

2011 MIAC Men's Outdoor T&F Championship Preview

5/11/2011

ST. PETER, Minn. – The Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) will conclude its 2010-11 Playoffs and Championships with one of its marquee events this weekend: the 2011 MIAC Men's and Women's Outdoor Track & Field Championships. The event will be hosted by Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minn., and it will run both Friday and Saturday.



The University of St. Thomas looks to have a strong team in place to defend its 2010 title, and the Tommies have won 24 of the last 28 MIAC Men's Outdoor Track & Field Championships. However, UST received a strong test from Hamline University at this year's Indoor Championships, and this weekend's team race could also come down to the final event. The Pipers were second a year ago, and appear to be in position to challenge the Tommies again, and Bethel – last year's third-place team – also boasts a strong lineup in 2011.

There are plenty of returning champions in this year's field trying to defend individual MIAC titles, headlines by three-time champion **Jay Quick** of Bethel and two-time champ **Nick Ward** of Augsburg. Quick is going for a career sweep in the high jump after winning the event each of his first three seasons, and he enters with the top mark in the MIAC in 2011. Ward will also be one of the top runners to watch after winning the 100-meter dash as a freshman and again last year as a junior. He enters with the top time in that event this season, as well as the MIAC's top mark in the long jump.

St. Thomas freshman **Eyo Epko** will be one of the featured athletes in the field events after jumping his way to dual titles in the long jump and triple jump a year ago. Hamline's **John Yates** (javelin) and **Schaise Schuette** (pole vault) both return as defending champs in their events, and both have the top mark in the MIAC in said event this season. Saint Mary's **Andrew Brueggen** enters the weekend with the conference's top mark in the hammer throw, and looks to regain championship form after winning the title in 2009.

One defending champ already successfully defended his crown, as St. Thomas' **Devin Dirth** won the decathlon over the weekend in Northfield, Minn., as that event is held a week prior to the rest of the championships. Saint John's **Wade Powers** is also a defending champ in the discus, back in 2011 to try to defend his title.

Competition begins Friday with field events starting at noon, and track events starting at 2 p.m. Saturday's action starts with field events at 1:30 p.m., the steeplechase at 3:30 p.m. and the rest of the running events at 4 p.m. The final event, the 1,600-meter relay, is scheduled for 7 p.m., and a short awards presentation will follow to the men's and women's team champions. Tickets are \$7 for adults and \$3 for students with valid identification. There are no other discounts offered, and children 5 and under will be admitted free.

[2011 MIAC Outdoor Track & Field Championships Website](#)



Augsburg

Coach: Dennis Barker (17th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 5th (77 points)

Augsburg Championship Preview

Coming off of its best finish in the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference outdoor track and field championships in recent history, the Augsburg College men's track and field team will look to continue its upward move in the MIAC standings again this season at the outdoor championships in St. Peter, Minn.

Leading the Auggies again this year at the outdoor championships will be veteran sprinter Nick Ward (SR, Coon Rapids, Minn.). A two-time individual champion in the 100-meter dash, Ward will look to become the first MIAC sprinter since Jerry Washington of Gustavus to win the event three times in his career. Ward currently holds the fastest 100 time in the MIAC this season, as he clocked an NCAA championship provisional time of 10.73 seconds earlier this season at the Tom Cat Twilight Meet.

Ward will also look to add to the Augsburg point total in the 200-meter dash and long jump competitions. Ward currently owns the top distance among MIAC competitors in the long jump during the outdoor season, as he recorded a distance of 6.86 meters (22-feet-6.25) on April 2 at the Hamline Invitational.

Joining Ward in the sprint events will be the Augsburg duo of Rick Wolke (JR, Belle Plaine, Minn.) and Joe Arnold (JR, Grand Rapids, Minn.). Wolke, a participant at last year's NCAA Division III national championships, will look to once again make his mark in the 200- and 400-meter dashes, while Arnold will look to build on his solid performance in the 400 this season. Arnold currently holds the fifth-best time in the conference this season in the 400, as he clocked a time of 49.68 at the Hamline Capitol City Championships on April 21.

In the relay events, the Augsburg 400-meter team of Ward, Wolke, Arnold and Gil Millette (SO, Brainard, Minn.) will look to earn the school's first-ever conference title in the event. The relay team, which has finished second at the MIAC championships in each of the last two seasons, will enter this year's conference meet with the field's top time of the season, having clocked a time of 42.11 seconds at the Falcon Invite earlier this year.

The Auggies will look to continue their succes in another relay, as Ward, Wolke, Arnold, and Matthew Schafer (SO, New Brighton, Minn./Irondale HS) will compete in the 1,600-meter relay. The quartet will enter the championships with the top-time in the conference this season, having recorded a time of 3:19.22 at the Tom Cat Open earlier this year.

Schafer will also look to make his mark in the individual events at the championships as well. As the Augsburg school record holder in the 1,500-meter run, Schafer is currently ranked third among MIAC competitors in the event this season. In addition to the 1,500, Schafer will also look to make some noise in the 800-meter run, as his time of 1:54.97 is currently ranked fifth-best in the conference this season.

In the field events, Augsburg will lean on the triple-jumping duo of Shane Pantila (SR, St. Michael, Minn./St. Michael-Albertville HS) and Emmanuel Marcellino (JR, Circle Pines, Minn./Centennial HS) to provide a boost in the teams overall point total. As the Augsburg indoor school record-holder in the triple jump, Pantila's outdoor distance of 14.04 meters (46-feet-0.75) currently ranks as the second-best distance in the conference this season. Marcellino currently holds the fourth-best mark among MIAC competitors, as he recorded a season-best 13.61 meters (44-feet-8) at the Capitol City Championships earlier this year.



Bethel

Coach: Jim Timp (6th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 3rd (109 points)

Bethel Championship Preview

Heading into the MIAC Outdoor Championships held at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota, the Bethel Royal's Men's Track squad look to finish the season strong and have several athletes bring home All-MIAC honors.

Amongst those athletes will be senior high jumper Jay Quick, who will continue his strong season, where he is one of the top 10 jumpers in the nation. Quick has already earned provisional qualifying marks and has a strong change to be heading to the DIII outdoor championships. Prior to those championships, Quick will try to win the high jump for the fourth consecutive year at the MIAC Championships.

Jordan Spronk and Bucky Dixon will also try to make big marks at the championships, as both are trying to earn provisional marks to qualify for nationals themselves. Spronk had an outstanding performance earlier in the year at the Macalester Twilight meet. Spronk cruised to an impressive 21.80 time in the 200-meter dash. 21.78 is the provisional qualifying mark for DIII national championships. The time puts the junior 3rd on Bethel's all-time list, and is the fastest time by a Bethel runner in the past 14 years.

Meanwhile Dixon is on the verge of qualifying for the DIII championships himself in the discus. After two standout performances, which saw Dixon be the top MIAC placer at the Macalester Twilight meet with a throw of 47.45 meters and be the top thrower the Gustavus's Drake alternative meet, Dixon hopes to take home All-MIAC honors on the weekend. Spronk now sits atop the MIAC honor roll in the 200 meters, while Dixon is 2nd in the discus.

The Royals also have potential scorers in the middle distances with a strong group of 400 and 800 meter runners. Senior Denny Meints is ranked 4th in the 800, and Matt Neufeld joins Spronk as one of the top 10 400 meter runners in the conference.

Gabe Hymer and Anthony Puckett will also be vying for the top spots in the pole vault. Each of the vaulters is ranked in the top 4 in the conference honor roll. Puckett is also ranked well in both hurdle events.



Carleton

Coach: David Ricks (7th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 10th (24.5 points)

Carleton Championship Preview

The Carleton men's track and field team will look to improve upon its 10th place finish at last year's conference championships, and they believe that they have the personnel to do so.

The Knights have great expectations in hurdle events from Ty Martin (Sr./Minot, N.D.), who has triumphed at numerous meets this season and finished fourth in the 110-meter event at last year's championships. This year, Martin has turned in the best 110-meter time in the MIAC, and he also owns the third best 400-meter hurdle performance.

Beyond Martin, the Knights hope to glean some points from their deep stable of runners. In long-distance events, senior Colin Sinclair (Madison, Wisc./West) will strive to close out his career with a bang, especially in the 10,000-meter run, where he holds the eighth-best time in the MIAC this year. Meanwhile, impressive first-year Marcus Huderle (Eden Prairie, Minn.) will lead the team in middle-distance events such as the 800 and 1500-meters.

The one-two punch of Dylan Cheever (So./Minneapolis, Minn./Southwest) and Lobo James (Fy./Redmond, Wash./Telluride) hope to soar above the competition in the high jump, where the underclassmen are presently tied for the fourth best jump in the conference, having cleared 1.88 meters.

C.J. Dale (So./Fox Island, Wash./Charles Wright Academy) will figure in multiple events for the Knights, and will be most of a threat in the triple jump.

In other field events, Mark Skoglund (Jr./Murdock, Minn./Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg) ranks as a top-10 javelin thrower, while Jordan Soteris (Fy./Scottsdale, Ariz./Pinnacle) is coming off of a personal-best in the pole vault.



Concordia

Coach: Garrick Larson (18th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 8th (59 points)

Concordia Championship Preview

Several new faces will have a chance to shine for Concordia at the upcoming 2011 MIAC Track and Field Championship Meet. The Cobbers have had several all-time top 10 performances throughout the weather-challenged spring and will be looking to peak in time for the conference meet.

Leading the charge for the new faces for the Cobbers at the 2011 meet will be the pole vault crew who have had five athletes clear 13 feet this season and have four vaulters qualified for the conference meet. Erik Olson (So., Buffalo, Minn.), Andrew Overson (Sr., Waconia, Minn.) and Levi Bachmeier (Fr., West Fargo, N.D.) have already posted heights over 14 feet and Charlie Alvarez (So., Ada, Minn./Ada-Borup HS) and Brian Watkins have recorded vaults in the 13-foot range. The five have already produced five different marks in the top 20 of the Cobber all-time best list. The quintet will be looking to score multiple team point at the MIAC Meet to help the Cobbers improve on their eighth-place finish last season.

The top marks for Garrick Larson's crew in 2011 have come from other field athletes. Jumpers Felix Okoth (Sr., Mombasa, Kenya) and Joe Bruenjes (Jr., Valley City, N.D.) have consistently been in the top 3 in the triple and long jumps this season. Okoth has the best mark in the conference in the triple jump this season. His top distance of 46-11 is an NCAA national provisional qualifying mark. Okoth is also fourth in the MIAC in the long jump this season. Bruenjes owns the second best distance in the long jump this season (22-03.50) and the 11th farthest mark in the triple jump (42-03.25).

Simon Erlandson is the final member of the field contingent that has a chance to make a splash at the conference meet. Erlandson is currently ranked fourth in the high jump with a season best height of 6-02.00.

Once again the track athletes will be led by distance standout Tom Sederquist (Jr., Moorhead, Minn.). Sederquist has been flying under the radar in the spring but still has the third fastest time in the MIAC in the 5000 meters and the seventh quickest mark in the 1500 meters.

One of the breakout stars for the Cobbers in 2011 has been senior Michael Dunn (Fargo, N.D./Oak Grove HS). Dunn has made waves in the middle distances this season and is currently in the top 15 of the 800 meters.

The other promising group for the Cobber tracksters comes from the hurdle athletes. John Bye (So., Moorhead, Minn.), Caleb Giesen (Jr., Henderson, Minn./LeSueur-Henderson HS), Jay Gjestvang (So., West Fargo, N.D.) and Ger Schmidt. All have times in the top 16 in both the 110-meter hurdles and the 400-meter hurdles. Bye, who finished in the top 7 of both events at least year's conference meet, is currently sixth in the 400-meter hurdles and 13th in the 110-meter hurdles.

The Concordia relay teams could also surprise at the MIAC Meet. The Cobbers are ranked second in the 4x800-meter relay and the 4x200-meter relay team of Bye, Luke Hvidston (Sr., Fargo, N.D./Oak Grove HS), Alex Benzegala (Fr., Gig Harbor, Wash./Peninsula HS) and Tommy Mammen (Jr., Worthington, Minn.) recently clocked the third fastest time in school history.



Gustavus

Coach: Dale Bahr (2nd season)

2010 Championship Finish: 7th (64 points)

Gustavus Championship Preview

Coming off of its highest finish at the MIAC Indoor Championships, the Gustavus men's outdoor track and field team is set to make another strong showing at the MIAC Outdoor Track and Field Championships held May 13-14 in St. Peter, Minn. The Gusties will look to improve on its seventh place finish from a year ago, using its home track to their advantage this season.

Rookie Blair Riegel is Gustavus' top competitor entering the meet, ranking in the top-10 in four events. Riegel ranks second in the 200-meter dash (22.02), third in the long jump (22' 3"), fifth in the triple jump (45' 3"), and seventh in the 100-meter dash (11.09). Joining Riegel in the sprints will be Matt Dvorak, as he will look for solid finishes in the 100 (3rd, 10:95) and 200-meter (8th, 22.39). Steven Groskreutz is the squad's top hurdler, ranking second in the 400-meter hurdles (54.86) and eighth in the 110 (16.10). Along with Groskreutz, Matt Flotterud looks to crack the top-10 in the 110-meter hurdles (9th, 16.11).

In the distance races, the Gusties will look to Mark Bartley and Anders Bowman to earn points. Bartley ranks fourth in the 10,000-meter run (32:07.58) and 10th in the steeplechase (9:53.64). Bowman ranks 10th in the 5,000-meter with a time of 15:31.64.

Ryan Obele and Mark Stice enter as the top Gustavus throwers. Obele ranks sixth in the shot put (45' 0.75") and eighth in the discus (148' 4"), while Stice has the fifth best toss in the hammer throw (165' 7"). Pole vaulters Josh Owens and Cameron Clause both rank in the top-five with Owens in second (15' 3") and Clause in fifth (14' 9").

Rounding out the top field competitors is David Young, Naja Rumicho, and Carl Stenoien. Young ranks second in the javelin (168' 6") and Rumicho sits in 10th in the high jump (6' 0.75"). Stenoien will look for a strong showing at the MIAC Multi's, ranking second in the decathlon. He also ranks 10th in both the high jump (6' 0.75") and pole vault (14' 1.25").

The MIAC Outdoor Track and Field Championships will begin with the women's javelin at 12:00 p.m. on Friday, May 13 at the Gustavus Track and Field Complex.



Hamline

Coach: Paul Schmaedeke (10th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 2nd (155 points)

Hamline Championship Preview

The Hamline University men's track and field team will look to take their second place finish at the indoor championships and use it to help them contend for the title at the outdoor championships this weekend.

The Pipers, who also finished second at the 2010 outdoor meet at Saint Mary's, hope to add to their tally as they return a point-scoring sprinter who didn't compete during the winter season, an All-American distance runner comes back from injury, and the javelin joins to the throws mix for the meet.

Andy Marnach (Sr., Hokah, Minn.), an All-American relay team member, didn't have eligibility remaining for the indoor season, but is back on the track for the outdoor season this year. He rejoins a talented group of sprinters that is headed up by Christian Swanberg (Sr., Lindstrom, Minn.), who won the 200-meter dash at the indoor championships.

DJ Weil (So., Chaska, Minn.), Tyson Molitor (Sr., Belgrade, Minn.), and Christian Willman (So., Rosemount, Minn.) all contribute strong championship experience to the Piper sprinters and will be looking to place near the top in several events.

In the distance events, All-American cross country runner Devin Monson (Jr., Thompson, N.D.) returns after missing the indoor meet due to injury. Hamline's depth will also be apparent in these events with Ian Campbell (Sr., Blooming Prairie, Minn.), Jack Diechert (Jr., Golden Valley, Minn.), Ellis Richardson (Jr., Roseville, Minn.), and Andrew Johnson (Sr., Andover, Minn.) all putting together a strong spring season.

In the field events, sophomore pole vaulter Shaise Schuette (Anoka, Minn.) is looking to go 4-for-4 at the MIAC championships after he captured the title at his first three meets. Earlier this spring, he cleared the NCAA provisional height for the first time and looks to improve upon that this weekend.

Hamline's throwers will once again look to provide a significant point addition to the Pipers as they bring in a strong corps that has already hit numerous NCAA provisional qualifying marks this spring.

Junior thrower Brennan McKeag (Lakeville, Minn.) leads the charge after setting a new school record in the hammer earlier this spring. He is the only MIAC athlete to hit the provisional qualifying mark in the shot put this spring and has hit the provo in the hammer.

Andrew Schlichting (Jr., North Oaks, Minn.) is just shy of the provisional mark entering the meet, while Derall King (Sr., Inver Grove Heights, Minn.) and Blake Springman (Sr., Adrian, Minn.) will also look to have big performances this weekend. Additionally, John Yates (So., Bemidji, Minn.) returns to the fold for the outdoor meet as he looks to defend his 2010 MIAC javelin championship.

Macalester



Coach: Martin Peper (18th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 11th (6points)

Macalester Championship Preview

Macalester is in a building process and will struggle to score many points at this year's MIAC championships in St. Peter.

One potential finalist and point-scorer is 400-meter intermediate hurdler Palmer Fliss (Sr., Medway, Mass.), a four-year standout who is ranked eighth on the MIAC honor roll. Auburn Jimenez (Fy., East Los Angeles, Calif. / St. John Bosco) was the No. 2 frosh at last fall's conference cross country meet and will be entered in the 5000-meter run.

Mike Adams (So., Chippewa Falls, Wis.), like Jimenez a member of Mac's football team, has made steady progress this winter and spring and has a chance for a strong showing in the 100-meter dash. The Scots are led in the middle-distance races by Dan Voss (Fy., Willmar, Minn.) and Joey Frankl.

Saint John's



Coach: Tim Miles (32nd season)

2010 Championship Finish: 6th (73 points)

Saint John's Championship Preview

At the 2010 Outdoor Championships, five Johnnies earned All-MIAC honors and claimed the top three spots in the discus. Junior Wade Powers (Hawick, Minn./New London-Spicer) claimed the MIAC title with a toss of 48.59 meters. Seniors Tim Juba (Cottage Grove, Minn./Park) and Griffin Hayes (Mendota Heights, Minn./St. Thomas Academy) followed closely in second (47.29 meters) and third (47.26 meters), respectively.

Senior Dustin Franta (La Crescent, Minn.) earned All-MIAC honors with a second-place finish in the 10,000 meters (31:55.23). Patrick Lowder, who graduated last spring, also earned All-MIAC honors.

SJU will again expect a strong showing from its throwers. In the discus, Hayes and Powers have both reached NCAA provisional marks with tosses of 50.30 and 48.17 meters, respectively. Hayes currently leads the MIAC, while Powers is third. Juba holds the sixth-best throw (46.09 meters).

In other throwing events, Juba topped the NCAA provisional mark of 53.00 meters in the hammer throw (55.15 meters) and is third in the MIAC. Hayes is second in the shot put (14.81 meters) and sixth in the hammer (50.39 meters). Powers' throw of 13.95 meters places him fifth in the shot put behind freshman teammate Brian Vargason (Owatonna, Minn.), who won the MIAC title at this year's MIAC Indoor Championships.

Sophomores Cory Anderson (Minnetonka, Minn./Hopkins) and Andrew Calascione (Parker, Colo./Chaparral) are second (50.62 meters) and fourth (49.92 meters), respectively, in the javelin throw.

Franta's time of 14:56.05 in the 5,000 meters puts him in second place, while fellow senior David Forster (Hopkins, Minn.) holds the third-best time in the 3,000-meter steeplechase (9:32.03). Junior Andrew Clasen (Plymouth, Minn./Robbinsdale Armstrong) is in fifth in the steeplechase (9:37.77).

Senior Tom Hoffman (Mahtomedi, Minn.) leads the MIAC in the 800 meters (1:53.37). Junior Logan Schwinghammer (Sartell, Minn./Sartell-St. Stephen) holds the third-best time in the 110-meter hurdles (15.62), while senior Matt Reeve (Fairmont, Minn.) has the sixth-best time (15.80).

Junior Rob Floren (Kenyon, Minn./Kenyon-Wanamingo) and sophomore Andrew Millon (Lino Lakes, Minn./Totino-Grace) hold the fifth (6.53 meters) and sixth spot (6.52 meters), respectively, in the high jump. Senior Andrew Norman (Maple Grove, Minn.) has the sixth-best height in the pole vault (4.45 meters).

The Johnnies are fourth in the 4x100-meter relay (42.83).



Saint Mary's

Coach: Shawn McMahon (4th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 9th (25 points)

Saint Mary's Championship Preview

They were all good a year ago, but this time around, they want to be better.

In fact, if Andrew Brueggen (Holmen, Wis.), Sara Harstad (Chatfield, Minn.) and Ryan Wockenfus (New London, Wis.) have their way, when their respective events at the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Championships are completed, they will be the best.

"We're excited about the conference championship," said SMU coach Shawn McMahon, whose teams hosted last year's conference outdoor championships. "Last year was great, we had a lot of outstanding performances — and the fact that we were able to do it in our own backyard was pretty special.

"But there's still more out there for a lot of our athletes, and hopefully, we will be able to put it all together at the right time."

Brueggen, Wockenfus and Harstad all earned All-MIAC honors a year ago with their second-place efforts — Brueggen in the hammer throw (54.03 meters), Wockenfus in the javelin (53.15 meters) and Harstad in the hammer throw (37.14 meters) — and each is determined to make their last conference championship their best yet.

"Second was nice last year, but this year, all three have their sights set on that top spot," said McMahon. "There's no question they all have the ability to do it — it's just a matter of putting it all together."

Brueggen comes into the MIAC Outdoor Championships following a strong indoor season, in which he won the conference weight throw title with a school- and MIAC-record throw of 19.68 meters, while also qualifying for the indoor national championships.

And once outdoors, the senior has been just as impressive, uncorking a season-best throw of 60.76 meters at the Norse Relays that not only broke the school hammer record, but also shattered the stadium and Norse Relays records as well.

Harstad has been equally as impressive, as the senior bettered her school record in the hammer with a throw of 49.64 meters — more than two meters further than her runner-up throw at last years MIAC Championships — at the Phil Esten Challenge on April 15, while Wockenfus' season-best throw of 50.60 meters at the Norse Relays on April 9 puts him in position for another run at a conference crown.

"Those three (Brueggen, Harstad and Wockenfus) have had great outdoor seasons, but, hopefully, they won't be the only ones making some noise for us," said McMahon, noting that throwers Coco Booker (St. Paul, Minn.), Nicole Heitmann (Hayward, Wis.) and Kassondra Burtis (Fairmont, Minn.) could also garner the Cardinals some points at the conference meet. "We'll just have to wait and see."

While the throwers have stolen most of the headlines this season, McMahon has a stable full of sprinters and distance runners eager to make some noise.

John Kelly (Rochester, Minn.), Peter Borash (Bowlus, Minn.), Benton Kodet (Northfield, Minn.), Jake Traxler (Le Center, Minn.) and Robby McGuire (Rochester, Minn.) have had solid springs for the men, while Brittany Kuehn (Sauk Rapids, Minn.), Joanna Pace (Minoqua, Wis.), Shauna Stephens (Norwood, Minn.), Bethany Schmidt (Sparta, Wis.) and Stephanie Sturgis (Woodbury, Minn.) lead the way for the SMU women.

"I'm excited to see what we can do," said McMahon. "The potential is there, we'll just have to wait and see how things unfold."



St. Olaf

Coach: Phil Lundin (3rd season)

2010 Championship Finish: 4th (87 points)

St. Olaf Championship Preview

The St. Olaf men's track team will look to a trio of runners in the 800, two distance runners and a handful of other potential league champs in the upcoming MIAC Outdoor Championships.

The Oles' Reid Gilbertson, Brian Tomlinson and Brian Saksu could each challenge for the league's title in the 800. Gilbertson ran at the NCAA's last season in the 1,500.

Two St. Olaf distance runners -- Chris Massey and Jon Lampert -- will each contend in the 5,000 and 10,000.

The sprinters will be led by Leon Clark, who will be one of the favorites in the 100. Reggie Woods and Isaac Tut should have a legitimate shot at finishing at or near the top of the 400.

The Oles best field contender will be JB Tut in the high jump.



St. Thomas

Coach: Steve Mathre (16th season)

2010 Championship Finish: 1st (178.5 points)

St. Thomas Championship Preview

St. Thomas will need to bring another complete team effort as it battles a 10-team field of competitors led by Hamline for the 2011 MIAC Track and Field Outdoor title.

The Tommies and Pipers have gone down to the wire in the last three championships with scant winning margins of seven and eight points in the last two indoor championships, and a 178.5-155 margin last May in the outdoor meet.

The Toms have captured 51 of the last 55 MIAC team championships contested indoors and outdoors since 1983. That includes 24 men's outdoor titles in the last 28 held.

St. Thomas men's and women's squads have won 106 all-time MIAC team titles in indoor and outdoor track and field.

Coach Steve Mathre's Tommies have four elite athletes to build around:

--Junior All-American Mike Hutton is a threat in the 800, 4x400 and possibly the 4x800, open 400 or 1,500.

--Junior All-American distance runner Ben Sathre, the NCAA cross country national runner-up last November, was a double winner in March at the conference indoor meet.

--Sophomore All-American Eyo Ekpo is expected to challenge for titles in the long jump, triple jump and high jump; Ekpo is qualified provisionally for nationals in the high jump.

--Senior All-American Matt Griswold has the potential to score well in the multi-event, hurdles and relays. He's ranked in the top 20 nationally in the 400 hurdles.

The team title may swing with the best depth and balance. In the March indoor meet, St. Thomas used points from 20 athletes and scored in 18 of 20 events.