

2005-2006 MIAC MEN'S HOCKEY PREVIEW

As the weather changes from fall to winter Minnesotans know that it is time once again for hockey season. This year the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) will again feature some of the best hockey in the nation. Perennial national title contenders Saint John's and St. Thomas will be strong in 2005-06. While Bethel, St. Olaf, Augsburg, and Gustavus will all battle to make the five-team MIAC Playoffs at the end of the season. Looking to improve upon last season's performance will be Saint Mary's, Concordia, and Hamline.

Saint John's edged out St. Thomas with five of the nine first-place votes for the top spot in the 2005 MIAC Preseason Men's Hockey Coaches Poll. The three-time defending MIAC regular season champion Johnnies are expected to return three All-America players from last year's team that went 23-3-2 overall and 14-1-1 in the MIAC. Saint John's is expected to return 21 players from last year's squad, including 12 forwards, eight defensemen and one goalie. SJU's returning All-Americans include first-team selections senior goalie Adam Hanna and senior defenseman Darryl Smoleroff, and second-teamer senior forward Scott Bjorklund.

St. Thomas looks to end Saint John's MIAC regular season championship streak at three with their talented squad this year. The Tommies will need to replace two All-America forwards and two effective goalies from last season's NCAA Division III runner-up team. Coach TerrySkrypek is hoping the momentum and confidence will carry over from that 20-6-5 team, buoyed by 24 returners and a strong recruiting class of 12 newcomers. Three senior co-captains John Bottoms, Brandon Wilcox, and Dan Krmpotich will lead the Tommies this season.

Hoping to build upon the record success of last season, Bethel is picked to finish third in the MIAC. The Royals finished MIAC play tied for third at 17-9, setting a new season record for the most wins and best winning percentage (.654) in their history. Bethel also made the playoffs for the first time in four years, losing to eventual national runner up St. Thomas 4-3 in overtime. This season Bethel will be led by 2005 Preseason All-American Honorable Mention forward Ryan Adams.

Coming off back-to-back MIAC playoffs appearances, St. Olaf is slotted to finish fourth in the MIAC by the coaches this season. The Oles have a talented squad back ready to make another run at the postseason. St. Olaf collected their first ever MIAC postseason win last year with a 3-2 decision over Gustavus in the first round. In the semifinals, they fell to Saint John's in overtime. St. Olaf will be anchored by senior goaltender Dan Kehler, the reigning NCAA goals against average statistical leader.

With a young and talented group of returnees Augsburg is picked to finish tied with Gustavus for fifth place. The Auggies return most of its scoring punch from last year's club, and feature just 17 upperclassmen and 25 underclassmen on the roster. Preseason All-American Honorable Mention junior forward Critter Nagurski will be a player to watch this season for Augsburg.

Much like Augsburg, Gustavus will rely heavily on underclassmen. Head Coach Brett Petersen welcomed 14 newcomers to his 26-man squad and has been impressed with the youthful energy that has been present at practices. Senior defenseman Keith Detlefsen will be the leader of the young Gusties this season. Detlefsen led the nation in scoring by a defenseman last year and is a serious threat to score on the power play

Saint Mary's will be hungry to make the MIAC playoffs after narrowly missing out last season. The Cardinals return seven of their top nine scorers from 2004-05. Senior forward Adam Fingerhut will lead Saint Mary's this season after leading the Cardinals in goals last year with 11.

Concordia will look to end a three-year postseason playoff drought this season. The Cobbers will need to improve in all facets of their game if they hope to make a playoff run. A pair of seniors will lead the Cobber offensive attack. Brice Berggren and Mike Vlasak will be counted on to lead by example in 2005-06.


Led by first-year head coach Scott Bell, Hamline will be look to improve upon last season's ninth place finish. The Pipers will be led on the ice by senior defensemen Shane Wagner and Ben Gustafson. This season, Hamline will play all of their homes contests at St. Paul's Drake Arena.

The 2005-06 MIAC Men's Hockey season opens up this Friday, November 4 with two weeks of non-conference games. MIAC play will start on Friday, November 18. The MIAC Playoffs will be held February 28 - March 4., 2006


2005-06 MIAC Preseason Men's Hockey Coaches Poll

(First Place Votes in Parentheses)


- 1. Saint John's (5)
- 2. St. Thomas (4)
- 3. Bethel
- 4. St. Olaf
- T5. Augsburg
- T5. Gustavus
- 7. Saint Mary's
- 8. Concordia
- 9. Hamline

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| Augsburg College | |  |
| Head Coach: | Mike Schwartz (10th season) | |


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| 2004-05 Record: | 9-11-5 overall, 5-8-3 MIAC (Tied 6th) | |
| Key Returners: | <p>Critter Nagurski (Jr., F, International Falls, Minn.)</p> <p>Aaron Johnson (Jr., F, Plymouth, Minn./Robbinsdale Armstrong)</p> <p>Danny Carlson (So., F, Roseville, Minn.)</p> <p>Tony Ciro (Sr., G, Spring Lake Park, Minn./Hill-Murray)</p> <p>Brett Osness (Sr., F, Calgary, Alberta/Springbrook)</p> <p>Joe Haehn (Sr., F, Minneapolis, Minn./Washburn)</p> | |
| Season Preview: | <p>Augsburg returns most of its scoring punch from last year's club, and features just 17 upperclassmen (nine seniors, eight juniors) and 25 underclassmen (14 freshmen, 15 sophomores) on the roster.</p> <p>The Auggies have had two of their most successful recruiting classes in recent history in the last two years, with head coach Mike Schwartz and his staff reaching substantially into the junior hockey ranks. As a result, the young players are coming into the program with significant experience and talent, which has Schwartz positive about his team showing continued improvement this season.</p> <p>Augsburg finished 8-12-5 overall, 5-8-3 in Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference play last season. The Auggies aim to return to the MIAC's five-team postseason playoffs this season after a two-year absence.</p> <p>"We're still a very young team, but we have had two of our best recruiting classes in the last two years," said Schwartz, entering his 10th season as Augsburg's head coach. "The most important thing for this group of kids is to play as team and not worry about who will get the points. If they can stay unselfish and share the wealth, we're going to be in for a lot of fun this year."</p> <p>One of the biggest additions to the Auggie lineup won't actually be on the ice, however. Chris Brown, who was an assistant coach under Schwartz in the 1996-97 season, returns to Augsburg this season to join Schwartz again on the bench as an assistant coach. Brown was a successful head coach for four seasons (2000-04) at Marian (Wis.), leading the Sabres to prominence in the Midwest Collegiate Hockey Association. Last season, he served as head coach at MIAC rival Hamline University.</p> <p>Four of the top five scorers from last year's team return to the Auggie lineup this season, including two of the top scorers in the MIAC in forwards Aaron Johnson (Jr., Plymouth, Minn./Robbinsdale Armstrong HS) and Critter Nagurski (Jr., International Falls, Minn.).</p> <p>Johnson, the team's leader in scoring last season (10 goals, 25 assists, 35 points), led the MIAC in assists (20 in league play) and had the ninth-most assists in the Division III national rankings, in his first year as an Auggie after transferring from Division I Michigan Tech. He earned All-MIAC first-team honors last season.</p> <p>Nagurski, a USCHO Division III Preseason All-USCHO honorable-mention selection this year, was the top goal-scorer in the conference (14 goals in league play), while leading the Auggies with 17 goals overall, adding 15 assists for 32 points and a team-high seven power-play tallies. He also earned All-MIAC first-team honors last season, after earning all-conference honorable-mention honors his freshman campaign.</p> <p>Forward Danny Carlson (So., Roseville, Minn.) also returns to the Auggie lineup after a successful freshman campaign, which saw him earn All-MIAC Rookie Team and All-MIAC honorable-mention honors. Carlson finished with 27 points (six goals, 21 assists), the 18th-best total among Division III rookies last season.</p> <p>Tony Ciro (Sr., Spring Lake Park, Minn./Hill-Murray HS), who had a solid season in goal in his first season at Augsburg after transferring from Bethel, is back for his senior season as Augsburg's primary netminder. Ciro saw all but one period of action in goal last season for the Auggies, compiling a 3.57 goals-against-average and .893 save percentage, along with two shutouts.</p> <p>Complete Augsburg preview at: http://www.augsburg.edu/athletics/mhockey/0506preview.html</p> | |

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| Bethel University | |  |
| Head Coach: | Peter Aus (13th season) | |
| 2004-05 Record: | 17-8-0 overall, 10-6-0 MIAC (Tied 3rd) | |


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| Key Returners: | <p>Ryan Adams (FW, Litchfield, Minn.)</p> <p>Neal Carlson (D, Roseville, Minn.)</p> <p>Brian Saintey (D, Rosemount, Minn.)</p> <p>Dan Bonne (FW, White Bear Lake, Minn.)</p> <p>Dustin Thompson (G, Lino Lakes, Minn.)</p> <p>Steve Eastman (FW, Edina, Minn.)</p> |
| Season Preview: | <p>The bar is set for the Men's Hockey team at Bethel University coming into the 2005-06 season after last season brought some new highs for the Royals. The team opened the season with the best record (4-2) in the MIAC vs. the NCHA and the Royals proceeded to finished MIAC play tied for third, setting a new season record mark of 17-9, for the most wins and best winning percentage (.654) in their history. Bethel also made the playoffs for the first time in four years, losing to eventual national runner up St. Thomas 4-3 in overtime.</p> <p>Though expectations are high, there are some skates to fill as Bethel graduated four seniors including Captain and All-MIAC player Dan Ubl, Kris Birch who finished fifth in the MIAC in scoring, Josh Storm and assistant captain Mitch Severson. All four contributed in significant ways and will be missed.</p> <p>Bethel does, however, return a solid core of veteran forwards led by junior, All-MIAC player Ryan Adams (Litchfield, Minn.) Adams, a pre-season All-American honorable mention selection, played two-years of Junior hockey before coming to Bethel. He scored a team high twenty goals and added four assists for the Royals last season. As an assistant captain this year, Adams will be looked upon to continue leading both on and off the ice. Joining Adams will be junior, Jon Kramer (St. Paul Como) and sophomores Dan Bonne (WBL), Jeff Balvin (Maple Grove) and Steve Eastman (Edina). Bonne, the Royal's point leader as a freshman last season, will look to continue his strong play through his offensive and defensive gifts.</p> <p>On defense, the Royals return five of their top six defensemen led by senior captain Ryan Gallagher (Lancaster, CA). Gallagher played midget AAA for the Dallas Stars before coming to Bethel and has provided stability as a three-year regular. He is a three time winner of the Thomas C. Correll Award which is voted on by the players and is handed out to the individual who exemplifies the highest qualities of the Christian Athlete on the ice and in life. Assistant captains Brian Saintey (Rosemount) and Neal Carlson (Roseville) along with Nate Peasley (No. St. Paul) round out a tough defensive unit. Although small in stature, Saintey plays big and is strong on his skates. With excellent balance and agility, Brian moves the puck well and has the ability to be an offensive threat. Carlson, an All-MIAC honorable mention selection, is able to see the ice well and provides sure passing to a dangerous Royal offense. He is also a key member of Bethel's power play and penalty kill units.</p> <p>In the net, the Royals return two-year starter Dustin Thompson. A junior from Centennial, Thompson was a key to the Royals setting a team record for fewest goals allowed in 2004-05. Thompson recorded two-shutouts last season which is the most by any goal tender in a season for the Royals and is tied for most in a career. Dustin's consistent play will be a key to how far the Royals advance this season.</p> <p>Complete Bethel preview at: http://cas.bethel.edu/athletics/Hockey/2006/preview.htm</p> |


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| Concordia College | |  |
| Head Coach: | Steve Baumgartner (20th season) | |
| 2004-05 Record: | 4-20-1 overall, 3-13-0 MIAC (8th) | |
| Key Returners: | <p>Brice Berggren (Sr., F, Cokato, Minn./Dassel-Cokato)</p> <p>Mike Vlasak (Sr., F, Rochester, Minn./Rochester Mayo)</p> <p>Mark Buchholz (Jr., D, Moorhead, Minn.)</p> <p>Brett Johnson (Sr., D, Thief River Falls, Minn./Lincoln)</p> | |

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| Season Preview: | <p>It's been three years since the Cobbers have made the postseason and 20th year head coach Steve Baumgartner is aching to find a way to return to the MIAC tournament. His 2005-06 squad will have to put behind the 4-20-1 season from a year ago and quickly find a way to add consistent scoring and solid goaltending.</p> <p>Last year the Cobbers were second to last in goals scored and goals allowed. Concordia scored more than three goals in a game in only 10 of their 25 games and allowed more than three goals on 21 different occasions.</p> <p>Despite last year's rollercoaster ride, there is room for optimism in the Cobber camp as a year of maturity and several strong newcomers should have Concordia back in the hunt for one of the playoff spots come March.</p> <p>A pair of seniors will lead the Cobber offensive attack. Brice Berggren (Cokato, Minn./Dassel-Cokato HS) and Mike Vlasak (Rochester, Minn./Rochester Mayo HS) will be counted on to lead by example in 2005-06. Berggren is a hard-nosed player who is always working and trying to make things happen. His ability to drive to the net and make his linemates better should help him improve on his point total from last year. Vlasak was third on the team in scoring in 2004-05 with seven goals and eight assists for 15 points. He will need to have his best year as a Cobber in order for the team to put consistent numbers on the board.</p> <p>Defensively, Concordia has a pair of seasoned players who will help tighten the opposing team's offense and hopefully cut down on the number of goals against from last season. Brett Johnson (Sr., Thief River Falls, Minn./Lincoln HS) has the most college experience of any defenseman on the team. He has played in 71 games as a Cobber and will be hoping to duplicate his freshman assist numbers when he led the team in assists with 14. Mark Buchholz (Jr., Moorhead, Minn.) is one of the most gifted players on the team. He transferred from the University of Findlay midway through his freshman season and has been hampered by nagging injuries the past two years. His ability to play both ways will help Concordia shore up the blueline in 2005-06.</p> <p>The biggest question mark for the Cobbers will be in goal. Two returning netminders will be pushed by a newcomer with Baumgartner hoping that one of the three runs away with the job and gives Concordia a clear-cut #1 goaltender. Mike Dowers (So., Thief River Falls, Minn./Lincoln HS) saw the most action in 2004-05, playing in 15 games and picking up three of the team's four wins. He also led the team in goals against average with a 4.04 mark. Josh Hand (So., Temple, Pa./Holy Name HS) played in 11 games and posted a goals against average of 5.67. Both goalies have the ability to be a top-level college goalie but need to be more consistent and not allow the occasional "soft" goal. Freshman Jeremy Boniface (Goderich, Ont./St. Annes SS) has a chance to make an immediate impact. He is a product of the junior leagues in Ontario and has a chance to push for the starting position right away.</p> <p>If the Cobbers can produce consistency and a more explosive offensive attack, then they have the chance to give head coach Steve Baumgartner a perfect present for his platinum anniversary behind the Cobber bench – a return trip to the playoffs.</p> |
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| <u>Gustavus Adolphus College</u> | |  |
| Head Coach: | Brett Petersen (6th season) | |
| 2004-05 Record: | 10-15-1 overall, 7-8-1 MIAC (5th) | |
| Key Returners: | Keith Detlefsen (Sr., Defense) Mike Hosfield (Jr., Forward) Loren Havemeier (Sr., Forward) Eric Lindquist (Sr., Defense) Jay Phillips (Jr., Defense) Erik Kraska (Sr., Goaltender) | |

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| Season Preview: | <p>The 2005-06 Gustavus men's hockey team will sport a new look due to the graduation of large senior class from last year's squad. Head Coach Brett Petersen welcomed 14 newcomers to his 26-man squad and he has been impressed with the youthful energy that has been present at the pre-season practices. The initial goal according to Petersen is to get everybody on the same page as early as possible, however he realizes that there will very likely be some growing pains as this young group comes of age.</p> <p>The Gusties will look to their five seniors to provide leadership on and off the ice. This group includes defenseman Keith Detlefsen, forward Loren Havemeier, defenseman Eric Lindquist, forward Steven Dusich, and goaltender Erik Kraska. Detlefsen led the nation in scoring by a defenseman last year with 13 goals and 24 assists for 37 points. He is a serious threat to score on the power play. Lindquist is the traditional stay-at-home defenseman, who controls the blue-line, while Detlefsen makes his rushes into the offensive end. Havemeier is a four-year starter at forward. He recorded 11 goals and 9 assists for 20 points last season in spite of missing six games with an assortment of injuries. Dusich contributed 3 goals and 4 assists for 7 points in 11 games. Kraska is the lone returning goaltender with any significant experience. He logged more minutes than any other netminder on the squad a year ago and compiled a record of 8-2-1 with a goals against average of 2.75.</p> <p>Other top returners include last year's second leading scorer junior forward Mike Hosfield (9g, 12a), junior forward Steven Jensen (7g, 9a), junior defenseman Jon Keseley (7g, 10a), sophomore forward Ben Olilla (6g, 5a) and junior defenseman Jay Phillips (2g, 3a). Top newcomers include Sami Idris, a sophomore transfer from Bemidji State, Tim Ornel a sophomore transfer from Bethel, and Cody Drysdale, a sophomore transfer from Hamline.</p> <p>The Gusties open the season with games against Northern Collegiate Hockey Alliance foes UW-Stout (Nov. 4), UW-River Falls (Nov. 5), St. Scholastica (Nov. 11), and UW-Superior (Nov. 12). The team opens MIAC play in early December against Concordia and Hamline.</p> <p>Complete Gustavus preview at: http://www.gustavus.edu/oncampus/athletics/news.cfm?view=hky&id=1686</p> |
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| <u>Hamline University</u> | |  |
| Head Coach: | Scott Bell (1st season) | |
| 2004-05 Record: | 4-20-1 overall, 1-14-1 MIAC (9th) | |
| Key Returners: | Shane Wagner (Sr., D, 6-0, 185, Stillwater, Minn.) Ben Gustafson (Sr., D, 6-0, 200, Elk River, Minn.) | |
| Season Preview: | <p>First-year head coach Scott Bell makes no excuses for where the Hamline men's hockey program has been in the past few seasons, and he has no qualms as to where it is headed. There is a fresh start for the Pipers in 2005-06, and Bell has set the bar high.</p> <p>"Our minimum goal for the season is to make the MIAC playoffs and give ourselves a chance to compete for a championship," Bell said. "I don't know if it's possible or not, but you should set your goals high. Anybody with any kind of competitive spirit always goes into a game thinking they're going to win."</p> <p>Hamline returns just seven players from last season's squad that finished 4-20-1, 1-14-1 in the MIAC. Bell will welcome an incoming class of 20 skaters who are energized to turn the program around.</p> <p>"Having only seven returners isn't necessarily a bad thing because everybody that is here is here because they want to be here, and they are excited about it," Bell said. "Whatever has happened in the past doesn't really affect them or me because we're going forward. We'll be judged on what we do – not what the teams of the past have done."</p> <p>Complete Hamline preview at: http://www.hamline.edu/hamline_info/athletics/mens_hockey/0506/outlook.html</p> | |

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| <u>Saint John's University</u> | |  |
| Head Coach: | John Harrington (13th season) | |
| 2004-05 Record: | 23-3-4 overall, 14-1-1 MIAC (1st) | |
| Key Returners: | Adam Hanna (Sr., Goalkeeper) Ryan Langenbrunner (Sr., Forward) Darryl Smoleroff (Sr., Defense) Scott Bjorklund (Sr., Forward) | |


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| Season Preview: | <p>The three-time defending MIAC regular season champion Saint John's University hockey team is expected to return seven of its top 10 point scorers, six of its top 10 goal scorers and three All-America players from last year's team that went 23-3-2 overall and 14-1-1 in the MIAC.</p> <p>Last year's record was the best in school history. The Johnnies made it to the NCAA tournament for the fifth time in school history. They fell short of advancing beyond the first round of the NCAA playoffs, losing to visiting St. Thomas 4-1. This was the first time since 1997 that Saint John 's had hosted an NCAA playoff game.</p> <p>SJU's record of 23-3-2 (14-1-1 MIAC) last season marks the third season in a row, and the fourth time in school history that a SJU team has won at least 20 games in a season. The Johnnies also set school records last year for winning percentage at .857 and team goals against average at 1.69. SJU led the country in winning percentage and in penalty kill. Saint John's was also fifth among all NCAA Division III schools in hockey attendance during the 2004-05 season, averaging 1,171 fans during 16 home games.</p> <p>This year's team is excited about the season and is looking to surpass last year's success and make it into the NCAA tournament for the second-consecutive year.</p> <p>SJU is expected to return 21 players from last year's squad, including 12 forwards, eight defensemen and one goalie.</p> <p>SJU's returning All-Americans include first-team selections senior goalie Adam Hanna (Owatonna, Minn.) and senior defenseman Darryl Smoleroff (Maple Grove, Minn.), along with senior forward Scott Bjorklund (Moorhead, Minn.) who was named to the second team. Smoleroff will be this year's captain. Bjorklund and senior forward Aaron Getchell (Corcoran/Maple Grove, Minn.) will be the alternate captains.</p> <p>SJU will need to replace defenseman Adam Holmgren (Blaine, Minn.), a All-MIAC First Team selection, forwards Mike Hanke (Antigo, Wis.) and Brady Lundblad (Hugo/Centennial, Minn.) and goalies Chris Gornick (St.Paul/Cretin-Derham Hall, Minn.) and Aaron Bulman (Maple Grove/Wayzata, Minn.), all of whom graduated.</p> <p>John Harrington will enter his 13th season as head hockey coach at SJU. The all-time winningest hockey coach in school history, Harrington is looking to improve his record of 203-109-24 overall and 133-41-18 in the MIAC.</p> <p>The Johnnies have gone to the MIAC playoffs 11 times and NCAA tournament five times under Harrington's tenure. Adding another winning season last year, the Johnnies have now had 10 consecutive winning seasons (1996-2005), the longest streak in school history.</p> <p>SJU has 12 home games scheduled at the National Hockey Center in 2005-06 and will open its season at home on Nov. 4 against St. Norbert, Wis.</p> <p>Complete Saint John's preview at: http://www.gojohnnies.com/hockey/0506hockeypreview.htm</p> |
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| Saint Mary's University | |  |
| Head Coach: | Don Olson (29th season) | |
| 2004-05 Record: | 10-14-1 overall, 6-9-1 MIAC (Tied 6th) | |
| Key Returners: | Adam Fingerhut (Sr., F, Oak Brook, Ill.) Jesse Polk (So., F, Hastings, Minn.) David Gross (So., F, Grasston, Minn.) Marcus Reszka (Sr., D, Winona, Minn.) | |

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| Season Preview: | <p>They were so close, they could taste it.</p> <p>Heading into the final week of the regular season a year ago, the Saint Mary's University men's hockey team needed two wins against St. Olaf to earn a second straight trip to the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Tournament.</p> <p>Instead, the Cardinals suffered back-to-back 3-2 decisions to the Oles — the second in overtime — and were forced to spend their time watching the playoffs, rather than playing in them.</p> <p>And that did not sit well.</p> <p>"The way last season ended was tough," admitted SMU coach Don Olson, whose team finished with a 10-14-1 overall record. "We were so close (to the post-season), and to lose like we did, in the last weekend of the season ... it was frustrating."</p> <p>As frustrating as those two losses to St. Olaf may have been, there was one positive to come out of it — it fueled the Cardinals' hunger — a hunger that grew throughout the long off-season.</p> <p>"Everyone worked very hard during the off-season and have come in hungry and ready to play," said Olson, who returns seven of his top nine scorers — including leading goal scorer Adam Fingerhut (Oak Brook, Ill.), who netted 11 goals in SMU's 25 games. "We've still got some work to do putting all the pieces together, but so far I like what I've seen."</p> <p>Complete Saint Mary's preview at: http://sports.smumn.edu/m_hockey/2005/newsletter/mhpreview.html</p> |
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| St. Olaf College | |  |
| Head Coach: | Sean Goldsworthy (8th season) | |
| 2004-05 Record: | 14-7-6 overall, 8-4-4 MIAC (Tied 3rd) | |
| Key Returners: | <p>Dan Kehler (Sr., G, Woodbury, Minn./Great Falls - NAHL)</p> <p>Will Wetterlin (Sr., D, Edina, Minn.)</p> <p>Ted Bickel (Sr., F, Minnetonka, Minn.)</p> <p>Josh Biser (Sr., F, Waunakee, Wis./IRYJ - MJHL)</p> <p>Johl Ihrie (Sr., F, Woodinville, Wash./Springfield - NAHL)</p> | |

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| Season Preview: | <p>The St. Olaf men's hockey team, off back-to-back MIAC playoffs appearances, has a talented pool back ready to make another run at the postseason.</p> <p>St. Olaf collected their first MIAC postseason win with a 3-2 decision over Gustavus in the first round before falling to second-ranked Saint John's in overtime in the semifinals last winter.</p> <p>The Oles are built around all-conference goaltender Dan Kehler (Sr., Woodbury, Minn./Great Falls - NAHL). Kehler was the NCAA statistical champion in goals against average last season, allowing 2.42 tallies a contest.</p> <p>Kehler has plenty of support in the defensive zone. Will Wetterlin (Sr., Edina, Minn.), an All-MIAC pick in 04-05, and Andrew Gastineau (Jr., Rochester, Minn./Mayo) will help lead a unit that was second in the MIAC in goals against. St. Olaf also took just over 12 minutes of penalties a game, the least in the league last year.</p> <p>The defense welcomes the return of Sophomore John Paulson (Eden Prairie, Minn./St. Louis-USHL) and Mitch Mudra (Jr., Edina, Minn.). Paulson had seven goals and seven assists in his first campaign.</p> <p>First years Ryan Hampson (Fy, Chanhassen, Minn./Bismarck - NAHL) and Sam Windsor (Fy, Plymouth, Minn./Minnesota - NAHL) will get in the mix as well.</p> <p>The graduation of captain and 111-career point man Keith Townsend (seven goals, 19 assists) and Pat Gilles (six goals, 11 assists) lend offensive opportunities in 2005-06.</p> <p>Ted Bickel (Sr., Minnetonka, Minn.) had a team-high 16 goals, twice as many as the next best, on the way to a 26-point season last year. He had seven power play goals and three game-winners, including the deciding goal in the win over Gustavus in the first round of the MIAC playoffs.</p> <p>Bickel has plenty of support. Captain Josh Biser (Sr., Waunakee, Wis./IRYJ - MJHL) and Johl Ihrie (Sr., Woodinville, Wash./Springfield - NAHL) combined for 15 goals and 15 assists last fall, and the duo has amassed 98 points in their careers. Juniors John Egge (Wisconsin Rapids, Wis./Central Texas - NAHL) and Kyle Hilmerhausen (Wausau, Wis./Central Texas - NAHL) could have breakout years after 18- and 11-point seasons last winter.</p> <p>The sophomore class is among the best in the MIAC. Mike MacMillian (So., Buffalo, Minn./Billings - NAHL) had eight goals and 17 assists in his first season, while Jeff Budish (So, Edina, Minn./ Fargo - NAHL) tallied 15 points and Justin Green (So., Shorewood, Minn./Fort Francis - SIJHL) had eight.</p> <p>The Oles have a group of talented first year forwards including Nick Stalock (So. St. Paul, Minn./ Santa Fe - NAHL), Casey Dynan (Orono, Minn./Bismarck - NAHL) and Andrew Birkholz (Maple Grove, Minn./ Breck HS).</p> <p>St. Olaf opens with No. 13 UW-River Falls at home Friday. They then play three straight on the road - UW-Stout on Saturday, No. 7 UW-Superior and St. Scholastica the following weekend. The Oles open MIAC play with Bethel (11/18-19), No. 3 St. Thomas (12/3-4) and Augsburg (12/10-11) before the holiday break.</p> <p>Complete St. Olaf preview at: http://fusion.stolaf.edu/athletics//index.cfm?fuseaction=NewsDetails&id=553</p> |
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| University of St. Thomas | |  |
| Head Coach: | Terry Skrypek (19th season) | |
| 2004-05 Record: | 20-6-5 overall, 12-3-1 MIAC (2nd) | |
| Key Returners: | Brandon Wilcox (Sr., Forward) Dan Krmpotich (Sr., Forward) Nick Harris (Jr., Forward) John Bottoms (Sr., Defense) Andrew Edwards (Sr., Defense) Eric Weum (Sr., Defense) | |

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| Season Preview: | <p>Coach Terry Skrypek graduated two All-American forwards and two effective goalies from last season's NCAA Division III runner-up squad. Yet the Tommies feel they have the potential for an even better team in 2005-06.</p> <p>The Toms caught fire last February and reeled off eight consecutive wins to reach the national championship game, where they lost to host Middlebury 5-0. Skrypek is hoping that momentum and confidence will carry over from that 20-6-5 team, buoyed by 24 returners and a strong recruiting class of 12 newcomers.</p> <p>Last year UST leaned heavily on All-Americans Dustan Lick (112 career points) and Anthony Blumer (113 career points), as well as senior goalies Zach Sikich (33-15-6 career, .910 save%, 2.63 GAA) and Kevin Hennessey. When Lick was sidelined in February with a broken leg, the team's depth kicked in.</p> <p>"Our balance will be the strength of our team," Skrypek said. "I think we can put any line out on the ice and be just as effective."</p> <p>Skrypek's biggest challenge on his deep and balanced roster this season could be to get his talent to play together and accept roles.</p> <p>"The key to our season will be our chemistry," Skrypek said. "Last year we had great chemistry. A lot of guys are back and some talented guys have joined the team. How do we keep them all happy?"</p> <p>Three seniors - co-captains John Bottoms (2X All-MIAC) and Brandon Wilcox (preseason All-American, 100 career points) and Dan Krmpotich -- will lead the returners. Krmpotich had 14 goals and 11 assists in his last 15 games last season to lead the run to the national championship game.</p> <p>UST's only open position in preseason is goaltender. The top three candidates are senior Jeremy Earl, junior transfer Treye Kettwick of Army, and freshman Jake Maida of Duluth East, who played one season of Junior A hockey.</p> <p>Three other transfers expected to help are senior Tim Dwyer, an all-conference defender from UW-River Falls; senior defender Adam Meyer, who scored 40 points in three seasons at Gustavus; and sophomore forward Nick Pernula, who played one semester at Division I Robert Morris.</p> <p>The Tommies, ranked third nationally in the preseason poll, will play another tough schedule, including road non-conference games vs. Norwich, St. Norbert, UW-River Falls and Lake Forest. Skrypek expects another dogfight in the MIAC, where three-time conference regular-season champ St. John's returns most of its team. He also said teams like Bethel and St. Olaf will be dangerous, with Augsburg, St. Mary's and Gustavus capable of surprising.</p> <p>UST is 17-5-2 since moving its home ice to Saint Thomas Ice Arena in Mendota Heights in January 2004. The Toms open play in 2005-06 at home vs. UW-Stevens Point and UW-Eau Claire, Nov. 4-5.</p> <p>Last season, the Tommies recorded their 23rd consecutive winning season and 21st top-two conference finish in the last 23 years. They reached the MIAC playoff title game for the 18th time in the 20-year history of the format. In 19 games vs. MIAC teams, the Toms allowed only 45 goals and went 16-2-1.</p> <p>Skrypek, the Division III National Coach of the Year, surpassed 300 career victories in 2002-03 and joined a select group to win 300 games in both high school and college. He ranks in the top 10 among active Division III coaches in wins and winning percentage. He comes into 2004-05 with a 340-149-36 record (.682 win%). He has never had a losing hockey season in 43 seasons as a high school and college player and head coach.</p> <p>Complete St. Thomas preview at: http://www.stthomas.edu/tommies/shared/shownews.cfm?ArticleID=3801</p> |
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