

2011 MIAC Men's Golf Championship Preview

9/29/2011

ST. PAUL, Minn. -- The main questions entering the 2011 MIAC Men's Golf Championships clearly center around Saint John's and its quest for a fourth-straight conference title. Who are the Johnnies top contenders this year? And can any of them stay close?

After winning last year's conference title - SJU's third in a row and sixth in seven years - the Johnnies enter this year's MIAC Championships as the No. 2-ranked team in the nation with all four of its 2010 All-MIAC selections back in the lineup. Head Coach **Bob Alpers'** team won last year's title by 13 shots, and with its star-studded lineup back almost completely intact, SJU enters the weekend as the clear favorite to four-peat and claim the MIAC's automatic bid to the NCAA Division III Men's Golf National Championships, which goes to the winning team.

However, the 2011 season has seen several of the MIAC's top contenders take a step forward throughout the month of September, and if they can elevate their games on the MIAC's biggest stage this weekend at Bunker Hills Golf Course in Coon Rapids, Minn., anything is possible. Saint John's leads a group of four teams all averaging less than 308 shots per 18 holes, and with picture-perfect weather in the forecast Saturday, Sunday and Monday, it could be an action-packed three rounds that comes down to Monday's back nine.

Concordia finished fourth a year ago, returns the defending individual champ and boasts a scoring average (303.7) within two shots of SJU's league-leading 302.0. St. Thomas, the third-place team a year ago, enters the MIAC meet with a 305.0 average and Gustavus, which joined Saint John's in the 2010 NCAA Division III National Championship field, brings a 307.7 scoring average to Bunker Hills this weekend.

Last year's runner-up, St. Olaf, is averaging 323 shots per round, but that score isn't really indicative of how the Oles have played, or what they're capable of. They return two golfers who finished in the Top 12 at last year's MIAC meet, and should also figure to be in the mix again in 2011. Bethel (312.7 average) and Augsburg (317.1 average), which finished sixth and eighth last year respectively, appear to be much-improved this season as well and will be in the mix to finish in the top half of the conference standings.

Rounding out the field is Carleton, Macalester and Saint Mary's. The Knights finished seventh a year ago and enter with a 330.0 scoring average. The Scots are just a step behind with a 332.2 average and Saint Mary's will look for improvement under first-year head coach **Kevin Landrum**.

Individually, the men's field is loaded this year, dually headlined by the two-time MIAC Golfer-of-the-Year and the defending champion from last year's MIAC meet. Saint John's **Tony Krogen** was voted the league's top golfer again last year and earned All-American honors, and enters as one of the favorites after finishing first and third last year at the last two MIAC Championship meets. Meanwhile, Concordia's **Andrew Whitchurch** elevated his game last year and won medalist honors by five shots with a remarkable 1-under-par 215 over the 54 holes, and he'll look to replicate that success again this weekend.

The rest of the returning All-Conference list is basically the Johnnies lineup card. All-American **Dennis Granath**, MIAC and Region Freshman-of-the-Year **Casey Vangsness** and recent MIAC Golfer-of-the-Week **Alex Klehr** are all back in the field after all finishing ninth or better a year ago. The other All-MIAC returner is St. Olaf's **Ryan Lubinsky**, who finished seventh last year and teams with fellow Ole **Justin Volling**, who was just one shot outside the Top 10 in 2010, to try to counter the Johnnies' returning star power.

There are 11 other golfers back who finished between 12 and 20 (counting ties) at last year's MIAC Championships, making this one of the deepest and most talented fields in recent memory. Gustavus returns all four of its top scorers in **Simon Erlandsson**, **Alex Kolquist**, **Tyler McMorrow** and **Andrew Oakes**. St. Thomas brings back the talented trio of **Michael Mortenson**, **John Young** and **Brandon Engelos**. St. Olaf's **Ryan Heide** is back to add depth to the Oles' lineup once again, and a pair of Bethel golfers, **Taylor Tollette** and **Toby Robinson** also return after each earning a Top 20 finish in 2010.

In all, 15 players enter this year's MIAC meet with a scoring average below 77 shots per round (who have played at least four rounds). Many of the top returners are in that group, and are joined by some new contenders for All-MIAC honors. Concordia's **Pat Deitz** finished just outside the Top 20 last season, but has been among the league's best this fall with a 74.8 average. Gustavus' **Coby Rowley** has also been good with a 75.7 average and Cobber freshman **Tyler Koivisto** has made a smooth transition to college golf with a 76.3 average.

Other golfers to watch this weekend include Augsburg's **Zach Johnson** (77.6) and **Brian Deuel**, Carleton's **Jeff Berg** and **Aaron Buckley**, Macalester's **Matt Butler** and **Dan Allen** and Saint Mary's **Tim Wolford**, **Ethan Austin** and **D.J. Borgen**.

As usual, each team will play one 18-hole round each day, with the champion and individual places decided by the cumulative scores after all 54 holes are complete. Saturday and Sunday will both begin with tee times starting at 11:20 a.m., and Monday's final round will start at 9 a.m. with a brief awards ceremony to conclude the tournament.

The MIAC men will play the East and West courses at Bunker Hills each day, with the women's playing the North and East courses. Pairings and tee times for Saturday's opening round are determined by last year's finish at the MIAC Championships, and Sunday and Monday's pairings and tee times will be dictated by the previous day's scores.



The MIAC Web site will offer live scoring updates throughout the tournament, along with complete results and recaps following each day of action with photos and videos to highlight the event as well. Stay tuned to the [2011 MIAC Golf Championship Home Page](#), as well as the MIAC's social media networks on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#) throughout the weekend to stay connected to all the action at Bunker Hills.

[2011 MIAC Golf Championships Web site](#)

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Augsburg

Coach: Ted Vickerman (7th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 8th (54-Hole Total:
949 - +85)

Augsburg Championship Preview

The Augsburg College men's golf team enters the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Championships with hopes of improving from back-to-back eighth-place team finishes. The championships will be held this Saturday to Monday (10/1-3) at Bunker Hills Golf Course in Coon Rapids, Minn.

Under seventh-year head coach Ted Vickerman and first-year assistant coach Dee Forsberg McCullagh, Augsburg enters the championships with a 317.1 team stroke average, sixth-best among MIAC teams. The Auggies are coming off a fourth-place finish at the Macalester Invitational last weekend.

Leading the Auggies coming into the MIAC tournament will be junior Zach Johnson (JR, Sartell, Minn.), who has been the team's best scorer in three of its four varsity meets this fall. He enters the championships coming off of a career-best 149 (77-72) at the Macalester Invitational, where he placed third as an individual. Johnson enters the championships with a 77.6 stroke average and .744 win-loss percentage this fall, and a 78.9 career stroke average and .581 career win-loss percentage.

Brian Deuel (SR, Vadnais Heights, Minn./White Bear Lake HS) and Justin Popp (SO, Sauk Rapids, Minn.) join Johnson as the three Auggies who have been on the roster in each of the team's four varsity meets.

Deuel has been a solid presence in the Auggie lineup throughout his career, entering this weekend's championships with a 79.0 season stroke average and .700 win-loss percentage. He has an 80.0 career stroke average and .535 career win-loss percentage. Deuel led the Auggies with a 165 at the competitive St. John's Invitational on Sept. 17-18.

Popp has had a strong first season of collegiate golf, entering the championships with an 81.3 stroke average. His best effort this season came at the Augsburg Fall Invitational on Sept. 10-11, when he shot a 157 (79-78) total.

The final two spots on the Auggie lineup for the MIAC championships will likely come from a group of four golfers. Tucker Williams (SR, Roseville, Minn.) and Terry Gibbons (SR, Westlake, Ohio) have been in the varsity lineup in the Auggies' last two meets, while newcomer Drew Bahl (FY, Preston, Minn./Fillmore Central HS) and Tim Herrmann (JR, Belle Plaine, Minn.) were on the varsity roster in the first two meets of the season. Gibbons has produced an 81.6 stroke average so far this season, while Williams has an 86.9 average. Bahl has an 80.8 average and Herrmann has an 84.8 average.



Bethel

Coach: Trent Anderson (2nd season)

2010 Championship Finish: 6th (54-Hole Total:
937 - +73)

Bethel Championship Preview

The Bethel men's golf team is looking to improve on last year as they have six of the eight players returning from last season. Captain Toby Robinson looks to cap off a stellar career in his senior season of golf. Luke Magnusson will try to build on his solid freshman year. Taylor Tollette and Luke Johnson have shown continued improvement and look to take on more leadership as they come into their junior year. Jack Paul looks use his tremendous athletic ability to crack the top 5. Mason Swenson is returning after a year away from the golf team and hopes to provide another consistent good score for Bethel. Dan Harper and Nik VanVonderan are the two new faces and hope to provide a nice look for the future.

This year the BU men hope to compete for a top 3 finish in the MIAC championship. This year's roster has the potential and talent to take a top 3 finish. It is just a matter of how hard they want to work and go after it. Along, with the conference championship they hope to pick up at least 2 other tournament wins.



Carleton

Coach: Jerry Ericksen (5th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 7th (54-Hole
Total: 947 - +83)

Carleton Championship Preview

The Carleton College men's golf team lost their top scorer from last year, but the veteran squad is looking for a strong performance at the MIAC Championships. Last year the team earned their second-best finish at the conference meet since 1983, finishing seventh overall. The Knights have struggled to play consistent golf this season, but their recent seventh-place finish at the Macalester Invitational shows signs of steady improvement.

Carleton is averaging 335.7 this season, with nine players contributing to the team total at some point. The Knights have seen very balanced scoring this season, with eight of the nine contributors having a season average of between 82.0 and 88.0.

In order to improve on their performance at last year's MIAC Championship, the Knights will need a few players to step-up and deliver standout performances. This season, sophomore Jeff Berg (Wood Dale, Ill./Wheaton Academy) is leading the team in individual scoring with an 82.0 average. The only other sophomore on the team, Aaron Buckley (San Diego, Calif./Francis Parker School), paced Carleton at last weekend's Macalester Invitational with a seventh-place finish and is tied for second on the squad with an 83.5 scoring average.

Seniors Brian Gilmore (Edina, Minn./Edina) and Turner Wadington (St. Charles, Ill./Elgin Academy) also have 83.5 scoring averages this season. Wadington started off the year strong at the Augsburg College Fall Invitational, carding 74-81 for a two-day total of 155. Gilmore has also been an important contributor at each tournament this season, and he led the team at the Saint John's Fall Invitational with a 36-hole total of 166.

As the only junior on the team, Brian Chesley (Mankato, Minn./West) plays a key role in the team's success. At last year's championship, he had the best finish among the current squad, posting a three-round total of 243.



Concordia

Coach: Duane Siverson (4th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 4th (54-Hole Total:
921 - +57)

Concordia Championship Preview

Concordia will be under a brighter spotlight when it enters the 2011 MIAC Championship Meet. The Cobbers will have the lights shined on the defending individual champion as well as a team that is trying to make a bid for a berth in the NCAA Tournament.

Concordia junior Andrew Whitchurch (Litchfield, Minn.) exemplifies the old golfing adage "horses for courses". Whitchurch entered last year's MIAC Championship Meet as the No.3 golfer for the Cobbers and proceeded to fire a 1-under 215 (75-71-69) and win medalist honors by five shots. He pulled the same conference-tournament magic in 2009 when he went from the middle of the CC pack to a sixth-place finish and All-Conference honors.

As a team, Concordia will be looking to break into the top 3 at the meet. The Cobbers have not finished in the top 3 at the conference meet since 2001. Since then they have recorded seven top 5 finishes but have never pushed through to the top 3. There will be extra weight on posting a top finish at this year's meet since CC is currently in the hunt for a berth in the NCAA Tournament.

The Cobbers are riding the wave of success heading into the 2011 championship meet. Concordia has won the last two invites they have participated in and has not finished outside the top4 in any meet this year. They breezed to the tournament title at the UM-Morris Invite and then captured the crown at the Macalester Invite last weekend.

Senior Pat Deitz (Moorhead, Minn.) is the clear-cut No.1 golfer for Concordia. Deitz is second in the MIAC in scoring average. He is averaging 74.8 strokes over his nine rounds this season. His biggest eye-opening moment of the year came at the St. John's Fall Invite where he shot a 72-77 and won individual champion honors. He was named the MIAC Men's Golfer of the Week for his tournament win.

Concordia has a pair of freshman that make up the team's top 4 for the season. Tyler Koivisto (Cokato, Minn./Dassel-Cokato HS) is the team's No.2 golfer when it comes to scoring average this season. Koivisto has a 76.3 average and is coming off a second-place finish at the Macalester Invite where he tied for low score honors. Coy Papachek (Fargo, N.D./Fargo South HS) has a 77.3 average and has a pair of top 15 finishes on the year.

Like 2010, Whitchurch enters as the team's No.3 golfer. He has a 77.0 average in 2011 and had his best finish at the UM-Morris Invite where he placed third.

One of the keys for CC at the conference meet will be to have a solid No.5 golfer. Leading the pack of golfers for the final spot is junior Jordie Siverson (Moorhead, Minn.). Siverson is coming off his two best outings of the year. He placed fourth at the UM-Morris Invite and then was seventh at the Macalester Invite.



Gustavus

Coach: Scott Moe (16th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 5th (54-Hole Total:
922- +58)

Gustavus Championship Preview

The Gustavus men's golf team is well prepared for the MIAC Championships after competing against many of the country's top Division III teams earlier this week at the Gordin Classic NCAA D3 Preview. The 18-team tournament held in Howey-in-the-Hills, Fla. featured 16 colleges and universities that reached last year's NCAA Division III National Tournament. The Gusties placed 13th at the Gordin Classic with a three-day collective score of 301-328-304-933 (+69).

Prior to the NCAA D3 Preview, Gustavus placed third in both of its first two meets of the 2011-12 campaign – the Augsburg Invite on Sept. 10-11 and Saint John's Invitational on Sept. 17-18. In both meets, the University of Manitoba and Saint John's University placed either first or second.

Sophomore Simon Erlandsson has proven to be the Gusties top shooter with consistent play. The Mjolby, Sweden native placed 16th in a field of 91 at the Gordin Classic with a three-round score of 75-83-70-228 (+12). He finished 12th at the Augsburg Invite and 22nd at the Saint John's Invitational. After seven rounds this season, Erlandsson has averaged 76.1 shots per round – a team low.

Fellow second-year Andrew Oakes also has compiled an 18-hole average of less than 77 at 76.9. Oakes, a Hermantown, Minn. native, finished in the top-12 in the first two meets of the season – 12th at the Augsburg Invite and eighth at the SJU Invitational.

Not far behind Oakes is sophomore Tyler McMorro with a 77.1-round average through seven rounds. McMorro notched the Gusties' highest finish of the season garnering fourth place in the first meet of the year. Junior Trevor Gervais also recorded a fourth place finish at Saint John's with a score of 77-75-152. The Fergus Falls, Minn. native has tallied a 78.6 average.

Junior Alex Kolquist, who placed 15th at last year's NCAA Championships, is averaging 79.3 shots per round. Kolquist recorded his best finish of the season at the Saint John's Invitational by taking 14th out of 115 participants.

Not to be forgotten is junior Coby Rowley, who has spent time on the Gusties' second team. Rowley was recently named MIAC Men's Golf Co-Athlete-of-the-Week after leading the team to a third-place finish at the Macalester Invitational last weekend. The Prior Lake, Minn. product won his first individual tournament title of his collegiate career with a two-day total of 76-72-148. He was one of two players in a field of 64 to shoot a 72 (E) over the course of the tournament.

Gustavus will look to improve upon last season's performance at the conference tournament where it placed fifth, as the Gusties travel to Coon Rapids, Minn. on Oct. 1-3 for the 2011 MIAC Championships.

Macalester



Coach: Martha Nause (12th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 9th (54-Hole Total:
960 - +96)

Macalester Championship Preview

Macalester is averaging a 332.2 team score through eight rounds this fall, eighth best overall, and is looking to move up from last year's ninth-place MIAC finish.

The Scots will be looking for senior leadership from Dan Butler (Southlake, Tex. / Carroll) and Dan Allen (Orland Park, Ill. / Carl Sandberg), the two most consistent players on the squad this fall. Butler tops the Scots with an 82.0 scoring average and Allen's average score is 82.3. They posted scorecards of 75 and 77, respectively, in the second round of last weekend's Macalester Invitational.

The next five players on the roster behind Butler and Allen average between 85.3 and 86.8: Matt Caminiti (Jr., Mendham, N.J. / West Morris Mendham), Andrew Gage (Fy., Piedmont, Calif.), Tyler Hanck (Jr., Park Ridge, Ill. / Maine South), Dan Shi (Fy., Loveland, Ohio / Seven Hills) and Mark Thompson (Jr., Alameda, Calif. / The College Preparatory School).

Saint John's



Coach: Bob Alpers (19th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 1st (54-Hole
Total: 892 - +28)

Saint John's Championship Preview

The Saint John's University golf team has high expectations for this season after losing just one member of the 2010 team that won the MIAC Championship and tied for third at the NCAA Division III Championship in May. It was the Johnnies' sixth MIAC title in the last seven years and their 10th top-eight finish at nationals in the last 12 years.

The Johnnies' returnees include two All-Americans in senior Tony Krogen (Marshall, Minn.) and junior Dennis Granath (Bandhagen, Sweden/Farsta Gymnasium). The two-time reigning MIAC Player of the Year, Krogen became the second Johnnie to participate at the U.S. Amateur this past August. A 2010 PING All-American and two-time Golf Coaches Association of America (GCAA) All-District selection, Krogen ended the 2010-11 season with a 74.4 stroke average in 23 rounds of play and led the team with seven top-10 finishes. He tied for 26th with a 10-over par 298, including back-to-back even-par rounds, at the 2011 NCAA Division III Championship. Granath ended the 2011 NCAA Division III Championship with an even-par 288, finishing in a tie for seventh to earn PING All-American first-team honors. He led the Johnnies with a 74.3 stroke average in 23 rounds last fall.

Senior Alex Klehr (Mankato, Minn./West) and sophomore Casey Vangsness also return as key contributors this fall. A GCAA All-District selection, the Central Region and MIAC Freshman of the Year, Vangsness posted a 74.8 stroke average in 23 rounds last season and led the team with three tournament wins. Over the summer, Vangsness qualified for the 2011 U.S. Amateur Public Links. Klehr, meanwhile, posted a 76.5 stroke average and tied for 65th (+22, 310) at the 2011 NCAA Division III Championship.

Senior Alex Wallerich (Lake City, Minn.), junior Andy Stahlman (Plymouth, Minn./Wayzata), sophomore Dominic Todora (Woodbury, Minn./Cretin-Derham Hall), as well as a talented group of freshmen, are expected to vie for the varsity vacancy left by Mark Giorgi, who transferred to NCAA Division I Idaho.

Head coach Bob Alpers begins his 19th season this weekend. He has guided the Johnnies to nine MIAC titles and 12 consecutive NCAA appearances, including back-to-back national championships in 2007 and 2008. The 2007 Eaton Golf Pride National Coach of the Year, Alpers earned the MIAC Coach of the Year award for the ninth time in 2011 and the GCAA Central Region Coach of the Year for the fourth time in 2010.



Saint Mary's

Coach: Kevin Landrum (1st season)

2010 Championship Finish: 10th (54-Hole)

Total: 1,031 - +167)

Saint Mary's Championship Preview

When first-year head coach Kevin Landrum evaluates the Saint Mary's University men's golf team heading into this weekend's Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Championships, he sees potential — lots of it.

Now all he has to do is find a way to transform that potential into actual results.

Landrum has the luxury of inheriting a team that returns its top three golfers from a year ago in D.J. Borgen (Red Wing, Minn.), Ethan Austin (Northbrook, Ill.) and Tim Wolford (Maple Grove, Minn.).

"We are looking pretty solid in our top three spots," said Landrum. "Tim was not healthy last year — he was battling shoulder issues, but he's come back and had a pretty solid season thus far.

"D.J. and Ethan have both shown signs of being solid collegiate golfers, but they have to continue to get more consistent," Landrum added. "And it's not just those two — if we are going to be successful, consistency is the key. It doesn't do us any good to shoot 79 one day and 99 the next.

"There have been times that we have been very good, and there are times where we weren't so good," said Landrum. "If we are going to make a move in the conference, we have to play up to our potential — on a consistent basis."



St. Olaf

Coach: Glen Peterson (6th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 2nd (54-Hole Total:

905 - +41)

St. Olaf Championship Preview

St. Olaf comes into the MIAC tournament with a handful of tournaments under its belt this fall. The season began with a rain-shortened showing at the Culver's Edgewood College Fall Classic, where the Oles shot a season-best 314 (+30) despite the conditions.

St. Olaf has an experienced group of seniors this year, led by Ryan Lubinsky. Averaging a team best 76.2 with a season best of 75, Lubinsky enters the MIAC tournament after a top 10 finish in the Saint John's Fall Invitational from September 17-18. Following Lubinsky is Justin Volling, averaging 77.3 with a top 20 finish to his credit and a season-low 74 over 18 holes at the Augsburg College Fall Invitational. The Oles are rounded out by Ryan Heide, the lone sophomore of the group who averages 79.4. The team also has Mark Marotz (80.4), Jimmy Konsky (82.0) and David Segar (82.8) who could find their way into the championship lineup.



St. Thomas

Coach: Scott Proshek (2nd season)

2010 Championship Finish: 3rd (54-Hole Total:
914 - +50)

St. Thomas Championship Preview

St. Thomas tied for second in the 2009 MIAC Championships, and placed third in 2010. The Tommies will look to challenge for another top-three finish in 2011 in a competitive field.

St. Thomas returns four of its top six players and have been bolstered by four freshmen players.

Junior John Young has placed 19th and 17th in his two career conference meets. Junior Michael Mortenson also tied for 17th at last season's MIAC meet. Brandon Engebos and Brian Parkhurst are other veterans battling for a lineup spot. Freshmen Alex Kapraun, Bennett Schroeder, Pat Larkin and Sam Reber have played well thus far.

UST's varsity has a 302.1 stroke average through seven rounds. Leading the team have been Mortenson (74.7 average), Schroeder (75.9), Kapraun (76.1), Young (77.3), Larkin (77.3), Engebos (78.0) and Parkhurst (78.6).

The Tommies have played all the MIAC rivals close but will need to play with more consistency this weekend to contend to for a top-two finish.