

2012 MIAC Men's Swimming & Diving Championship Preview

2/14/2012

MINNEAPOLIS -- The University of Minnesota Aquatic Center will again play host to one of the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference's most popular event as the 2012 MIAC Swimming and Diving Championships prepare to return to Minneapolis this Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Feb. 16-18.

There will be a total of six sessions over the three days, with both a morning and an evening session each day. The morning sessions - each starting at 10:30 a.m. - will feature preliminary races and diving, followed by event finals each evening beginning at 6:30 p.m. Doors will open at 9 a.m. for each morning session and at 5:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday. The doors for Saturday's final session will open at 3 p.m.

In last year's men's championship, St. Olaf College pulled away from a competitive field to claim the conference championship. The Oles accumulated 759.5 points to distance themselves from runner-up St. Thomas (640) and third-place Gustavus (612). Saint John's (564) and Carleton (471.5) also had strong showings last season to round out the top five, and Macalester (149), Saint Mary's (133) and Hamline (127) engaged in a close battle for the final three spots.

The Oles will enter the 2012 meet with their sights on a repeat, but St. Thomas bring a strong, deep team into this year's meet and will try to capture their second title in three years. Carleton, Gustavus and Saint John's should all be a factor once again and will all look to repeat their top-five finishes from a year ago, while Macalester, Saint Mary's and Hamline are all aiming for improvement and more swimmers on the awards podium.

The top two individual awards will be up for grabs as last year's MIAC Swimmer-of-the-Year **Chris Bateman** (St. Olaf) and MIAC Diver-of-the-Year **Eric Brenner** (Carleton) were both seniors. St. Olaf's **Dave** and **Bob Hauck** were voted the MIAC Men's Swimming Coaches-of-the-Year for leading the Oles to the title, and Carleton's **Gabe Korteum** was voted the MIAC Diving Coach-of-the-Year.

The two leading candidates to replace Bateman - who was spectacular at last year's championship - are both Oles. **Colby Kubat** is back to defend his MIAC titles in the 100- and 200-yard backstroke with the top time this season in each event, and he also has this season's best tie in the 200-yard individual medley. Meanwhile, Kubat's teammate **Spencer Scarth** could be the breakout star of the meet. The sophomore holds the MIAC's top time in three events this season: the 500- and 1,650-yard freestyle and the 400-yard individual medley.

Also bolstering the Oles' hopes for back-to-back team titles are **Chase Liaboe**, the defending champ and top time holder in the 200-yard butterfly and **Michael Gratz**, who has this season's top time in the 200-yard freestyle.

However, the Tommies will provide a tough test for St. Olaf behind a pair of swimmers aiming for history. **Eric Huls** is gunning for his fourth-straight championship in the 100-yard butterfly, and the UST senior enters as the favorite again with the conference's top time in the event this season. Meanwhile, teammate **Sam Rauchwarter** will try to claim his third-straight title in the 200-yard freestyle.

Fellow Tommies **Michael Hoelterhoff** (100-yard backstroke) and **Justin Mullee** (200-yard backstroke) are the favorites in the backstroke events with this season's top times, and St. Thomas enters the championships with the top MIAC time in four of the five relay events.

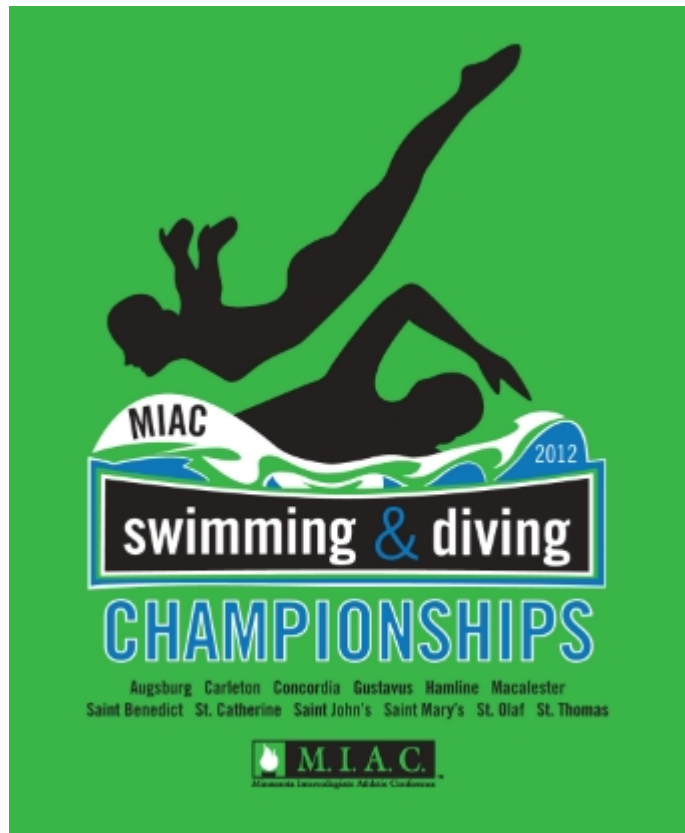
Another swimmer to watch is Carleton star **Erik Klontz**, who will lead the Knights' strong team with this season's top time in both the 50- and 100-yard freestyle events. Carleton also has the conference's top time in the 200-yard freestyle relay heading into the championships.

On the diving board, it should be a close contest in both the 1-meter and 3-meter events. Saint John's **Wes Schlichting** and St. Thomas' **Nick Johnson** enter as the favorites, but expect Saint Mary's **Brian Baker** and St. Olaf's **Ian Straehley** to also be in the mix throughout the weekend.

Augsburg College and Carleton College are serving as this year's host institutions. Commemorative T-shirts were available via presale through each participating team, and Augsburg College does have some extra shirts for sale for anyone who missed the presale. In order to reserve a T-shirt, email Augsburg Assistant Athletic Director **Kelly Anderson Diercks** at: diercks@augsborg.edu and indicate the quantity and sizes (S-XL). T-shirts are \$15 each and will be available for pick-up at the event.

Tickets are available at either a single-session rate, or all-session passes will also be available for purchase for fans who plan to attend the entire event. Single session admission is \$8 for adults and \$4 for students, while the all-session passes cost \$40 for adults and \$20 for students. This year, the price of admission includes a heat sheet at each session. MIAC sport passes will be accepted for admittance. No other passes or discounts will be honored. Due to construction at the U of M, the only working entrance to the facility will be on the University Ave. side.

As in years past, all six sessions will be broadcast live online thanks to Webcast America ([click here](#)). Fans will also be able to watched



archived video of each session following the event and purchase DVDs of the broadcasts via Webcast America's site. There will also be ["live" results](#) available online with results updated shortly after the conclusion of each event for fans following the action from afar.

The MIAC has an exclusive [Web site](#) for the 2012 MIAC Swimming & Diving Championships. The site features the complete event schedule, psych sheet, ticket information, venue information and a map, as well as links to the live broadcast and stats. The site will be constantly updated throughout the event with recaps, photos and more.

Helpful links:

[2012 MIAC Swimming & Diving Championships Home Page](#)

[Webcast America's Live Broadcast](#)

[MIAC Men's Swimming & Diving Home Page](#)

Listed below are team-by-team previews for all eight MIAC teams competing in the 2011 MIAC Swimming & Diving Championships.



Carleton

Coach: Andy Clark (19th season)

2011 Championship Finish: 5th (471.5 points)

Carleton Championship Preview

The Carleton Men's Swimming and Diving team hopes to break into the top four at the MIAC Championships this season, after finishing in fifth place in both 2010 and 2011.

The Knights have a chance to make some noise on the first day. Carleton has never won the 200-yard freestyle relay at the MIAC Championships, but the quartet of Eric Klontz (Jr./Bethesda, Md./Bethesda-Chevy Chase), Mamoru Kanazawa (Jr./Tokyo, Japan/St. Mary's), Benito Ramirez (Fy./St. Louis Park, Minn./Minneapolis South), and Ross Brown (So./Chippewa Falls, Wis.) possesses the top time in the conference this year at 1:25.05.

Klontz, an All-MIAC performer in four events at last year's championships, holds the top times in the conference this season for both the 50- and 100-yard freestyle races. He finished third in the 50 and fifth in the 100 at the 2011 Championships. Klontz carries a lot of momentum into this year's conference meet, as he has not lost a 100-yard race to a Division III swimmer this season and has bested all but one D-III racer in the shorter distance.

Kanazawa earned All-MIAC distinction in six events (two individual and four relays) a year ago as he finished third in both the 100 and 200-yard freestyle. This season, he owns the third-best time in the 200 free, fourth-fastest in the 500 free, fifth-best in the 100 backstroke, in addition to two other top 10 times.

Ramirez ranks fourth in the 200-yard butterfly and sixth at the 100-yard distance. He captured conference honors at the 200 fly last season and was part of Carleton's All-MIAC 400 and 800-yard freestyle relays.

Jesse Gourevitch (So./Ardsley, N.Y./Ardsley) also figures in the Knights plans with top eight finishes in the MIAC in both the 100 and 200-yard breaststroke.

In addition to the 200-yard freestyle relay, the Knights are ranked among the top three in 400- and 800-yard freestyle relays and the 400-yard medley relay. Last year they finished third in the 200- and 400-yard freestyle relays, and second in the 800-yard freestyle relay breaking school records in all three events.

Divers Chris Frills (Jr./Chicago, Ill./North Lawndale Prep) and Leo Hummel (Sr./Seattle, Wash./Garfield) are expected to score on both boards.



Gustavus

Coach: Jon Carlson (22nd season)

2011 Championship Finish: 3rd (612 points)

Gustavus Championship Preview

Coming off a third place finish last season, the Gustavus men's swimming and diving team is poised for a return to the podium in 2012. The Gusties have placed inside the top-three the past three seasons, finishing runner-up back-to-back years (2009 and 2010) since taking the title back in 2008. The 2012 MIAC Swimming and Diving Championships will take place on Feb. 16-18, at the Aquatic Center on the campus of the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.

Gustavus will rely on strong leadership from its upper-classmen and a big meet from its talented group of young swimmers. Senior captains Billy Schultze (Mankato, Minn.), Gunnar Teigen (Hartland, Wis.), and Matt Van Fossen (Albert Lea, Minn.) will lead the Gusties into this season's conference meet.

Freestyle and breaststroke swimmer Billy Schultze enters the MIAC Championships coming off runner-up finishes in both the 100 and 200 breaststroke last season. Schultze ranks third in the 200 IM (1:58.97), fourth in the 200 breaststroke (2:10.80), and sixth in the 100 breaststroke (59.59) according to the most recent top individual times in the MIAC. He also ranks third in the 100 free (47.18) and sixth in the 200 free (1:46.30).

Gunnar Teigen will add depth in the distance freestyle and individual medley races, while Matt Van Fossen will look to provide points in the butterfly. Teigen is currently ranked eighth in the 1650 free (17:44.63) and fifth in the 400 IM (4:21.56). Van Fossen has recorded the fifth fastest 100 butterfly do date 53.11.

Frosh swimmers looking to make a splash in their first MIAC Championships include Ross Larson (Brookings, S.D.), Zac Solis (Centennial, Colo.), and Kurt Youngdahl (Wayzata, Minn.). Larson currently ranks seventh in the 500 free (4:51.35), and will look to score in the backstroke, ranking seventh in the 100 (54.39) and sixth in the 200 (1:59.59). Solis will provide competition in the individual medley and backstroke, ranking fourth in the 400 IM (4:21.56), sixth in the 200 IM (2:01.33), and fifth in the 200 back (1:59.51). Youngdahl rounds out the group, ranking fourth in the 50 free with a time of 21.84.

Sam Hanson enters the meet as Gustavus' top diver. Hanson ranks third on the one-meter (239.75) and fourth on the three-meter (215.15).



Hamline

Coach: Frank Vaccaro (4th season)

2011 Championship Finish: 8th (127 points)

Hamline Championship Preview

Coming off an eighth place finish in last year's meet, Hamline Swimming and Diving coach Frank Vaccaro knows there is only one direction his team can go. He already sees one positive as they enter this year's meet: he come to the meet with a larger squad than last year.

The Pipers' best bet to make a little noise would appear to be the 200 and 400 Medley Relays. The team of Ben Smidt, Jerry Daniels, Nick Herrera and Corbin Conliffe has improved times as the season has progressed.

Smidt has also shown great improvement in the 200 Fly. The same is true for Conliffe in the 50 Free.

Herrera, however, might be the most interesting Piper story going. About a month ago, he added Diving to his resume. "He's a real late bloomer," Vaccaro said. "He hadn't much chance to work on it until recently. We just added some new dives this week."

The young Pipers have no juniors or seniors on their team. Accordingly, the team heads to the MIAC meet with no grand illusions. "We've been getting better all year and I am confident we'll make a better showing this year," Vaccaro said. "But this year is still a learning experience for a lot of folks."



Macalester

Coach: Beth Whittle (2nd season)

2011 Championship Finish: 6th (149 points)

Macalester Championship Preview

Most of the points collected by Macalester at last year's conference meet were produced by MIAC backstroke champion Nathan Young and Jeff Yamashita in the butterfly. Both, however, graduated, and team points will be tough to come by for the young Scots.

Several Scots are looking to move forward past the preliminary rounds. Among the top Macalester threats are sprint freestylers Wojciech Michno (Fy., Domsjo, Sweden / UWC (Red Cross Nordic)) and Clark Jacobson (So., Harvard, Mass. / The Bromfield School). In the breaststroke events, the Scots will send out Nathan Schachtman (So., St. Louis, Mo. / Ladue) and James Innelli (So., Rose Valley, Pa. / Strath Haven). Domi Lauko (So., Whitefish Bay, Wis.) represents Macalester in the butterfly and 50 free.



Saint John's

Coach: Bill Saxton (14th season)

2011 Championship Finish: 4th (564 points)

Saint John's Championship Preview

Saint John's finished 40th out of 49 teams at the 2011 NCAA Division III Championships and fourth at the MIAC Championships.

Senior Wes Schlichting (Sauk Rapids, Minn./Sauk Rapids-Rice), a two-time All-MIAC honoree and two-time national meet participant, led all MIAC divers for the second consecutive season at the national tournament with a 14th-place finish out of 22 divers in the 3-meter dive (435.35). Schlichting currently leads the MIAC in 11 dives at three meters with 477.35 and holds the second best score for the 1-meter dive (437.75). He also leads in six dives at one meter (328.15) and is second at three meters with 307.95. Senior Kelley Burg (Grand Forks, N.D./Sacred Heart) holds the fifth-best MIAC score at six dives in both the one- (219.75) and three-meter dives (213.40).

Senior Josh Seaburg (Moorhead, Minn.) currently holds the third-best time in the 200-yard fly (2:00.37), as well as, the third-best time in the 400-yard individual medley (4:19.27). He also has the conference's fourth-best time in both the 500-yard freestyle (4:48.89) and the 1,000-yard freestyle (10:16.07). Last season, Seaburg received his second All-MIAC honor in the 400-yard individual medley, but missed All-MIAC honors by 0:00.13 of a second in the 200-yard butterfly. Seaburg has been an All-MIAC award recipient a total of four times in his SJU career and once during his freshman year at Gustavus Adolphus.

Freshman Logan Arnold (Moorhead, Minn.) currently has the fourth-best time in the 100-yard backstroke, as well as the fifth-best time in the 50-yard freestyle.

Senior Ty Nimens (Crookston, Minn.) is tied for eighth in the 50-yard freestyle and is ninth in the 200-yard freestyle. He finished second in the 200-yard individual medley at the 2010 MIAC Championships and earned a trip to the 2011 NCAA Division III Championships as part of the Johnnies' 400-yard freestyle relay team.

Freshman Connor Franta (La Crescent, Minn.) is currently fifth in the MIAC in the 1,650-yard freestyle, while junior Ben Maakestad (Minneapolis, Minn./Edina) is right behind in sixth.

Senior Jimmy Foley (Moorhead, Minn.) finished fifth in the 1,650-yard freestyle at last year's MIAC meet, while senior Jesse Otis (West Des Moines, Iowa/Dowling Catholic), a 2010 All-MIAC honoree in the 200-yard breaststroke, finished seventh in the same event last year.

Last year, the Johnnies' 400-yard freestyle relay team finished 18th (3:05.88) out of 26 relay teams at the NCAA Championships. SJU's current 400-yard free relay team (Arnold, Nimens, Seaburg and Connor Triggs) holds the third-best time in the MIAC.

The Johnnies are without Mando Moss, last year's MIAC champion in the 50- and 100-yard freestyles, who transferred to Division I Xavier (Ohio) this fall.



Saint Mary's

Coach: Eric Lindquist (13th season)

2011 Championship Finish: 7th (133 points)

Saint Mary's Championship Preview

Saint Mary's University swimming and diving coach Eric Lindquist had some pretty lofty expectations for his teams heading into the season-ending Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Championships a year ago.

Expectations that the Cardinals promptly exceeded on a daily basis during the three-day event at the University of Minnesota Aquatic Center.

And when the Cardinals take to the pool for this year's conference championships, those expectations are equally as high — if not higher.

Returning all the key components from a year ago certainly has a way of raising the bar just a bit.

"Every year, our goal is to make sure that our times at the conference championships are season-bests, and last year we did a very good job of hitting that mark," said Lindquist. "We've got a lot of talented individuals back, as well as a number of very capable freshmen, so it will be interesting to see how the (conference) championships unfold."

Leading the way for the Cardinal men will be senior Neil Heacox (San Diego, Calif.) — back after a year studying abroad — and junior's Mark Ross (Dubuque, Iowa) and Robert Doyle (Hudson, Wis.), while seniors Liz Flynn (Mahtomedi, Minn.), Nikki Farmer (Medford, Wis.) and Linda Tierney (Cloquet, Minn.) return to pace the SMU women.

"We have a number of individuals with the potential to do some really good things," said Lindquist. "Mark Ross has had two solid seasons, and traditionally, junior years are breakout seasons, so we are looking for big things from him. Neil, Robert, Brandon (Matis), Jon (Lamphere) ... they've all been through this before, so hopefully they can put it all together.

"On the women's side, Liz Flynn has been very good for the past three years — and this year has been her best yet," Lindquist added. "We've got plenty of experience, and, just like on the guys' side, it's just a matter of going out and getting the job done."

While Lindquist's rosters are dotted with upperclassmen, there are plenty of new faces as well, giving the Cardinal head coach what he feels is a perfect mix.

"Everything we've done this year leads up to those three days in February (at the conference championships)," said Lindquist. "Our upperclassmen all know what it takes and our freshmen have been able to get their feet wet during the regular season and should be ready to go.

"Hopefully we can some positive momentum into the conference championships."



St. Olaf

Coach: Dave Hauck (38th season) and Bob Hauck (23rd season)

2011 Championship Finish: 1st (759.5 points)

St. Olaf Championship Preview

The St. Olaf men's swimming and diving team will look for its second straight and 27th MIAC Championship in school history this weekend behind a core group of top-flight swimmers. The Oles have the top times in 10 events entering the event and have numerous returning conference champions.

Sophomore Colby Kubat headlines the group, as he will defend league titles in the 100 Breast and 200 Breast, events that he has the top times this winter. The returning All-America swimmer has a NCAA A cut in the 200 Breast and a B cut in the 100 Breast. He also has the top entry in the 200 IM.

Another sophomore, Spencer Scarth, has the MIAC's top times in the 500 Free, 1650 Free and 400 IM and was an All-America honoree in the 800 Free Relay and 1650 last winter. He has a B cut in the 1650 and 400 IM and will help the Oles defend their title in the 800 Free Relay.

First year sensations Michael Gratz and Evan Griffith enter the meet with handfults of top five times. Gratz has the MIAC's top time in the 200 Free, a NCAA B cut in the 200 IM and also has top four times in the 50 Free, 100 Free, 1000 Free and 100 Back. Griffith has top three times in the 500 Free, 1000 Free, 1650 Free, 100 Back, 200 Back and 400 IM.

Senior Chase Liaboe, who enters the meet with the league's top time in the 200 Fly, won the event last year. He swam on the team's All-America 800 Free Relay and has the third-best time in the 100 Fly and could be one of the Oles' top swimmers in the St. Olaf-stocked 500 Free, as he has the No. 2 time in the league.



St. Thomas

Coach: Tom Hodgson (33rd season)

2011 Championship Finish: 2nd (640 points)

St. Thomas Championship Preview

Two years ago, the Tommie men edged Gustavus 709-701 to win the program's first MIAC team championship since 1954. Last season, St. Olaf won the men's title with 759 points as it outscored closest challengers St. Thomas (640) and the Gusties (612).

Fast forward to 2011-12, and Tommie coach Tom Hodgson's 2010-11 athletes are preparing for another battle at the top, particularly with St. Olaf and Gustavus.

The three-day competition starts Thursday at the University of Minnesota Aquatic Center.

The Tommies had gone 17 seasons without a top-two team finish but now are looking to make it three in a row. They've improved from sixth in 2007 to fourth in 2008 to third in 2009 to first in 2010 and second in 2011.

Hodgson expects a closely-contested meet that has the potential to go down to the final races until a team champion is determined. "This really should be a fun competition," Hodgson said. "Every race is going to count, every point is going to count. We're very excited when we look at our training and where we are right now."

The UST men are again deep in the freestyle sprints and relays, and the butterfly races. Overall, St. Thomas is seeded first in four relays -- the 200 and 400 medley and 400 and 800 free relays -- and is ranked individually in the top five 15 times.

Nick Johnson is seeded first in three-meter diving and second on the one-meter board. Other UST top-two seeds are Erik Huls and Evan Ecklund in the 100 fly; Justin Mullee in the 200 back; Michael Hoelterhoff and Mullee in the 100 back; Matt Rippentrop in the 200 fly; Nathan France in the 100 breast; Ben Henrickson in the 50 free; and Sam Rauchwarter in the 200 free.