

2016-17 MIAC Men's Hockey Preview and Preseason Coaches' Poll

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2016-17 MIAC Men's Hockey Season Preview

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. – The only college hockey conference completely contained by the "State of Hockey's" borders is ready to begin another exciting campaign, as the 2016 Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) Men's Hockey Showcase will officially drop the puck for all nine teams, as they begin the 2016-17 season in style.

Once again, a men's hockey season in the MIAC opens with all nine teams harboring high hopes of competing for the MIAC championship, a spot in the five-team MIAC Playoffs, or a trip to the NCAA Tournament, and recent history suggests that when the MIAC's teams all get together on the ice, literally anything can happen.

Since 2006-17, seven of the MIAC's nine teams have won the conference's regular-season championship. In that span, only St. Thomas (four) has won more than two titles, which is evidence of the league's parity year-in and year-out. That equality extends to the Playoffs, where a different team has won each of the last five conference postseason tournaments. In the last six years, all but one of the MIAC's nine teams have appeared in the MIAC Playoff championship game, proving that it literally could be anyone's year.

Just last season (2015-16), Augsburg was picked to finish fifth in the MIAC Preseason Coaches' Poll, only to see the Auggies compile a remarkable 11-3-2 conference record and 36 points in the standings to claim their first MIAC title since 1997-98. The year before, it was the remarkable, simultaneous turnaround stories of Hamline and Saint Mary's, which culminated in the two of them meeting in the MIAC Playoff championship game.

In short, when it comes to MIAC men's hockey, anything is possible. And in such a hockey-crazy state, that's extremely good news.

In addition to its MIAC regular-season title, Augsburg compiled a 17-9-2 overall record and outlasted Saint John's in an epic three-overtime Playoff championship game to add the league's postseason title and an NCAA appearance to an unforgettable season for Head Coach Chris Brown and his club.

The Auggies barely edged St. Thomas (13-8-5, 10-3-3 MIAC) and the Johnnies (13-10-4, 10-4-2 MIAC) for the regular-season crown, as they finished second and third with 34 and 33 points, respectively, to give the MIAC a formidable top three that was separated by just three points.

Concordia (10-14-2, 8-7-1 MIAC) was solidly in fourth with 26 points a year ago, and Hamline (10-12-5, 6-8-2 MIAC) used some final-weekend magic to finish fifth with 22 points and beat out a host of contenders for the fifth and final Playoff bid. Saint Mary's (9-14-2, 6-9-1 MIAC) and St. Olaf (6-14-5, 4-8-4 MIAC) both finished with 19 points and were just on the outside looking in, with Gustavus (6-14-5, 5-8-3 MIAC) just another point behind at 18. Bethel (4-19-2, 3-13 MIAC, nine points) rounded out the 2015-16 standings.

To add to the excitement of the new campaign, there's a new coach in the conference that is hardly a stranger to college hockey fans. Mike Eaves took over at St. Olaf after a remarkable run as the head coach at the University of Wisconsin, which included a national championship. His addition will bring some big-name recognition and an even brighter spotlight to one of Division III's signature hockey conferences.

In addition to a high-profile new face in the league, there are plenty of very familiar faces back on the ice as well, as only nine of last year's 20 All-Conference selections were seniors. That means there are 11 All-MIAC and an additional four Honorable Mention student-athletes that are all back for their respective teams.

Between the typical excitement in the "State of Hockey," the returning talent and the always unpredictable storylines in the MIAC, the 2016-17 could be shaping up to be one of the most unforgettable in recent memory. The puck can't drop fast enough.

COACHES CAST THEIR VOTES

Augsburg's incredible 2015-16 – along with the Auggies' returning talent and reigning MIAC Coach-of-the-Year – was certainly fresh in the



minds of the conference coaches when they cast their votes for the 2016-17 MIAC Men's Hockey Preseason Coaches' Poll. The Auggies finished atop the poll with 61 points and five first-place votes, and enter as the favorite to defend their titles. Augsburg is also receiving national love as the No. 13 team in the USCHO.com poll, and it's ranked 15th in the nation by D3hockey.com.

The Auggies' high hopes are well founded thanks to the return of several stars, led by senior goalie Jordyn Kaufer, who was an All-MIAC selection and a Second Team All-America West Region pick after his outstanding junior campaign. All-MIAC forwards Corbin Chapman and Nate Flynn also return to give Augsburg plenty of scoring punch as they skate out in defense of their crowns.

The coaches haven't forgotten about St. Thomas, which saw a streak of three-straight MIAC titles narrowly end a year ago. This year, the Tommies were picked by conference coaches to finish second, just four points behind Augsburg with 57, including two first-place votes. The team also received votes in both of the national polls. Head Coach Jeff Boeser will have to replace nine seniors, but has a great start with All-MIAC defender Johnny Roisum, Honorable Mention forward Michael Dockry and fellow forward Thomas Williams all back as his senior captains.

MIAC coaches also expect Saint John's to once again be in title contention after last year's third-place finish and Playoff run. The Johnnies also received two first-place votes, and a total of 49 points to finish third in the preseason poll. All-MIAC forward Huba Sekesi is back after leading SJU in points and assists a year ago, and senior forward Kevin Becker and sophomore defender Sean Lang are also back for Head Coach Doug Schueller's squad.

Though Saint Mary's narrowly missed the MIAC Playoffs in 2015-16, expectations are again high for the Cardinals both in the conference and nationally. Head Coach Bill Moore's team received 40 points to finish fourth in the MIAC Preseason Coaches' Poll, and they also received votes in the USCHO.com national rankings. The Cardinals won't lack any scoring punch this year, as a trio of All-Conference forwards all return. Martin Gruse and Bob Kinne are both two-time All-MIAC picks, and Gruse was an All-Region selection, and Jay Heinle joined that duo on the All-Conference team last season. Now, all three are back in Winona with unfinished business.

Concordia has been a constant presence in the MIAC Playoffs, with six-straight top-five finishes, and the conference coaches expect that to continue as the Cobbers were voted fifth in the poll with 37 points. Concordia is another team with tons of talent on offense, led by high-scoring junior Jon Grebosky and senior Garrett Hendrickson, that both earned conference recognition last year, and sophomore Mario Bianchi is poised to continue the breakout start to his collegiate career for Head Coach Chris Howe.

Gustavus and Hamline are also expected to contend for Playoff spots in 2016-17, as the Gusties received 27 points to finish sixth in the Preseason Coaches' Poll, and the Pipers were just two points back in seventh with 25 points. The Gusties bring back veteran forward Sam Majka and Colin Hernon, as well as All-Rookie Team goalie Chris Amsden, while Hamline will try to replace two of the nation's scoring leaders in MIAC Player-of-the-Year Charlie Adams and Brandon Zurn, but have high-scoring sophomore Mitch McPherson back, along with Mitch Hall and Jesse Kessler on the blue line.

St. Olaf was picked to finish eighth in Eaves' debut season with 20 points, and the new coach will begin to build his roster around experienced forwards Drew Otto and Sheven Sherman and sophomore goalie Eric Hancock. Bethel received eight points in the poll to finish ninth, and the Royals will hope senior defender Michael Bond and forwards Justin Bonanno and George Splichal can help get the team moving in the right direction.

Fortunately, fans only have to wait one more sleep for the season to start, as the eighth-annual MIAC Hockey Showcase begins Friday at Schwan Super Rink in Blaine, Minn. All nine teams will be in action over the three-day event, with each playing two games that will count as nonconference contests in the standings. The MIAC has a [web site](#) dedicated to the event that will include directions, ticket information, the game schedule, links to follow live stats, as well as recaps, photos, stats and more each day. The popular event is a perfect celebration of hockey in the MIAC, and in Minnesota.

The following weekend (Nov. 4-5) half of the conference's teams will begin conference play while the other half plays crossover games against the WIAC, and the following weekend those teams will flip. Nov. 18-19 will mark the first full weekend of MIAC action, and the battle for the MIAC title and five Playoff spots is expected to once again come down to the season's final weekend (Feb. 17-18). The MIAC Playoffs will follow over the course of the next two weeks, with the champion crowned on March 4, and the NCAA Tournament will conclude the season, with the MIAC Playoff champ earning an automatic bid to the national playoffs.

A CLOSER LOOK

The rest of the 2016-17 MIAC Men's Hockey Preview contains complete results from the 2016-17 Preseason Coaches' Poll, 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 hockey news, schedules, scores, stats and more throughout the 2016-17 season.

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

2016-17 MIAC Men's Hockey Preseason Coaches' Poll

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

2016-17 MIAC Men's Hockey Preseason Coaches' Poll

Rank	Institution	Total
1.	Augsburg (5)	61
2.	St. Thomas (2)	57
3.	Saint John's (2)	49
4.	Saint Mary's	40
5.	Concordia	37
6.	Gustavus	27
7.	Hamline	25
8.	St. Olaf	20
9.	Bethel	8

2016 MIAC Men's Hockey Showcase

The 2016 MIAC Men's Hockey Showcase will open the season in style as the popular three-day event at Schwan Super Rink in Blaine, Minn., will feature all nine MIAC teams making their season debuts. The Showcase will have three games each day going on simultaneously, with start times staggered by 30 minutes. The Showcase will be held Oct. 28, 29 and 30, with each of the nine MIAC teams playing two games over the course of the weekend to drop the puck on the 2016-17 season in style. The Showcase games will be counted as nonconference games in the standings, and serve as a season-opening celebration of the only Division III conference in "The State of Hockey." The [Showcase home page](#) contains full schedules, live stat links, team information and links, ticket information, directions and more, and it will be updated with results, recaps, photos and more throughout the event.

| [2016 MIAC Men's Hockey Showcase Home Page](#) |

2017 MIAC Men's Hockey Playoffs

The 2017 MIAC Playoffs will feature the top five teams in the conference standings playing in a high-seed-host, single-elimination postseason tournament. The lone quarterfinal game between the No. 4 and No. 5 seeds will be played Thursday, Feb. 23, with the two semifinal games to follow on Saturday, Feb. 25. The championship game is set for the following Saturday, March 4. The winner will receive the MIAC's automatic bid to the 2017 NCAA Division III Men's Hockey Tournament.

| [2017 MIAC Men's Hockey Playoffs](#) |

MIAC Men's Hockey Links

| [Website](#) | [Standings](#) | [Schedule](#) | [Statistics](#) | [News](#) | [Athletes-of-the-Week](#) | [Recordbook](#) | [Archives](#) |

Team-by-Team Previews

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



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

Head Coach

- Chris Brown (11th season at Augsburg, 16th overall)

A Year Ago

- 11-3-2 MIAC (Champions) | 17-9-2 Overall

In the 2015-16 Postseason

- MIAC playoff champions (W 5-2 over Hamline, W 5-4 (3OT) vs. Saint John's)
- NCAA Division III quarterfinalist (L 6-1 at St. Norbert)

Players to Watch

- Jordyn Kaufer (G, SR | AHCA D-III All-America West Region 2nd team in 2015; All-MIAC in 2015; 16-6-1 with 2.20 GAA, .924 save percentage and 3 shutouts in 2015-16; In 39 career games (including first two seasons at Concordia-Moorhead), has 23-11-4 record, 2.20 GAA, .920 save percentage and 4 shutouts.)
- Corbin Chapman (F, SR | All-MIAC and Academic All-MIAC in 2015-16 and 2014-15; 2nd on team in scoring in 2015-16 with 11G-11A--22P; Career totals (72 games) of 24G-34A--58P.)
- Nate Flynn (F, JR | All-MIAC and Academic All-MIAC in 2015-16; Team's leading scorer in 2015-16 with 16G-14A--30P, 4th in points, t-3rd in goals and t-8th in points among MIAC players in overall stats; Career totals (54 games) of 24G-16A--40P.)

Did You Know?

- Augsburg's men's hockey team had 13 student-athletes earn Academic All-MIAC honors in 2015-16, which honors student-athletes with

3.5 or greater cumulative grade-point averages while playing in at least 50 percent of a team's regular-season contests. During the last 10 years with Chris Brown as head coach, Augsburg men's hockey players have earned 72 Academic All-MIAC honors.



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

Head coach

- Charlie Burggraf (7th season)

A Year Ago

- 3-13 MIAC (9th place) | 4-19-2 Overall

Players to Watch

- Michael Bond (D, Sr. | 3 G, 8 A, 11 Pts.)
- Justin Bonanno (F, Jr. | 9 G, 5 A, 14 Pts.)
- George Splichal (F, So. | 8 G, 9 A, 17 Pts.)

Did You Know?

- The Royals will be traveling over Christmas break to Europe for nine days. From December 21-29 the squad will play several games while taking in the sights of Munich, Germany and Prague, Czech Republic.
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CONCORDIA | [Cobbers' men's hockey home page](#) |

Head coach

- Chris Howe (9th season)

A Year Ago

- 8-7-1 MIAC (4th place) | 10-14-2 Overall

Players to Watch

- Jon Grebosky (F, Jr. | 2016 MIAC All-Conference; led the team in scoring in 2016 with 11 goals and 14 assists for 25 points)
- Mario Bianchi (F, So. | Second on the team in goals scored and fourth in points in 2016 with 11 goals and four assists for 15 points)
- Garrett Hendrickson (F, Sr. | 2015 MIAC All-Conference Honorable mention; 20 goals and 34 assists for 54 points in his career)

Did You Know?

- Concordia has made the MIAC playoffs in five of the past six seasons and the Cobbers have finished in the Top 5 of the league for six straight seasons.
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GUSTAVUS | [Gusties' men's hockey home page](#) |

Head coach

- Brett Petersen (17th season)

A Year Ago

- 5-8-3 MIAC (8th place) | 6-14-5 Overall

Players to Watch

- Sam Majka (Forward, Sr. | Led team last season with 18 points last season on 5 goals and a team-best 13 assists ... +1 plus/minus ... one game-winning goal)
- Colin HERNON (Forward, Jr. | Led team last season with 8 goals ... had 8 assists and 16 points, which were second most on the team ... +2 plus/minus)
- Chris Amsden (So., Goalie | 2015-16 All-Rookie Team ... 13 games played/12 started ... 801:36 ... 2.62 goals against average911 save percentage ... 2-8-2)

Did You Know?

- The 2016-17 Gustavus men's hockey campaign marks a monumental milestone for the program as it celebrates 75 seasons at the College. The 75th season celebration will be highlighted by two events. The first event takes place Saturday, Nov. 19 as the Gustavus hockey community, along with family and friends of legendary coach Don Roberts, will celebrate Roberts' life with a 1 p.m. service at Christ Chapel. Roberts passed away July 24 at the age of 83 after a battle with degenerative heart disease. The keystone event of the 75th season celebration will be held on Nov. 19 as well, as the hockey team will host an all-alumni and friends celebration in Alumni Hall following the 5:05 p.m. game against Augsburg.
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HAMLIN | [Pipers' men's hockey home page](#) |

Head coach

- Cory Laylin (3rd season)

A Year Ago

- 6-8-2 MIAC (5th place) | 10-12-5 Overall

In the 2015-16 Postseason

- defeated Concordia, 3-0, and lost to Augsburg, 5-2 in MIAC playoffs

Players to Watch

- Mitch McPherson (F, So. Leading returning scorer with 13 G, 14 A)
- Mitch Hall (D, Jr., 3rd in MIAC in PP points w/14, led all MIAC defensemen with 25 pts.)
- Jesse Kessler (D, Jr., 2nd among MIAC defensemen with 22 pts, led HU with 19 blocked shots)

Did You Know?

- HU head coach Cory Laylin coached Team USA to a first place finish in the U17 Five Nations Cup Tournament in Dallas, Texas in August.
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SAINT JOHN'S | [Johnnies' men's hockey home page](#) |



Head coach

- Doug Schueller (Ninth season)

A Year Ago

- 10-4-2 MIAC (Third place) | 13-10-4 Overall

In the 2016 Postseason

- W, 2-1 (OT) at St. Thomas (MIAC Semifinals); L, 4-5 (3OT) at Augsburg (MIAC Championship)

Players to Watch

- Kevin Becker (F, Sr. | Played all 27 games for the Johnnies in 2015-16...finished third on the team with 18 points (6g/12a)...his 12 assists were good for second on the team...seven (1g/6a) of his 18 points came on the power play...has 44 points (16g/28a) in 75 career games)
- Sean Lang (D, So. | Named to the six-man MIAC All-Rookie team in 2015-16...played 25 games for SJU as a freshman...led all Johnnie defensemen with 13 points (7g/6a)...five points (2g/3a) were on the power play...tallied two game-winning goals and a shorthanded goal)
- Huba Sekesi (F, Jr. | 2015-16 All-MIAC first-team selection...2014-15 All-MIAC Rookie Team...led the Johnnies in points (25), assists (16) and power-play points (8) in 24 games...tied for second on the team with nine goals...finished third in the MIAC in points (19) and assists (12) in conference play, despite missing two league games...won a team-high 64.4 percent (309-171) of his faceoff draws...tallied nine points (3g/6a) in the Johnnies' final six games...has 36 points (16g/20a) in 48 career games)

Did You Know?

- SJU is 47-27-10 (.619) in MIAC, regular-season games after Jan. 1 under the direction of head coach Doug Schueller, including a 7-1-2 record last year.
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SAINT MARY'S | [Cardinals' men's hockey home page](#) |

Head coach

- Bill Moore (10th season)

A Year Ago

- 6-9-1 MIAC (6th place) | 9-14-2 Overall

Players to Watch

- Martin Gruse (Forward, Senior | 25 GP, 14 G, 17 A, 31 Pts.; 2-time First-Team All-MIAC ... D3hockey.com All-Region ... Posted second straight season of 30 or more points. ... 3rd in MIAC in points, 5th in goals and fourth in assists)
- Bob Kinne (Forward, Senior | 25 GP, 9 G, 18 A, 27 Pts.; 2-time First-Team All-MIAC ... Led team in assists and was 3rd in MIAC. ... Posted first collegiate hat trick and second collegiate three-assist game in 2015-16)
- Jay Heinle (Forward, Junior | 25 GP, 16 G, 8 A, 24 Pts. | First-Team All-MIAC ... Led team in goals and was 3rd in MIAC ... Scored 16 goals in 2016-16—after not scoring a single goal during his freshman year. ... Notched first collegiate hat trick vs. Bethel on Nov. 13.

Did You Know?

- Saint Mary's had a player dish out three assists in a game four times last season—Martin Gruse did it twice, while Bob Kinne and Kellen Wasell each achieved the feat once.
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ST. OLAF | [Oles' men's hockey home page](#) |

Head coach

- Mike Eaves (1st season)

A Year Ago

- 4-8-4 MIAC (7th place) | 6-14-5 Overall

Players to Watch

- Drew Otto (F, Jr. | Nine goals, seven assists in 2015-16.)
- Eric Hancock (G, So. | Went 3-3-2 in eight league games... .902 save percentage.)
- Steven Sherman (F, Sr. | 48 career points on 13 goals and 35 assists... All-MIAC in)

Did You Know?

- St. Olaf unveiled details about its intention to build an on-campus ice arena on Oct. 14 as a part of the college's \$200 million campaign, For the Hill and Beyond. The plans for the \$6 million, 860-seat facility include an NHL-size ice sheet, varsity locker rooms for the Ole men's and women's hockey programs, four visiting locker rooms, two officials locker rooms, an athletic training room, skate sharpening room and equipment room.



ST. THOMAS | [Tommies' men's hockey home page](#) |

Head coach

- Jeff Boeser (7th season)

A Year Ago

- 10-3-3 MIAC (2nd place) | 13-8-5 Overall

In the 2015-16 Postseason

- Lost 2-1 in overtime in MIAC playoff semifinals to St. John's

Players to Watch

- Michael Dockry (F, Sr., | HM All-MIAC; Captain; Career: 19 goals, 22 assists over 62 games)
- Johnny Roisum (D, Sr., | All-MIAC; Captain; Career: five goals, 20 assists over 47 games)
- Thomas Williams (F, Sr., | Captain; Career: 19 goals and 22 assists over 62 games)

Did You Know?

- The Tommies graduated nine seniors last season, including goalie Joe Morris, who played 96 percent of the minutes in net. Their 2016-17 roster has eight freshmen coming in from Juniors hockey and three transfers.

[MIAC Men's Hockey Home Page](#)