

2015-16 MIAC Men's Basketball Preview and Preseason Coaches' Poll

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2015-16 MIAC Men's Basketball Season Preview

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. -- The 2015-16 Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) men's basketball season is about to tip off and, while the conference typically features strong teams at the top and remarkable depth throughout, this season certainly could be one of the most competitive and memorable to date.

A year ago, the University of St. Thomas (24-4, 17-3 MIAC) continued its decade-long reign atop the MIAC standings, as Head Coach John Tauer and the Tommies won their 10th-straight MIAC title. The championship was also the 30th overall for UST, which is 11 more than any other conference program. This year, St. Thomas will try for title No. 11 and they enter ranked No. 4 in the nation by D3hoops.com, but the field of contenders aiming for their spot at the top is both deep and dangerous.

St. Olaf (23-6, 16-4 MIAC) brings back a ton of talent from its team that made a memorable run to the NCAA Division III Sweet Sixteen a year ago after challenging the Tommies for the MIAC title into the season's final week. The Oles are also ranked at No. 15 in the nation, as the team aims for a third-straight trip to the NCAA tournament. Bethel (19-9, 13-7 MIAC) also returns with ideas of contending after reaching the MIAC Playoff championship game, where it saw a last-second game-tying shot rim out at the buzzer as St. Thomas added the Playoff title to its regular-season crown. The Royals are receiving votes in the D3hoops.com preseason poll.

Saint John's (16-10, 14-6 MIAC) enters a new era, as Head Coach Jim Smith retired after 51 seasons on the Johnnies' bench, but new Head Coach Pat McKenzie has plenty to build on with most of SJU's talent back in Collegeville and contention for the conference championship firmly in their sights. Gustavus (16-11, 11-9 MIAC) and Concordia (15-11, 11-9 MIAC) shared fifth place last season and each team also brings back plenty of talent to have them eyeing a return to the MIAC Playoffs or more.

A trio of teams - Augsburg (11-14, 8-12 MIAC), Carleton (11-14, 8-12 MIAC), and Hamline (11-14, 8-12 MIAC) - shared seventh place in the conference standings and just missed out on a trip to the MIAC postseason tournament, and all three have high hopes of earning a Playoff bid in 2015-16. Meanwhile Macalester (6-19, 3-17 MIAC) and Saint Mary's (4-21, 1-19 MIAC) enter the new season with high hopes to continue their improvement and ascend upward in the conference standings.

This season is certainly shaping up as one to remember in the MIAC. The Tommies' quest for an 11th-straight title is littered with veteran, proven contenders. There are 10 All-Conference players all back to give the MIAC some serious star power. Also, if last year's MIAC Playoffs were any indication, games could routinely come down to the final buzzer, as the semifinals and championship included one overtime game, two that came down to the final shot, and all three were decided by eight points or less. If that's going to be the case again in 2015-16, tip off can't come soon enough.

TOMMIES TOP COACHES' POLL

The MIAC head coaches all predict that the Tommies' quest for title No. 11 in a row will be successful, as the team was a unanimous choice atop the 2015-16 MIAC Men's Basketball Preseason Coaches' Poll. St. Thomas received 10 first-place votes and 100 points in a system where coaches are not allowed to vote for their own teams.

However, the coaches' votes definitely reveal both the parity at the top, and the top contenders to end UST's streak. Saint John's received 84 points to finish second in the poll, while St. Olaf was just two points behind the Johnnies in third with 82 points and the other first-place vote. The fourth- and fifth-place teams were also neck-and-neck, as Bethel received 73 points to finish fourth, with Gustavus close behind in fifth place.

Concordia received 51 points to finish sixth in the poll, which would put the Cobbers into the final MIAC Playoff bid. However, the coaches also expect Augsburg (44) and Carleton (42) to challenge for a postseason spot as well. Hamline (26) edged Macalester (22) for ninth place with Saint Mary's (10) rounding out the final spot in the preseason predictions.

PLAYERS TO WATCH

St. Thomas' quest for another MIAC title is bolstered by the return of three talented upper-classmen who are ready to lead another typically-balanced Tommie team. Senior forward Ryan Saarela and senior guard Taylor Montero were both All-MIAC selections a year ago, and junior guard Grant Shaeffer is allso back after earning Honorable Mention honors.

McKenzie's transition to head coach will certain be eased by the stars that Saint John's welcomes back in the backcourt. Seniors Mitchell Kuck and Alex Schmitt both earned All-MIAC honors last season while both averaging more than 15 points per game, and fellow senior Joe Risinger was an Honorable Mention pick who also scored in double figures to give SJU a strong, veteran-laden team this season.



St. Olaf brings back most of its key players from last year's Sweet 16 run minus All-MIAC guard Sterling Nielsen. However, All-MIAC center Ben Figini and his 16.9 points per game return to give the Oles a dominant presence inside, and seniors Justin Pahl (All-MIAC) and Riley Aeikens (All-Defensive Team) will certainly help ease the loss of Nielsen in the backcourt as St. Olaf aims for a MIAC title and more postseason success.

Bethel likely has the biggest hole to fill following the graduation of MIAC Player-of-the-Year Kyle Zimmerman, but Head Coach Doug Novak's team has all its other key pieces back after last year's run to the MIAC Playoff title game. Two-time All-MIAC guard Brycen Wojta and fellow All-Conference guard Bridgeport Tusler give the Royals one of the MIAC's best guard tandems, and forward Kyle von Schmidt-Pauli also returns to help fill in some of Zimmerman's numbers up front.

Gustavus nearly had a spot in the MIAC Playoff title game as well a year ago, falling to St. Thomas in overtime after the Tommies tied the game with a buzzer beater to end regulation. The good news is the postseason experience should benefit a Gustie team that brings back a strong, balanced roster. Guard Gary Cooper and post Brody Ziegler were both All-MIAC Honorable Mention picks a year ago and appear to be headed for big senior seasons, and fellow senior Sergio Najera gives the team another talented player in the paint.

Concordia hopes for another trip to the postseason and expectations are high in Moorhead behind a talented senior trio. Two-time All-MIAC Jordan Bolger is back for his final season, and teammates Tom Fraase and Brady Syverson also return to lead the Cobbers. Augsburg has some questions in the backcourt after the graduation of Parker Hines, but the Auggies have a solid front line behind the forward trio of Collin Olmscheid, Brett Rasmussen and Joe Zangel.

Carleton graduated All-MIAC and All-Defensive Team pick Shane McSparron from the backcourt, but the Knights have a young core they're excited to build around. Forward Kevin Grow is back after earning West Region Rookie-of-the-Year honors, and he's joined by juniors Tianen Chen and Mitchell Biewen. Hamline also has big shoes to fill after the graduation of All-MIAC forward Dior Ford, but a backcourt tandem of sophomores Zach Smith and Quinton Garvis and junior Dylan See-Rockers have the Hutton Arena faithful about the Pipers' progress.

Macalester hopes to continue improving, with that hope fueled by a strong returning duo. Center Kareem Ismail earned All-MIAC honors a season ago, and he'll team up with guard Dylan Kilgour to lead the Scots again this season. Saint Mary's also has its sights set on upward movement in 2015-16 with all of its key players back, led by a strong front line of forwards that includes Will Swiggum, Wylie Ferron and Mark Schumacher.

CIRCLE THESE DATES

The good news for fans is that tip off for the 2015-16 MIAC men's basketball season isn't far off. The season officially tips off on Friday, Nov. 13, with three teams - Saint Mary's, St. Olaf and Macalester - all in action. Gustavus, St. Thomas, Bethel and Concordia all open their season the following day, with the rest of the MIAC's teams to follow over the course of the next week.

Teams will all open with nonconference action throughout November, with MIAC play set to start on Wednesday, Dec. 2. Most teams will play four MIAC games over December's first two weeks, before the conference season hits pause for the semester and Holiday break. MIAC play will be back to start the new year on Friday, Jan. 2, and will run through the final day of the regular season, Saturday, Feb. 20. The MIAC Playoffs will follow for the top six teams on Feb. 24, 26, and 28, and the winner will receive a bid to the NCAA Tournament.

A CLOSER LOOK

The rest of the 2015-16 MIAC Men's Basketball Preview contains complete results from the 2015-16 Preseason Coaches' Poll, MIAC Playoff details, helpful links and a preview for each team submitted by their sports information director. The MIAC web site - www.miacathletics.com - will be an outstanding source for MIAC men's basketball news, schedules, scores, stats and more throughout the 2015-16 season.

Visit the [MIAC scoreboard](#) on game days to follow all the action, and download the [MIAC mobile app](#) to have all the information with you anywhere you travel. Also, connect to the conference on its [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#) pages for updates and interaction all season long.

2015-16 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.

2015-16 MIAC Men's Basketball Preseason Coaches' Poll		
Rank	Institution	Total
1	St. Thomas (10)	100
2	Saint John's	84
3	St. Olaf (1)	82
4	Bethel	73
5	Gustavus	71
6	Concordia	51
7	Augsburg	44

8	Carleton	42
9	Hamline	26
10	Macalester	22
11	Saint Mary's	10

2016 MIAC Men's Basketball Playoffs

The 2016 MIAC Playoffs will feature the top six teams in the conference standings playing in a high-seed-host, single-elimination postseason tournament. The two top seeds will receive a bye to the semifinal round, while the No. 3 seed will host the No. 6 seed, and the No. 4 seed will host the No. 5 seeds during the quarterfinals, which will be held Wednesday, Feb. 24. The top remaining seed will play at the No. 2 seed and the lowest remaining seed will play at the No. 1 seed during the semifinals, which are scheduled for Friday, Feb. 26. The championship game is set for Sunday, Feb. 28, with the two semifinal winners meeting on home court of the top remaining seed. The winner will receive the MIAC's automatic bid to the 2016 NCAA Division III Men's Basketball Tournament.

| [2016 MIAC Men's Basketball Playoffs Home Page](#) |

MIAC Men's Basketball Links

| [Website](#) | [Standings](#) | [Schedule](#) | [Statistics](#) | [News](#) | [Recordbook](#) | [Archives](#) |

Team-by-Team Previews

| [AUG](#) | [BU](#) | [CAR](#) | [CON](#) | [GAC](#) | [HU](#) | [MAC](#) | [SJU](#) | [SMU](#) | [STO](#) | [UST](#) |



AUGSBURG | [Auggies' men's basketball home page](#) |

Head coach

- Aaron Griess (11th season)

A Year Ago

- 8-12 MIAC (t-7th place) | 11-14 overall

Top Returners

- Collin Olmscheid (F, So. | Returning leading scorer, averaged 12.3 points and 5.0 rebounds per-game in 2014-15. Earned All-MIAC First Year and MIAC honorable mention honors)
- Brett Rasmussen (F, Jr. | Averaged 8.4 points and 3.9 rebounds per-game in 2014-15. Earned All-MIAC First Year honors and was named the D3hoops.com West Region Rookie of the Year in 2013)
- Joe Zangel (F, Sr. | Averaged 8.8 points and 3.8 rebounds per-game in 2014-15. Led the team in field-goal percentage (56.3) and offensive rebounds (40). In the last eight games of 2014-15, Zangel averaged 14.9 points and 4.9 rebounds per-game.)

Key Losses

- Parker Hines (G | 3x MIAC honorable mention honoree. Led the team in scoring in with a 12.9 points per-game average, while averaging 4.6 rebounds per-game. Led the team in assists (129), steals (31) and blocked shots (12). Finished tied for first in school history with 473 career assists.)

By the Numbers

- 5: Augsburg has made the MIAC Playoffs in five of the last seven seasons under the direction of Head Coach Aaron Griess, including making Championship game in 2012-13.
- 447: The number of free throws shot by the Auggies a year ago. Augsburg converted on 71.8 percent of its free throw attempts, good for fourth in the MIAC both in attempts and percentage.
- 701 - The number of minutes played last season by senior Ryan Gilmer (28.0 minutes per-game average). In addition to leading the Auggies in minutes played, Gilmer was also named to the MIAC All-Sportsmanship team in 2014-15.

Did You Know?

- Augsburg honored the 1964-65 and the 1983-84 and 1984-85 MIAC championship teams during Homecoming this fall. The 1964-65 team was coached by Ernie Anderson and finished with a 23-7 overall mark and a 13-3 record in conference play. The 1983-84 and 1984-85 teams were both coached by Dave Boots and finished with a combined record of 40-14 overall and 35-5 in conference play.

Off the Court

- 2015 Augsburg graduate Parker Hines, who battles Crohn's Disease, is an incredible advocate for the cause. An event Hines organized in 2015 for Crohn's Awareness raised more that \$3,000, plus an additional \$3,000 in online donations.

BETHEL | [Royals' men's basketball home page](#) |

**Head coach**

- Doug Novak (3rd season)

A Year Ago

- 13-7 MIAC (4th place) | 19-9 Overall

In the 2014 Postseason

- 71-53 win over Concordia (MIAC Quarterfinals)
- 75-67 win at #18 St. Olaf (MIAC Semifinals)

- 63-66 loss at #6 St. Thomas (MIAC Championship)

Top Returners

- Brycen Wojta (G, Jr. | Two-time MIAC All-Conference, 2014 All-Rookie-Team, 14.7 PPG, 3.2 APG, 2.7 RPG, .465 FG%, .813 FT%, 35.4 Min./G)
- Bridgeport Tusler (G, So. | 2015 MIAC All-Conference, 2015 MIAC All-Rookie-Team, 13.4 PPG, 3.7 RPG, 2.7 APG, 2.0 SPG, .458 FG%, 29.3 Min./G)
- Kyle von Schmidt-Pauli (F, Sr. | 8.6 PPG, 3.9 RPG, 0.9 APG, .465 FG%, .447 3PT%, 26.7 Min./G)

Key Losses

- Kyle Zimmermann (Forward | 2015 NABC First Team All-American, 2015 D3hoops.com Third Team All-American, 2015 NABC First Team All-Region, 2015 D3hoops.com First Team All-Region, 2015 MIAC Player of the Year, 2015 MIAC All-Defensive Team)
- Jared Kidder (Forward)
- Tommy Boyd (Forward)

By the Numbers

- 14: Last year's postseason appearance marked the 14th time in the last 16 years that the Royals have reached the MIAC Playoffs. Only two other teams across the league have accomplished this feat in that time frame.
- 122: The Royals swatted 122 blocks throughout the 2014-15 season, which ranked No. 21 nationwide and No. 1 across the conference. 2015 MIAC Player of the Year, Kyle Zimmermann, led the team and the league with 55 total blocks.
- 35: Bethel has won 35 games in the Robertson Center Gym over the past four seasons, which has resulted in a .700 winning percentage during that stretch. The Royals reached double-digit home wins in both 2014-15 and 2012-13.

Did You Know?

- Bethel has had two freshman in the past two years recognized to the MIAC All-Conference Team. Brycen Wojta and Bridgeport Tusler are the only two league-wide to earn this award as freshman since 2005 and the second and third since 1995-96.

Off the Court

- Four members of the Bethel University men's basketball team were honored with MIAC Academic All-Conference awards last spring for their success on the court and in the classroom. To be eligible, student-athletes have to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher and play in over 50 percent of the games. Those honored were Jared Nelson, Kyle von Schmidt-Pauli, Brycen Wojta, and Kyle Zimmermann.

**CARLETON** | [Knights' men's basketball home page](#) |**Head coach**

- Guy Kalland (32nd Season)

A Year Ago

- 8-12 MIAC (8th place) | 11-14 Overall

Top Returners

- Kevin Grow (F, So. | D3hoops.com West Region Rookie of the Year; Named to All-MIAC First Year Team; 9.4PPG; 8.6RPG; 2.16BPG)
- Tianen Chen (F, Jr. | 11.0 PPG; 3.5RPG)
- Mitchell Biewen (G, Jr. | Led the Knights in Minutes played a season ago; 8.8PPG; Led the Knights in steals)

Key Losses

- Shane McSparron (G | All-MIAC; Named to All-MIAC Defensive Team; 12.9PPG)

By the Numbers

- 5.9: The Knights outrebounded their opponents by an average of 5.9 rebounds each game
- 12.76: Due to their strong inside play, the Knights only took 12.76 three pointers per game, the second lowest number in the conference
- 41.9: The Knights held their opponents to only 41.9% shooting from the field, the lowest opponent field goal percentage in the conference.

Did You Know?

- Head Coach Guy Kalland is the winningest coach in Carleton Men's Basketball History with 425 wins.

Off the Court

- The Knights earned an NABC Academic Excellence award last season, with two members of the Knights being named to the honors court, those two being John Eckert and Patrick England.



CONCORDIA | [Cobbers' men's basketball home page](#) |

Head coach

- Rich Glas (8th season)

A Year Ago

- 11-9 MIAC (5th place) | 15-11 Overall

In the 2014 Postseason

- Lost to Bethel 71-53 in MIAC quarterfinal

Top Returners

- Jordan Bolger (Sr., F | 2-time All-MIAC in '14 and '15, Averaged 15.4 PPG and 8.8 RPG in MIAC play in 2015)
- Tom Fraase (Sr., G | Averaged 9.7 PPG in '15)
- Brady Syverson (Sr., C | Averaged 7.8 PPG and 4.4 RPG in '15)

Key Losses

- Brandon Giese (G | Averaged 12 PPG in 2014-15)
- Ryan Rude (PG/G | All-MIAC Sportsmanship Team, Averaged 3.9 PPG, 2.9 RPG and 2.5 APG in '15)
- Scott Flotterud (C | Averaged 5.2 PPG and 4.2 RPG in '15)

By the Numbers

- 8: Concordia has eight seniors on this year's roster.
- 2: The Cobbers have made the MIAC tournament twice in the last three seasons.

Did You Know?

- Jordan Bolger participated on Team USA's Division III Team in their tour of Brazil in July of this past summer.

Off the Court

- The Concordia Men's Basketball Team has several members involved in the Concordia SAAC (Student Athlete Advisory Committee). Concordia SAAC volunteers heavily in the Fargo-Moorhead area and hosts events on campus for students at athletic competitions.



GUSTAVUS | [Gusties' men's basketball home page](#) |

Head coach

- Mark Hanson (26th season)

A Year Ago

- 11-9 MIAC (6th place) | 16-11 Overall

In the 2014 Postseason

- The Gusties entered the MIAC Playoffs as the No. 6 seed and traveled to No. 3 Saint John's for a quarterfinal matchup. The Gusties won 64-54 as Gary Cooper led the way with 16 points and the team shot 53.3-percent from the field. Gustavus then faced No. 1 St. Thomas in the semifinals and took the Tommies into overtime, but lost 83-79.

Top Returners

- Gary Cooper (Guard, Sr. | 2014-15 MIAC Honorable Mention ... 27 games played and started in 2014-15 ... 11.2 points per game528 FG percentage233 3-pt FG percentage729 FT percentage ... 3.7 rebounds per game ... 62 assists ... 10 blocks ... 39 steals)
- Brody Ziegler (Post, Sr. | 2014-15 MIAC Honorable Mention ... 27 games played and started in 2014-15 ... 8.6 points per game527 FG percentage565 FT percentage ... 5.2 rebounds per game ... 32 assists ... 23 blocks ... 22 steals)
- Sergio Najera (Post, Sr. | 27 games played, 21 started in 2014-15 ... 8.3 points per game443 FG percentage815 FT percentage ... 3.1 rebounds per game ... 30 assists ... 24 blocks ... 11 steals)

Key Losses

- Isaac Tapp (Guard | 27 games played and started in 2014-15 ... 8.5 points per game455 FG percentage317 3-pt FG percentage788 FT percentage ... 1.7 rebounds per game ... 44 assists ... 6 blocks ... 21 steals)
- Martin Feddersen (Post | 27 games played and started in 2014-15 ... 6.7 points per game574 FG percentage821 FT percentage ... 5.4 rebounds per game ... 84 assists ... 34 steals)

By the Numbers

- 48.5: Gusties shooting percentage from the field last season, which ranked second in the MIAC
- 5: Points shy of upsetting No. 1 seed St. Thomas in overtime in the MIAC Semifinals last year
- 3: Gustie starters returning for the 2015-16 season

Did You Know?

- The Gusties will travel to Puerto Rico over Christmas break for a training trip. They will play against Vassar College and SUNY Oneonta.



HAMLIN | [Pipers' men's basketball home page](#) |

Head coach

- Jim Hayes (3rd season)

A Year Ago

- 8-12 MIAC (Tie-7th place) | 011-14 Overall

Top Returners

- Zach Smith (G, So. 8.4 ppg, led MIAC FT shooters with 92% total in conf. Games, Member, All-Freshmen team)
- Dylan See-Rockers (G, Jr., 7.3 ppg, scored 16 pts. In win over Augsburg)
- Quinton Garvis (G, So. 6.6 ppg, led HU in 3 point shooting percentage at 42,1)u with 42%Hu with 42% 3 pt shooting percentage)

Key Losses

- Dior Ford (G, All-MIAC choice, 14.0 ppg, 1000+ career point scorer)
- Austin Johnson (F, 11.0 ppg, .546 career FG percentage – third best in school history)
- Bennett Cooper (F, 6.1 ppg, 3.9 rpg)

By the Numbers

- 2: Number of wins the Pipers improved from the 2013-14 season. It is the second straight season the Pipers have increased their total of wins from the year before by two.
- 3: Number of wins the Pipers had over 2014-15 MIAC playoff participants
- 11: number of first or second year players on last year's team

Did You Know?

- HU head coach Jim Hayes was recently inducted into the school's Athletic Hall of Fame. Jim, who graduated in 1994, is fourth all-time rebounds in school history and is one of just a dozen HU players to score more than 1,000 points in his career.

Off the Court

- Bennett Cooper was named to the MIAC All-Academic team

MACALESTER | [Scots' men's basketball home page](#) |



Head coach

- Tim Whittle (7th season)

A Year Ago

- 3-17 MIAC (10th place) | 6-19 Overall

Top Returners

- Kareem Ismail (C, JR | 2014-15 All-MIAC, 13.9 ppg, 7.4 rpg)
- Dylan Kilgour (G, SR | 12.0 ppg, 2.2 apg, 51 3PTFG)

Key Losses

- Bert Yaffe (G | 25 starts, 7.2 ppg, .491 3PTFG%, captain)
- Hans Erickson (G | 25 starts, captain, MIAC Sportsmanship)

By the Numbers

- 17: Rebounds by Kareem Ismail in the Scots' 66-61 win at Martin Luther in OT
- 9: First year players on this year's roster
- 10: Number of states represented on this year's roster

Did You Know?

- The Scots are starting the 2015-16 season with two games in Oregon.

Off the Court

- Kareem Ismail spent the summer doing an internship at the University of Arizona with Macalester alumnus Ray Runyan '72, who is a professor of cellular and molecular medicine.

SAINT JOHN'S | [Johnnies' men's basketball home page](#) |



Head coach

- Pat McKenzie (First season)

A Year Ago

- 14-6 MIAC (Third place) | 16-10 Overall

In the 2015 Postseason

- MIAC postseason results (Quarterfinals – lost to Gustavus, 54-64)

Top Returners

- Mitchell Kuck (W, Sr. | 2014-15 All-MIAC...started all 26 games for the Johnnies...was SJU's second leading scorer in 2014-15 with 15.4 points per game...shot 46.2 percent from the field and 40.2 percent from three-point range...led the team with 74 assists and 41 steals...tallied seven 20-point games)
- Joe Risinger (W, Sr. | 2014-15 All-MIAC honorable mention...started 25 games for the Johnnies...led the team with 31.9 minutes played per game...finished third on the team with 10.9 points per game...shot 44.7 percent from the field)
- Alex Schmitt (G, Sr. | 2014-15 All-MIAC...led SJU with 16.0 points per game...started 25 games...shot 46.8 percent from the field, including 38.5 percent from three-point range, and 86.2 percent from the free throw line...tallied seven 20-point games)

Key Losses

- Jacob Peterson (P | Made one start and appeared in all 26 games for SJU...finished second on the team with 4.6 rebounds per game)
- Blake Maslonkowski (P | Started all 26 games for SJU...led the team with 7.0 rebounds per game...shot 52.6 percent from the field and 80.0 percent from the free throw line.

By the Numbers

- 58.5%: The Johnnies return their three top scorers from last season in Schmitt (16.0 ppg.), Kuck (15.4 ppg.) and Risinger (10.9 ppg.). The trio accounted for 58.5 percent of the team's scoring in 2014-15.
- 1,000 x 2: Kuck and Schmitt begin the 2015-16 season 168 and 187 points away, respectively, from 1,000 for their respective SJU careers. The last time two Johnnies eclipsed 1,000 career points in the same season was Mike Nester ('02) and Luke Witt ('02) in 2001-02.
- 51: The 2015-16 season is the first for SJU since the spring of 1964 in which its head coach was not named Jim Smith. The legendary coach retired at the end of last season and passed the torch to his assistant coach and former student-athlete, Pat McKenzie '04. McKenzie served nine years as an assistant under the direction of Smith.

Did You Know?

- The Johnnies are expected to return 84.3 percent (1,584 of 1,878 points) of their scoring from last season.

Off the Court

- Five Saint John's basketball student-athletes were named to the 2014-15 National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) Honors Court. To be eligible for the distinction, student-athletes must be a junior or senior academically, a varsity player during the 2014-15 season, boast a 3.2 GPA or higher at the conclusion of the academic year, and have spent at least one full year at the current institution.

SAINT MARY'S | [Cardinals' men's basketball home page](#) |



Head coach

- Jamison Rusthoven (3rd season)

A Year Ago

- 1-19 MIAC (11th) | 4-21 Overall

Top Returners

- Will Swiggum (6-5, 180, Sr., F | 25 GP, 10.4 ppg, 5.9 rpg, 99 FG, 30 assists, 14 steals | 2013-14 H-M All-MIAC, 2012-13 MIAC All-First Year Team)
- Wylie Ferron (6-4, 210, So., F | 16 GP, 9.4 ppg, 4.2 rpg, 24 assists, 12 blocks, 11 steals)
- Mark Schumacher (6-8, 215, Jr., F | 25 GP, 9.4 ppg, 4.8 rpg, 26 assists, 18 blocks, 11 steals)

By The Numbers

- 7: The Cardinals boasted seven players who scored career highs of 10 or more points a year ago—Wylie Ferron (Waconia, Minn. / 22), Connor Kaiser (Rockland, Wis. / 22), Ronnie Ortiz (Dayton, Ohio / 21), Mark Schumacher (Perham, Minn. / 20), Nick Ogren (Stillwater, Minn. / 15), Jake Rhyner (Apple Valley, Minn. / 14), and Zach Hinrichs (Lake City, Minn.).
- 8: Will Swiggum (St. Charles, Minn.) scored 13 points and added 11 rebounds against Macalester on Jan. 17. It was the eighth double-double of his collegiate career.
- 24/22: Will Swiggum (St. Charles, Minn.) equaled his career high with 24 points against Martin Luther on Jan. 26, while Connor Kaiser (Rockland, Wis.) chipped in a career-best 22 points. The efforts marked the first time Saint Mary's has boasted two players scoring 20 or more points in the same game since Jan. 21, 2013.

Did You Know?

- Will Swiggum (St. Charles, Minn.) led five Cardinal players in double figures vs. Crown on Jan. 5—marking the second straight meeting with the Storm that Saint Mary's has boasted five double-figure scorers.

Off The Court

- The Cardinals are active in the community—volunteering for several youth events, including the YMCA's March Madness event each spring—but the most prominent activity is the Saint Mary's Buddies program. The Buddies program is a group of 15-18 developmentally disabled young adults who are passionate about playing basketball. The Cardinal players and coaches spend time teaching and working with these special players. Several of the Buddies are regulars at the Saint Mary's basketball games.

**Head coach**

- Dan Kosmoski (22nd Season)

A Year Ago

- 16-4 MIAC (2nd place) | 23-6 Overall

In the 2014 Postseason

- MIAC postseason results - Lost in semifinal round to Bethel
- NCAA postseason results - Defeated Ohio Wesleyan 90-78, defeated Defiance 68-63, lost to Marietta 79-72.

Top Returners

- Ben Figini (C, Sr. | All-MIAC... Led team in scoring at 16.9/ppg, rebounding at 5.8/rpg while shooting 56.5 percent from the field.)
- Justin Pahl (G, Sr. | All-MIAC... Made 56 3-pointers, shooting 38.4 percent from the arc... Averaged 13.4 points and 2.3 assists/game.)
- Riley Aeikens (G, Sr. | MIAC All-Defensive Team selection... Averaged 9.9 points, 4.7 rebounds while shooting 49.0 percent from field)

Key Losses

- Sterling Nielsen (G | All-MIAC... Was Reece's All-Star Game participant... Helped Oles lead nation in assist-turnover ratio... Had 113 assists against only 48 turnovers.)
- Mason Braden (F | Averaged 5.2 points while shooting 59.6 percent from the field.)
- Sam Daly (F | Started all 28 games he played in... 5.1 points/game.)

By the Numbers

- 23: St. Olaf won a school-record 23 games in 2014-15... The Oles advanced to the Sweet 16 of the NCAA Division III Championship for the first time in program history.
- 850: Senior guard Justin Pahl needs 150 points to reach the 1,000-point plateau for his career.

**ST. THOMAS** | [Tommies' men's basketball home page](#) |**Head coach**

- John Tauer (Fifth season)

A Year Ago

- 17-3 MIAC (MIAC Champions) | 24-4 Overall

In the 2015 Postseason

- MIAC postseason results (2-0, 1st place; def. Gustavus 83-79, def. Bethel 66-63)
- NCAA postseason results (0-1, lost 71-70 round one to Northwestern (Minn.) on buzzer-beater 3-pointer)

Top Returners

- Grant Shaeffer (Guard, JR; 14-15: HM MIAC, 28 games, 294 points, 72% FT, four 20-point games; Career: 55 games, 423 points)
- Ryan Saarela (Forward, SR; USA D-III all-star team in July 2015, All-MIAC, MIAC All-Defensive Team; 14-15: 8.9 ppg and 6.4 rpg; Career: 70 games, 396 points, 309 rebounds, 53 blocks)
- Taylor Montero (Guard, SR; USA Division III all-star team in July 2015, All-MIAC, Career: 43% 3-point range, 75% FT, 86 games, 657 points, 111 made treys)

Key Losses

- Conner Nord (Forward, Grad, 2X All-MIAC, 1,056 points, 645 rebounds in all 117 career games; 2013 USA Division III all-star team)
- Marcus Alipate (Guard, Grad, All-MIAC, All-West Region; Career: 47% from 3-point range, 1,007 points in 109 games)

By the Numbers

- 10-10-10: UST Men's Hoops has current consecutive streaks of 10 MIAC titles, 10 NCAA playoff berths and 10 seasons of 20 or more wins
- 16: Minnesotans on Tommies' 17-man varsity roster
- 3: UST's ranking in Division III for all-time men's basketball victories at 1,625 over its first 107 varsity season.

Did You Know?

- UST's 181-27 record over the last seven years (.870) is the best winning clip in NCAA Division III. That includes a 98-19 mark in four years for Coach John Tauer.

Off the Court

- The Cretin-Derham Hall era continues with Tommie men's basketball: three current coaches (John Tauer, Mike Keating, Al McCoy) and three current players (Cortez Tillman, Taylor Montero and Michael Hannon) are CDH alums.