

2009 MIAC Men's Golf Championship Preview

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St. Paul, Minn. -- The 2009 MIAC Golf Championships will take place this Saturday-Monday, October 3-5, at Bunker Hills Golf Course in Coon Rapids, Minn. The 54-hole event will feature ten men's and ten women's teams competing for the MIAC team title, individual medalist honors, and an automatic qualification into this spring's NCAA Championships for the team champions.

For the first time ever, the **MIAC Golf Championships Website** will feature unofficial live scoring for both the men's and women's championships throughout the event. Tee times for the first pairings begin at 11:28 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday and 9 a.m. on Monday with scores updated online after every six holes.

Saint John's, ranked sixth nationally, enters the men's championship having won four of the last five team titles. The Johnnies will again be favored to take the championship, but should receive a strong challenge from the rest of the conference. Leading those challengers will be Concordia as they have combined with Saint John's for the top eight low team rounds this fall. The Cobbers also enter the championships with a lower team scoring average than the Johnnies. Bethel has also played well this fall and could challenge for the MIAC title. St. Thomas, Gustavus, St. Olaf, Macalester, and Augsburg have all played strong in the fall and will battle for spots in the upper half of the conference.

A variety of golfers will enter the championships with a realistic chance of winning medalist honors. Returning All-Conference performers who have fared well at Bunker Hills include: Gustavus' Ricky Copeland (3rd in 2008), Saint John's Ben Vangsness (4th), Saint John's Ben Cahill (7th), St. Thomas' Sean Barrett (10th), and Gustavus' Josh Curb (10th). But, Saint John's first-year Dennis Granath leads the conference in scoring average this fall with a 73.7 average and two tournament medalist honors in three events. The Concordia duo of Zach Kappes and Pat Deitz are second and third in conference scoring with averages near 74. Last season's MIAC Rookie of the Year Mason Swenson of Bethel has the conference's fourth best average and Saint John's Vangsness is fifth.

[2009 MIAC Golf Championships Website](#)

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Coach: Ted Vickerman (5th season)

2008 Championship Finish: 3rd (54-Hole Total:
922 - +58)

Augsburg Championship Preview

The Augsburg College men's golf team is one of the youngest in the MIAC, with no seniors, four juniors, four sophomores and five first-year students on its 13-golfer roster. But youth is not a deterrent for a squad coming off of last season's third-place finish at the MIAC championships -- Augsburg's 14th top-five conference-meet finish in the previous 15 seasons. Under head coach Ted Vickerman, the Auggies have finished among the top three teams in three of his four previous seasons.

Augsburg enters this week's MIAC meet with a 319.8 team stroke average. Vickerman has used different top-five lineups in each of the four varsity meets leading up to the conference championships, with just three golfers -- Joel Kociemba (JR, Andover, Minn./St. Francis HS), Brian Deuel (SO, Vadnais Heights, Minn./White Bear Lake HS) and Jason Henning (JR, Coon Rapids, Minn.) -- competing in all four meets.

Kociemba has led the Auggies thus far, averaging 78.1 strokes per-round, nearly a three-stroke improvement from last season. He has five of the top 14 rounds shot by Auggie golfers this fall and seven of his eight rounds this season in the 70s. Deuel stands second on the team in scoring, averaging 79.3 strokes per-round, with five of his eight rounds this season in the 70s. Henning is averaging 81.8 strokes per-round. Both Kociemba and Henning competed in last year's MIAC meet, with Henning finishing 28th and Kociemba finishing 40th.

The other two spots in the Auggie varsity roster have been held by four different golfers, with Zach Johnson (FY, Sartell, Minn.) competing in three meets, Alex Umland (JR, Maple Grove, Minn./Totino-Grace HS) and Christopher Tobkin (FY, Willmar, Minn./New London-Spicer HS) competing in two meets, and Terry Gibbons (SO, Westlake, Ohio) competing in one meet. Johnson has an 81.6 stroke average, while Umland, who finished 45th at the 2007 MIAC championships, is averaging 81.5 strokes per-round. Gibbons made his first varsity appearance last weekend, and has a 84.7 stroke average.

**Bethel****Coach:** Joel Johnson (3rd season)**2008 Championship Finish:** 4th (54-Hole Total:
935 - +71)**Bethel Championship Preview**

After matching a school-best fourth place finish at the MIAC Championships, the team is looking to equal, if not surpass that mark this year.

With the departures of 2008 All-MIAC golfer Bjorn Hanson as well as Tony Weber, the Royals have been dependent on last year's MIAC Freshman of the Year, Mason Swenson (So., Eagan, Minn.), who is averaging a 74.8 through five rounds this season. He's had two sub-par rounds, including a 69 in the second round of the Augsburg Invitational. Michael Yocum (Sr., Mora, Minn.) had two very good rounds at the Saint John's Invitational and is averaging 75.6 thus far. Other golfers that look to factor into Bethel's scoring are Charlie Cook (Sr., Rochester, Minn.) and Toby Robinson (So., Mankato, Minn.).

"We need to come out and have a good first round to set the tone for the rest of the championships," said Head Coach Joel Johnson. "I feel like we've got a good team, but our focus needs to be there from the first tee to the last green. We know it's going to be a challenge, but some of our younger guys have already made big improvements in their approach and I'm looking forward to seeing what they can do for us."

**Carleton****Coach:** Jerry Ericksen (3rd season)**2008 Championship Finish:** 10th (54-Hole
Total: 997 - +133)**Carleton Championship Preview**

The Knights have high hopes for this year's MIAC Championships. In his third year as head coach, Jerry Ericksen has assembled his deepest, most talented squad yet. After spending the previous year studying abroad in England, Alec Roman (Sr./Portland, Ore./Catlin Gabel School) returned as the Knights' top golfer and looks to earn All-Conference honors again after accomplishing the feat in 2007. Roman has shot a 75 in two of his four rounds this fall. His scoring average of 78.5 is just outside the MIAC's top-20.

The improvement and consistency of the back end of the Carleton roster has been a bright spot for the Knights this season. After several years of occasionally counting scores in the 90s, the worst score that the Knights have counted this year is an 85. In fact, the scoring averages of the rest of the squad are within stroke of each other.

Sophomore Brian Gilmore (Edina, Minn.) is looking to recapture the success he had last year at the MIAC Championships as a rookie. He finished tied for 19th and had the fourth lowest three-day total among first-year golfers. Consistency has been one of the strengths of Gilmore's game as he is the only Knight to have his score count in every round this season.

Turner Wadington (So./St. Charles, Ill./Elgin Academy) was medalist at the Knights' first meet against Saint Mary's University after firing a career-low 79 at The Bridges in Winona. He finished 46th at last year's MIAC Championships.

Senior Trent Wells (Rochester, Minn./Century) has shown a steady improvement and has played in every meet over his four years with the Knights. His best finish at the MIAC Championships was 38th in 2007. Rookie Brian Chesley (Mankato, Minn./Mankato West) has provided very heady play for a first-year golfer. The difference between his best round and worst round this fall is all of two strokes.

Senior Jordan Narvey (Portage la Prairie, Manitoba/Portage Collegiate Institute) and junior Michael Hantho (Edina, Minn.) may also grab one of the final spots in the Knights' lineup and seize their first opportunities to play in the championship.

The Knights were a pair of unfortunate finishes away from placing in the middle of the pack at the Saint John's Invitational so the potential is there. If the Knights play up to their capabilities, Carleton could earn its best finish since 2002 at the MIAC Championships.

**Concordia****Coach:** Duane Siverson (2nd season)**2008 Championship Finish:** 7th (54-Hole Total:
951 - +87)**Concordia Championship Preview**

There is an air of excitement surrounding the 2009 Concordia-Moorhead men's golf team. The Cobbers are coming off their best regular-season in recent history and are poised to make a run at the top of the conference at the MIAC Championship Meet. Concordia is buoyed by the fact that they have posted a pair of school records entering the conference meet. The Cobbers broke the school record for low team score in a single round when they fired a 282 at the Jamestown Invitational and also posted a second team score in the 280's when they fired a 288 at the NDSU Erv Kaiser Invite. It's the first time in program history they have had two rounds in the same season under 290.

To go along with their team success, the Cobbers have also had individuals post several low numbers. Three different Concordia golfers have posted five scores in the 60's this season – another team first. Junior Zach Kappes (Moorhead, Minn.) and sophomore Pat Deitz (Moorhead, Minn.) both tied the school record of 68 when they matched that score at the Jamestown Invitational. For their efforts they were named the MIAC Co-Golfers of the Week on Sept. 8. Kappes also fired a 69 in the first round of the Concordia Invite. Joining Kappes and Deitz in the sub-70 group is freshman Andrew Whitchurch (Litchfield, Minn.). Whitchurch has shot a pair of 69's this season. He opened the year with a 69 at the Jamestown Invitational and then backed it up with the same score in the second round of the NDSU Erv Kaiser Invite.

Kappes, Deitz and Whitchurch are a part of a group of eight CC players that are all averaging under 79.0. The Cobbers also have 10 golfers with averages in the 70's. Kappes leads the team with a 74.1 average and Deitz is close behind at 74.3. Whitchurch checks in at No.3 with a 75.4 stroke average. Rounding out the top five for the Cobbers at the MIAC Meet will be super senior Erik Weiss (Moorhead, Minn.) and sophomore Tyler Champ (Champlin, Minn./Meadow Creek Christian HS). Weiss has posted a top 10 finish this season and has posted the most consistent season of his career. Champ is averaging 77.3 strokes per round this year and is coming off his best finish of the year. He led the Cobbers at the St. Olaf Invite by finishing sixth with a two-round total of 150.



Gustavus

Coach: Scott Moe (14th season)

2008 Championship Finish: 2nd (54-Hole Total:
917 - +53)

Gustavus Championship Preview

Head Coach Scott Moe welcomes back seven seniors and a talented group of newcomers as the Gusties hope to contend for the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference title this fall. Moe will look to senior captains Ricky Copeland and A.J. Olson to lead the way.

Copeland, who finished third at last year's MIAC Championship and earned All-Conference honors, led the team with a stroke average of 75.1 through 22 rounds. Olson, the Gusties #2 player a year ago posted a stroke average of 78.0, while Josh Curb (Sr., Bemidji, Minn.) averaged 78.1 and John Anderson (So., Appleton, Wis.) averaged 78.7. Other returners expected to contribute include senior Ben Bauknecht (San Diego, Calif.), senior Derek Hilding (Spicer, Minn.), senior Greg Palm (Orinda, Calif.), and senior Alex Woodhull (Minnetonka, Minn.).

Moe is also expecting a trio of talented newcomers to help the squad. That group includes first year players Saul Menendez (Gijon, Asturias, Spain), Trevor Gervais (Fergus Falls, Minn.) and Alex Kolquist (Hermantown, Minn.). Menendez is a National Junior Team member from Spain who has had significant success in many international competitions, while Gervais finished in the top ten at the Minnesota State High School Tournament in Class AA two years ago and Kolquist finished fifth in Class AA last year. Both have been very successful at the state and regional levels over the past several years.

The Gusties are ranked #23 in the American Golf Coaches Association (GCAA) Division III Coaches Preseason poll.



Macalester

Coach: Martha Nause (10th season)

2008 Championship Finish: 8th (54-Hole Total:
956 - +92)

Macalester Championship Preview

Macalester has its most balanced team in years and any one of five players could pace the squad at this year's championships. The Scots are averaging a 318 team score per round going into the Sept. 26-27 St. Olaf Invitational and are optimistic about moving up from last year's eighth-place finish.

The team's most consistent player is Nick Santrach (Jr., Coon Rapids, Minn.), who is averaging 77.8 through the first five rounds of the fall season. Santrach took over as the clear No. 1 player last spring and a few weeks ago was 22nd at the Augsburg Invitational with a 154. Ryan Peters (Sr., Kohler, Wis.) is second on the squad this fall with a 79.6 average score. Santrach and Peters have posted low rounds of 74 this fall.

Right behind Santrach and Peters are Dan Allen (Jr., Orland Park, Ill. / Carl Sandberg) (80.4), Ben Langworthy (Jr., Tucson, Ariz. / Tucson Magnet School) (80.8), Daniel Kerwin (Sr., Colorado Springs, Colo. / Yokohama International) (81.6) and Pierce Peters (Fy., Glenwood, Minn. / Minnewaska Area) (81.8).



Saint John's

Coach: Bob Alpers (17th season)

2008 Championship Finish: 1st (54-Hole

Total: 889 - +25)

Saint John's Championship Preview

When you graduate six seniors, including three All-Americans, a college golf program is left with one option: reload.

Last fall, the Johnnies won the 2008 Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) championship, defeating second-place Gustavus Adolphus by 28 strokes. The 2008 title was SJU's eighth overall and fourth in the last five seasons. On the national scene, the Johnnies finished eighth overall at the 2009 NCAA Division III Championship.

SJU needs to replace All-Americans Joe Daly, Joey Polingo and three-time MIAC Most Valuable Player Joe Schoolmeesters. The Johnnies return, however, two All-MIAC players and one of the conference's top freshmen from a year ago. Senior Ben Vangsness (Alexandria, Minn.) finished fourth overall at the MIAC Championship last season and posted a 76.2 stroke average in 25 rounds of play. Junior Ben Cahill (Grand Rapids, Minn.) also earned All-MIAC honors by tying for seventh with a 228 (+12). He completed the 2008-09 season with a 76.4 stroke average in 21 rounds of golf. Look for Vangsness, Cahill, and sophomore Tony Krogen (Marshall, Minn.), who averaged 76.9 strokes in 16 rounds of play last season, to lead the Johnnies this season. SJU will also boast a deep and talented freshman class that hopes to contribute to the starting five and continue SJU's tradition of success.

Saint John's has done a great job at reloading, tying for second at its first meet in Bemidji Sept. 14 and winning its own fall invitational on Sept. 20 by 11 strokes. The Johnnies are led by freshman standout Dennis Granath (Bandhagen, Sweden/Farsta Gymnasium). Granath earned medalist honors the first two meets SJU has participated in this year. In Bemidji, at his first collegiate golf tournament, Granath earned medalist honors by four strokes with a six-under par 66 in the final round to finish with a 135 (-9). Granath's 66 tied for second-best all-time, one stroke from the school record of 65 recorded by Josh Sherlin at, coincidentally, the 2003 Bemidji State Invitational. For that performance Granath was named the MIAC Men's Golf Athlete of the Week. At SJU's fall invitational, Granath earned medalist honors for the second consecutive weekend with a two-day total of 145 (+1), including a one-under par 71 on the final day.

Granath has a strong team behind him that includes Vangsness, Cahill, Krogen, and fellow freshman Mark Giorgi (Red Wing, Minn.). Krogen tied for third overall with a 149 (+5) two day total at the SJU Invitational, while Vangsness tied for 10th with a 152 (+8).

Head coach Bob Alpers, the 2009 MIAC Coach of the Year, begins his 17th season as head golf coach at Saint John's in 2009-10. Alpers has guided the Johnnies to seven MIAC titles and 10 consecutive NCAA appearances, including back-to-back national championships in 2007 and 2008. Of the Johnnies' 10 consecutive national appearances, SJU has finished in the Top 10 eight times, which is second-best in all of Division III. Saint John's tied for the most national championships (two) in the past 10 years.



Saint Mary's

Coach: Jeff Stangl (2nd season)

2008 Championship Finish: 9th (54-Hole Total:

995 - +131)

Saint Mary's Championship Preview

If the preseason was any indication, the Saint Mary's University men's golf team is in for a memorable 2009 season.

At least they certainly got things started with a bang.

In one of their first qualifying rounds of the season, Rob Klein (Lake Bluff, Ill.) notched the first hole-in-one of his career, acing the 11th hole at Cedar Valley Golf Course.

Klein, one of three seniors on this year's squad, used an 8-iron on the 152-yard hole — and coach Jeff Stangl is hoping that Klein's early season feat sparks the Cardinals to bigger and better things.

"Graduation has us pretty hard — we lost five golfers who all contributed at one time or another — but with the return of a strong nucleus, not to mention a very talented freshman class, I'm excited about the potential of this team," said Stangl, who will be looking to Klein and fellow seniors Tony Hynes (Lino Lakes, Minn.) and Ryan Brodd (Woodbury, Minn.) to provide the leadership — both on and off the course — as the Cardinals head into the conference championships.

"Improvements don't usually come by leaps and bounds, we have to grind them out, which is exactly what I expect out of this team — to keep grinding no matter what.

"In golf, every single shot is a game all its own, and you have to play it that what. When a one-inch putt scores the same as a 300-yard drive, you have to pay attention to every shot," Stangl added. "I believe we have the talent to move up the conference ladder, but we need to work on our mental toughness when things don't break out way."



St. Olaf

Coach: Glen Peterson (4th season)

2008 Championship Finish: 5th (54-Hole Total:
936 - +72)

St. Olaf Championship Preview

The St. Olaf men's golf team enters this weekend's MIAC Championships with a deep roster that will make for tough decisions for head coach Glen Peterson to pick his best lineup. The Oles have five players, through the fall's first three events, that were averaging under 80 strokes/round.

Billy Utter has been the most consistent player, with five of his first eight rounds at 76 or better. Chris Conklin should figure in the team's play at the MIAC's. Conklin has been under 80 in all but one of his eight rounds this fall, including a 77-75 in the first event of the year to finish 13th in a 96-player field at the Edgewood Invite.

First year Jonathan Walsh fired the team's best score of the fall, a one-under 70 in his first collegiate 18, on the way to a second place finish at the Edgewood event, but went 80-81 and 81-85 in his last four rounds.

Ryan Lubinsky David Segar, Charlie Johnson and Justin Volling could also be in the mix for the Oles, who finished fifth at last year's MIAC's.



St. Thomas

Coach: Dave Lepp (4th season)

2008 Championship Finish: 6th (54-Hole Total:
939 - +75)

St. Thomas Championship Preview

St. Thomas will try to record the school's 11th top-four team placing in 13 seasons when the 2009 MIAC Championships take place Oct. 3-5 at Bunker Hills Golf Course.

Junior Sean Barrett made All-MIAC last season as he shared 10th place individually. The Toms finished four strokes out of fourth place and closed in sixth place.

In 19 rounds in 2008-099, Barrett led the Tommies with a 77.3 stroke average.

This fall, the Tommies have placed fourth, 11th and second in multi-team fields in their first three fall tournaments. In their last tune-up for the MIAC event, they placed second by one stroke behind nationally-ranked St. John's in the 14-team UW-Eau Claire tournament on Sept. 27-28.

Freshman John Young is averaging 77.4 over five fall rounds; junior Grant Shafranski is averaging 78.1 on seven rounds; senior Bill Mulvahill is averaging 78.5 over four rounds; freshman Mike Mortenson (five rounds) and Barrett (seven rounds) are each averaging 79.0; and senior James Stafford is averaging 79.7 for seven rounds.