC standings a year ago. In addition, the Gusties welcome back standout post Bobby Johnson, who missed all of last season with a knee injury. Gustavus narrowly missed an NCAA berth last year after falling to Carleton in the MIAC Playoff Championship 78-71 in overtime.

Schmidtknecht and Wirtjes will give the Gusties plenty of speed and shooting ability on the perimeter. Schmidtknecht led the MIAC in assist-to-turnover ratio last season at +2.81, while averaging 5.7 points per game. Wirtjes, an All-Conference honoree, led the MIAC in free throw percentage at 95.3 percent and ranked third in three-point field goal percentage at 46.9 percent. He averaged 9.7 points per game. Others expected to contribute on the perimeter include junior Seth Anderson (6.8 ppg, 2.9 rpg, 2.0 apg), junior Tyler Grey (6.3 ppg, 46.5 3-pt FG %), sophomore Ben Biewen (1.6 ppg), junior Adam Michel and sophomore Blake Shay.

In the frontcourt, junior Paul Blacklock (4.0 ppg, 5.5 rpg, 1.3 bpg) sophomores James Hill (3.2 ppg, 1.6 rpg) and Reed Sallstrom will see the bulk of playing time until junior Bobby Johnson joins the rotation in January. Blacklock, a 6-7, 200 pound post, finished fourth in the MIAC in blocked shots last season with an average of 1.05 per game. Johnson, a member of the MIAC All-Rookie Team in 2008-09, will be returning from a knee injury that caused him to miss all of last season. A 6-6, 240 pound post, Johnson averaged 6.5 points and 4.0 rebounds per game in his freshman season.



Hamline

Coach: Nelson Whitmore

Career Record: 32-44 (3 seasons at Hamline)

2009-10 Finish: Tied 5th (11-9 MIAC, 15-11 overall)

Hamline Season Preview

In his fourth season at the reigns of the Hamline men's basketball program, head coach Nelson Whitmore aims for the team's second straight MIAC tournament appearance. He'll do so with a young but experienced squad led by the team's lone senior – center Carl Hipp.

Missing from the 2009-10 playoff campaign will be Nick Carroll, Ray Brown, and Dan Anderson, but stepping up to fill their roles on the court will be a talented corps of returners. They will be joined by an impressive class of newcomers looking to make an immediate impact.

Hipp, a 2009-10 All-MIAC and All-Defensive team honoree, as well as an NABC All-District second team member, will look to continue his climb up the Hamline all-time lists as he ends his career. He enters the season 10th all-time in scoring (1,096 career points), third in rebounds (612), and is the school record holder for career blocked shots (188).

Last year, he led the Pipers in overall scoring with 17.7 points per game (16.9 ppg in MIAC play) and averaged 9.4 rebounds per game. He tallied 69 blocked and added 18 steals.

Familiar faces returning to the court who played key roles in last year's playoff run include a pair of returning juniors and four sophomores. Juniors Brandon Rieg (Riverside, Calif.) and Levi Wenrich (Newhall, Calif.) return to lead the team at point guard. Wenrich was third on the team in assists last year with 53.

On the receiving end of their passes will be sophomores Jordan Schmidt (Northbrook, Ill.) and Noah Aguirre (Fillmore, Calif.), two of the five players in the MIAC named to the All-First-Year Team for the 2009-10 season.

Schmidt and Aguirre were third and fourth on the team in scoring, respectively. Schmidt averaged 7.6 ppg overall and 6.9 ppg in MIAC play. He led the Pipers in assists with 70 total. Aguirre averaged 7.3 ppg overall and 6.9 in MIAC play. He averaged 3.2 rebounds per game and had 43 assists.

Also returning as part of a talented sophomore class are Christian Taber (Brooklyn Park, Minn.) and Andy Voigt (Cottage Grove, Minn.). With the absence of Brown on the court, they will join their classmates in picking up the scoring responsibilities.

Junior transfer twins Mike Campbell (Burnsville, Minn.) and Terry Campbell (Burnsville, Minn.) bring a level of maturity to the recruiting class. Mike is a terrific all-around scoring threat while Terry will add depth to the point guard position.

Four first-years in Josh Pratt (Roseville, Minn.), Sam Gullickson (Rosemount, Minn.), Tim Markoe (White Bear Lake, Minn.), and Tyler Pannell (Portland, Ore.) should step up early for Hamline. All four are athletic scoring threats and should allow for the Pipers to keep up the point production off the bench.

In their quest for their second straight playoff berth, this talented and athletic team will be faced with the challenge of playing 15 of their 25 games away from Hutton Arena this season. The road warriors will count on a strong team bond developed over a summer trip to Greece to help them mature quickly and play well off the bus.

Macalester



Coach: Tim Whittle

Career Record: 2-23 (1 season at Macalester)

2009-10 Finish: 11th (0-20 MIAC, 2-23 overall)

Macalester Season Preview

In the second year under head coach Tim Whittle, the Scots expect to put a superior product on the court during the 2010-11 campaign. A group of talented frosh will push for extended playing time and the veterans appear ready to continue their improvement.

"I am very excited about the start of the new season and year two at Macalester," says Coach Whittle. "As a team we made so much progress last year which did not show up in the final results. We competed and now know what the expectations are on and off the court including accountability and responsibility to our 'family' of teammates. With the influx of seven new faces into the mix added to ten returners we are prepared to take the next step."

Leading the way for the young Macalester squad is forward Pierce Peters (So., Glenwood, Minn. / Minnewaska Area), who was named to the five-member MIAC All-Newcomer squad last year and led the team in scoring with a 10.2 average. He also contributed 4.1 rebounds per game and shot 48% from the floor. Pierce led the team in blocked shots and was second in steals.

Through this year's first three games, Peters is averaging 22.0 points, 7.7 rebounds and 2.7 blocks per game while shooting at a 58% rate.

Also returning from last year's rotation are forward Colin Keeley (Sr., Kildeer, Ill. / Stevenson), guard Kyle Hamblett (Sr., Paris, France / American School of Paris), guard Holden Bigler-Johnson (Sr., Austin, Tex. / Anderson), center Andy Bowman (So., Perry, Kan. / Perry-Leocompton), guard Colin Jarvis (So., Madison, Wis. / West) and forward Patrick Piepkorn (Jr., Sauk Rapids, Minn. / Sauk Rapids-Rice).

Keeley, a four-year regular, was Macalester's co-scoring leader, along with Pierce, at 10.2 points per game, also topped the team with a 5.7 rebounding average. Hamblett chipped in with 8.1 ppg. and Bigler-Johnson averaged 5.8.

Newcomers could play a big role in the back court as Justin Wasik (Fy., Park Ridge, Ill. / Maine South) and Chris Quinn (Fy., Medford, Mass. / Beaver Country Day) begin their collegiate careers. Wasik starts his season with a 13.3 scoring mark through three games. Lamont Diggs (Fy., Fridley, Minn.) joins the front court.



Saint John's

Coach: Jim Smith

Career Record: 713-499 (46 seasons)

2009-10 Finish: Tied 5th (11-9 MIAC, 14-12 overall)

Saint John's Season Preview

The prospectus of the 2010-11 Saint John's University basketball team can be described in one word: experience. SJU returns six of its top eight scorers and a seasoned group of role players as the Johnnies seek to improve on last season's 14-12 record and fifth-place finish in the MIAC.

The six returners combine for 362 games played (242 starts), including a pair of four-year starters in seniors Aaron Burtzel (6-5, 210; Cold Spring, Minn./Rocori) and Chris Schwartz (6-4, 215; Sioux Falls, S.D./Lincoln). Both enter their senior campaigns within striking distance of 1,000 career points.

Head coach Jim Smith begins his 47th season with a 713-499 career record (.588) in 2010-11. College basketball's all-time wins leader in Minnesota, Smith became the 27th coach in NCAA men's basketball history to win 700 career games last season. He has led the Johnnies to seven MIAC titles, five MIAC playoff titles, nine trips to the NAIA tournament and eight trips to the NCAA Division III tournament.

Here's a preview of the Johnnies by position:

Backcourt:

A key returnee to the Johnnies' backcourt is junior point guard Andy Burns (6-0, 185; Shorewood, Minn./Minnetonka), who will begin his third season as the starting point guard. Burns started all but two games last season and averaged 29.1 minutes and 8.7 points per game. He finished second on the team in both assists (96) and steals (27), and led the MIAC (conference games only) in three-point shooting (.500, 34-68). He followed up his selection to the All-MIAC First-Year team with All-MIAC honorable mention honors last season. In August, Burns and Burtzel played for the USA Division III All-Star team in Brazil, under the direction of SJU assistant coaches Pat McKenzie and Jerry Fogarty. Burns averaged nine points per game, with a high of 15, while Burtzel averaged 8.8 points with a high of 19.

The 2009-10 MIAC Sixth Man of the Year, senior Sam Blank (6-2, 190; Rollingstone, Minn./Winona Cotter) is expected to take over as a full-time starter at the No. 2 wing this season. Blank played in all 26 games, averaging 10.1 points and 24.3 minutes per game last year. He led the Johnnies in scoring six times and tallied three 20-point games.

Junior Patrick Bowlin (6-2, 185; Winona, Minn./Cotter) is expected to vie for more playing time this season after serving as a role player in 21 games last winter. With Blank slotted to start, Bowlin will most likely serve as the sixth man off the bench this season. An Academic All-MIAC honoree last season, Bowlin proved his smarts and defensive ability last year, but will be relied on to contribute more offensively in 2010-11. That shouldn't be a problem, however, as Bowlin broke Winona Cotter's scoring record a year after Blank set it.

Although interchangeable between the two backcourt positions, sophomores Sam Dittberner (6-0, 175; New Prague, Minn.) and Nick Jordan (5-10, 160; St. Cloud, Minn./Tech), and freshmen Patrick Butcher (6-0, 180; Louisville, Ky./St. Xavier) and Kevin McKenzie (5-8, 150; De Pere, Wis./Notre Dame Academy) will likely compete for time behind Burns at the point. Look for sophomores Josh Hibbison (6-3, 185; Monticello, Minn.) and Chris Neumann (6-4, 200; Winsted, Minn./Holy Trinity), and freshmen Trevor Barth (6-1, 185; Roanoke, Texas/Nolan Catholic), Derek Gaab (6-3, 175; Sartell, Minn./Sartell-St. Stephen) and Jack Wittenborg (6-1, 175; Bloomington, Minn./Jefferson) to also provide depth in the backcourt.

Frontcourt:

A 2010 The Sporting News Preseason All-American, Burtzel is once again expected to lead the front court for the Johnnies. Burtzel was named to the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) Division III All-West Region second team and All-MIAC for the second consecutive year last season. He started all 26 games, averaging 35.6 minutes per game, and led the Johnnies in shooting percentage (.635, 132-208), assists (121), scoring (13.6 ppg.) and rebounds (9.1 rpg.). Burtzel led the MIAC (conference games only) in shooting percentage (.673, 107-159) and assists (4.85 apg.). He also finished second in rebounding (9.7) and minutes played (35.6), as well as third in steals (1.75). Burtzel recorded 11 double-doubles, including two triple-doubles in 2009-10. He enters this season with 295 assists, 72 behind assistant coach Matt Ohme's school record of 367. Burtzel also needs 211 points to reach 1,000 for his career.

Schwartz will also be a key returnee for the Johnnies. Last season, Schwartz battled injuries and played in 22 games, averaging 21.9 minutes and 6.2 points per game. He is currently tied for fifth in school history with 134 career three-pointers made and needs 194 points to join SJU's illustrious 1,000-point club.

Junior Aaron Barmore (6-5, 215; Bloomington, Minn./Jefferson) also returns after starting 25 games last season. He averaged 27.8 minutes and 8.3 points per game, and finished second on the team in both rebounding (3.4 rpg.) and shooting percentage (.560).

Sophomore Brett Torrence (6-4, 200; Maple Grove, Minn.) and freshmen Dominic Devine (6-5, 185; Litchfield, Minn.), Jack Ghizoni (6-2, 195; Savage, Minn./Burnsville), Luke Januschka (6-5, 185; St. Cloud, Minn./Cathedral), Seth Marx (6-4, 205; Maple Grove, Minn./Benilde-St. Margaret's) and Kyle Zimmermann (6-3, 205; Champlin, Minn./Champlin Park), will also compete for playing time at the forward/wing positions this winter.

Post:

In addition to the versatile Barmore and Burtzel, six-foot-nine senior Nermin Hujdurovic (Tuzla, Bosnia/Medical) is expected to see significant time at the post position this season. Hujdurovic played in all 26 games last season, averaging 11.2 minutes and 5.7 points per game. He also led the team in blocks with 15, and posted a .505 shooting percentage.

Six-foot-10 junior Garrett Bassett (Eagan, Minn.) is expected to add depth for a post position that has recently lacked height. He appeared in seven games last season, averaging 2.7 minutes and 1.3 points per game. Sophomore Chris Orgas (6-8, 250; Lakeville, Minn./North) and freshmen Tommy Boyd (6-4, 210; St. Paul, Minn./Minnehaha Academy), Andrew Good (6-8, 210; Mora, Minn.), Brandon Schaust (6-5, 205; Lester Prairie, Minn./Holy Trinity) and Travis Whiting (6-6, 215; Aurora, Minn./Mesabi East) will also compete for playing time.



Saint Mary's

Coach: Todd Landrum

Career Record: 16-34 (2 seasons at Saint

Mary's)

2009-10 Finish: 10th (7-13 MIAC, 9-16 overall)

Saint Mary's Season Preview

It isn't very often that a team goes from one year to the next without losing a single player.

But that is the exact situation that Saint Mary's University men's basketball coach Todd Landrum finds himself in this season — everyone is back from a Cardinals team that went 9-16 overall and 7-13 in the MIAC.

"Is returning everyone a good thing or a bad thing?" asked Landrum, whose Cardinals ranked No. 1 in the MIAC in free-throw percentage (318-for-414, 77%) a year ago. "Everyone has definitely improved, and once the games start, we'll see where we are at."

The Cardinals will be led by seniors Will Wright (Chicago, Ill.) and Lukas Holland (La Crosse, Wis.). Both eclipsed the 1,000-point mark last season and have been four-year starters.

"Those guys have really evolved into more than just great players," Landrum said of Wright and Holland. "They have become great leaders as well."

On the court, the Cardinal duo enjoyed a banner season a year ago — capped by both being named to the All-Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference First Team.

Wright, who closed out the season as the team's scoring leader (453 points, 18.1 ppg), currently ranks eighth in career scoring with 1,354 points. He enters his senior year 190 points behind No. 7 Ken Jansen, and 557 points behind all-time career leader Marvin Tunstall (1,911 points). Holland, meanwhile, scored 359 points last season (14.4 ppg) and ranks 22nd with 1,080 career points.

Helping Wright and Holland shoulder some of the load will be sophomore Chris Palmer (Faribault, Minn.), who averaged 14.4 ppg during a stellar freshman campaign that included being named to the MIAC All-First Year Team, as well as honorable-mention All-MIAC.

Gary Seifert (Prescott, Wis.), Michael Burfeind (Lewiston, Minn.) and Thomas Sims (Minneapolis, Minn.) are also back and expected to contribute solid minutes for SMU.



St. Olaf

Coach: Dan Kosmoski

Career Record: 161-225 (16 seasons)

2009-10 Finish: 8th (8-12 MIAC, 10-15 overall)

St. Olaf Season Preview

The St. Olaf men's basketball team will lean on a pair of seniors, a super junior class and an athletic group of first years as it attacks the 2010-11 season.

The Oles raced to a 6-4 start in MIAC play in 2009-10, but stumbled down the stretch and missed the playoffs. This season, behind the team's athleticism, St. Olaf is poised to make a run towards the top of the MIAC standings.

Guards

Senior Tucker Sheley will be asked to play a more vital role in his final season, as he has in each of the last two seasons. A solid, game managing guard, Sheley played in all 25 games last season and averaged 5.4 points while shooting 44.6 percent from the arc.

Junior shooting guard/small forward Bobby Fong will be asked to be one of the Oles primary leaders and is the team's most athletic and capable scorers. Fong, slowed by nagging injuries in each of the last two seasons, averaged around 12 points/game in each of his first two winters and is expected to be healthy and take on a more central role in 2010-11.

Junior Alfred Jaryan started 24 of 25 games at the point last season and should retain those duties this year. Jaryan had bursts of offense in his sophomore campaign, including a pair of 30-point efforts, but will likely be more of a distributor this season. Jaryan was steady with the basketball in 2009-10 with 69 assists against only 44 turnovers.

The Oles will also look to junior Mark Wieloch, who has 49 career games under his belt, and first years Nathan Kuck, Andrew Bestler and Michael Jenson.

Forwards

Senior Nate Krossschell, who suffered an injury in the early weeks of practice, will settle in at the power forward spot once healed in mid December or January. Krossschell started every game he appeared in in 2009-10, averaging 8.0 points and 6.0 rebounds a game.

In the meantime, first year Connor Gunderson is expected to take over. Gunderson was a two-time all-conference selection at Austin High School.

First year slashing forward Charlie Aslesen will also get plenty of opportunities to play at either of the front court spots.

Two other first years -- Waseca's Nick Hanson and Sam Daly of Rochester Lourdes -- could see some time at the forward spots.

Posts

In the middle, St. Olaf will lean on junior Stu Neville. An athletic post that can play on the perimeter as well, he moved into a starting role as a sophomore last season when he averaged 12.4 points and 6.1 rebounds a night.

The team could also look to physical 6-7 sophomore Andrew Sathoff or 6-5 first year Matthew Hultgren in the post.



St. Thomas

Coach: Steve Fritz

Career Record: 541-239 (30 seasons)

2009-10 Finish: 1st (19-1 MIAC, 23-4 overall)

St. Thomas Season Preview

The Tommies return 11 of their top 14 players from a 23-4, MIAC champion and NCAA playoff team. Coach Steve Fritz' team will attempt to win a sixth consecutive conference championship -- a feat only accomplished once previously (by the Hamline powerhouses who won seven in a row from 1946-53).

They are the first program in the last 35 seasons to win five MIAC titles in a row. Over the last five seasons, St. Thomas is a league-best 99-10 vs.conference foes (two losses in overtime, five others by five or less points).

St. Thomas will look to join a select group of Division III schools to win 1,500 games as it comes into the season with 1,488 victories since its first varsity games in 1904.

After playing all of their 2009-2010 games off campus, St. Thomas has a new home court inside the \$52 million, 180,000 square-foot Anderson Recreation and Athletic Complex. UST won its final 46 home conference games on campus at Schoenecker Arena and will look to continue a strong home-court advantage at the new Schoenecker.

One of the marquee matchups in the new AARC will come Dec. 22. Last year's NCAA champion UW-Stevens Point will come to campus for a non-conference game against the Tommies. The last St. Thomas men's on-campus basketball game was played back in March 2009 - UST's 53-50 NCAA playoff victory over Stevens Point.

The Tommies continue to carry a big target on their backs. UST and Washington (Mo.) share the best won-loss percentage in all of NCAA men's basketball over the last two seasons at .914 (53-5), with Chapman third among D-III teams at .889 (48-

6). Findlay (Ohio) leads all Division II teams at .896 (60-7), while the Kansas Jayhawks top Division I squads at .845 (60-11).

Coach Steve Fritz is back for his 31st season as head coach and is moving towards 600 career victories. He's only had only losing season in the first 30, and his overall record is 564-243 (.699), including a 446-148 mark (.750) in MIAC regular-season games. In 43 seasons here as a star player (1067-71), assistant coach (1971-80) and head coach (1980-present), he's been affiliated with 799 Tommie wins.

Fritz is probably the only basketball person in the world to work in three different permanent on-campus home venues as a college head coach. UST played in old O'Shaughnessy Hall gym is Fritz' first season as boss, in 1980-81; the Toms played in the old Schoenecker Arena from 1981-2009; and this year will open the new Schoenecker inside the AARC.

The Tommies won the conference with a 19-1 record but lost two close games in the postseason and finished 23-4. UST became the fourth men's team to reach 19 conference wins since the schedule expanded in 1984. (The Toms had 20-0 finishes in 1994-95 and 2008-09. Augsburg went 19-1 in 1998-99).

The Tommies graduated seniors Joe Scott, Sam Eicher and Josh Peltier. Scott was voted an NABC All-American and MIAC Player of the Year in 2008-09 after helping the Toms to a No. 1 national ranking for five weeks and 30-1 finish.

He surpassed 1,400 career points, including 289 as a freshman at UC-Colorado Springs. Scott made 191 treys in 85 games at UST, and 249 threes in 111 college games overall.

Construction of the new AARC forced the Tommies to play all 27 games off campus. The Tommies went 13-2 in road games last winter and will need that toughness as they play seven of their first nine games away from the AARC.

St. Thomas boasts one of the elite backcourts in Division III with senior Tyler Nicolai and Alex Healy. Nicolai was chosen an All-American and MIAC Player of the Year last season (14.1 ppg) and has helped UST post a 76-10 in his era, all starts (60-5 vs. MIAC foes). He has 960 career points, and made 173 threes while converting 43% from bonus range. When Nicolai scores seven or more points on his career, UST is 58-5.

Healy had 26 points and six assists in the season finale last March in the one-point loss to Anderson. He was named MIAC Player of the week on Feb. 22. UST is 12-2 since Healy joined the starting lineup last season, and UST is 26-2 on his career when he scores in double figures. He had a 2-to-1 assist/turnover ratio and is shot 48% from 3-point range last season.

Three Tommies will miss the early-season games -- senior forward Brady Ervin and sophomore forward Garrett Maloney is with the UST football game in its playoff run, while soph guard Noah Kaiser is injured. Ervin (shown at right) has been a key part of three UST football squads with a 28-5 record thus far and one that claimed the school's first 10-0 regular season in school history. He also was part of the Toms' 30-1 basketball team in 2008-09 -- the best record ever by an MIAC men's hoops team. His UST football and basketball teams have a with a combined 81-10 record in his three-year era, including a 31-1 record in on-campus games.

Fifth-year senior forward Teddy Archer of DeLaSalle returns as a defensive stopper. Senior Anders Halvorsen, junior Tommy Hannon and sophomore Josh Pedretti will play inside at center and forward. Junior Peter Leslie and sophomores Will DeBerg and John Nance will join Kaiser and Ervin off the bench.

Newcomers include Zach Riedeman of Forest Lake, who turned down a football scholarship to play football and hoops with the Tommies. He was injured at the start of football last fall here and redshirted. Other new faces who could contribute are 6-4 forward Josh Pella of Champlin Park and 6-1 guard Erik Tengwall of New London-Spicer.

St. Thomas is 44-2 against MIAC foes since February 2008. The Tommies had an 18-game road win streak and 33-game regular-season win streak end with a December 2009 loss at UW-Stevens Point, the eventual NCAA champions. St. Thomas went 28-2 during the 2009 calendar year and has victories in 56 of its last 63 games. In 2008-09 the Toms became the first school to sweep the conference regular-season and playoff titles in men's basketball four years in a row.

St. Thomas has made a conference-high 19 postseason trips and has 1,488 wins in its 100-plus year varsity history. That includes 11 NCAA playoff berths (seven in the last 11 seasons) and eight trips to Kansas City for the NAIA National Tournament from 1949-1974. St. Thomas has a league-best 23 MIAC playoff appearances in the 26-history of the format. UST has won nine MIAC playoff championships and took second six times, and its 25-13 all-time conference playoff mark includes a 21-7 home record.

St. Thomas is ranked 13th in the 2010-11 preseason poll by D3Hoops.com. The Toms were ranked in the top 10 by D3Hoops.com for 28 consecutive polls before last March... Last season, they were tabbed fourth in the preseason poll, and moved as high as No. 2 in the Dec. 15 poll. On January 26, 2009, St. Thomas became the first Minnesota team to receive the No. 1 ranking in the then-11-year history of the d3hoops.com polls. UST stayed there for seven weeks before losing to eventual champion Washington (Mo.) in the national quarterfinals.