

2014-15 MIAC men's and women's swimming and diving set to start

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ST. PAUL, Minn. -- Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) swimming and diving is on the starting blocks and ready to dive into the pool to begin the 2014-15 season. With numerous talented individuals back in the water this season, expectations are high for record-breaking performances and scores throughout the season.

A year ago, the Gustavus women and St. Olaf men continued a pair of impressive runs by swimming their way to MIAC championships. The Gusties and MIAC Women's Swimming Coach-of-the-Year Jon Carlson claimed their fifth-straight conference crown, and now own the second-longest championship streak in MIAC history. Meanwhile, the Oles ended a successful run of every-other-year titles to win back-to-back championships. The title for Bob Hauck's team was the fifth in the last eight years.



Both teams return with high hopes thanks to a stable of talented individuals back. Gustavus graduated Two-time MIAC Swimmer-of-the-Year Alissa Tinklenberg, but return four swimmers that won MIAC individual titles last year. St. Olaf also graduated talented senior leaders in Colby Kubat and Spencer Scarth, but the Oles also have four swimmers back who have won MIAC individual titles in their careers.

On the diving board, St. Thomas' Nick Johnson graduated after winning titles on both the 1-meter and 3-meter board, as well as the MIAC Men's Diver-of-the-Year award. However, two of the league's individual award winners are back to defend their honors, as another Tommie - junior Mike Lanz - was named MIAC Men's Swimmer-of-the-Year after winning both the 50- and 100-yard butterfly events with MIAC record times. And MIAC Women's Diver-of-the-Year Jenna Nagy of St. Catherine is also back after winning the 1-meter title and finishing third on the 3-meter board to win top conference honors as a rookie.

The men's team race featured St. Olaf pulling away from second-place St. Thomas and third-place Carleton to win its second-straight title. Gustavus edged Saint John's for fourth place, with the Johnnies rounding out the top five. Hamline, Macalester and Saint Mary's were closely grouped together in sixth, seventh and eighth to round out the standings.

On the women's side, there was clear cut separation among the top three teams, with the rest of the standings grouped together much closer. The Gusties cruised to the title, while St. Thomas was solidly in second and St. Olaf grabbed the final spot in the top three. Saint Benedict barely edged Carleton for fourth, while St. Catherine took sixth, Macalester was in seventh and Concordia narrowly claimed eighth over Augsburg. Just eight points separated Hamline and Saint Mary's in the final two spots.

The 2014-15 season is already under way, with a few teams making their debut last Saturday and the others to follow in the coming weeks. As the season unfolds, it will be exciting to watch the individual times and team results as the MIAC's eight men's teams and 11 women's teams all prepare for the conference's marquee event - the 2015 MIAC Swimming and Diving Championships - which will be held Feb. 19-21 at the University of Minnesota Aquatic Center in Minneapolis.

WOMEN WELCOME BACK TALENTED SWIMMERS, DIVERS

It's clear Gustavus may not replace the talented Tinklenberg, her two MIAC Swimmer-of-the-Year honors or her multiple All-American awards, but if any team is prepared to continue its success, it's the Gusties. Jenny Strom returns as the team's leader after winning the 100- and 200-yard breaststrokes, as well as the 500-yard freestyle a year ago. Dani Klunk won a pair of titles in the 200-yard individual medley and 200-yard butterfly, and Haley Booher (400-yard individual medley) and Katie Olson (100-yard freestyle) each won one MIAC championship race. That returning core has Carlson's team excited about continuing its dynasty for another year.

Second-place St. Thomas hopes to again be Gustavus' top challenger, and even a title contender, as the Tommies return three of their top swimmers. Butterfly expert Mariann Kukielka returns and hopes to cap her career with an incredible fourth-straight MIAC title in the 100-fly. Elise Guenther also returns as the defending champion in the mile, and star breastroker Emily Punyko gives the Tommies a talented trio of leaders. St. Olaf figures to be in the mix again as well, as 200-yard freestyle champion Maddie Lee returns, as does talented freestyle swimmer Abbey Schnaith to lead the Oles.

Saint Benedict has talent back both in the pool and on the diving board, as All-MIAC diver Megan Lawson returns for the Blazers, and big things are expected of butterfly swimmer Laura Peterson after she reached the finals in both the 100- and 200-fly a year ago. Carleton welcomes back Maria Wetzel, who finished second in the 200-yard backstroke in 2014, and Alexandra Guy to give the Knights an experienced nucleus. In addition to Nagy's return, St. Catherine's high hopes are bolstered by the return of All-MIAC breastroker Alex Kuelke and talented distance swimmer Haley French Krahn.

Macalester graduated star diver Renee Jordan, who was both a MIAC and national champion and will try to groom the next wave of talented Scot divers, and they're excited about returning swimmers Maggie McKenna (breaststroke) and Smaranda Georgescu. Concordia has senior butterfly swimmer Emily Erickson and junior freestyler Rachel Aldinger back to lead the Cobbers in the pool. Augsburg welcomes back one

of its most decorated swimmers - Kelsey Knollmueller - and she's joined by Whitney Kieley to boost the Auggies' hopes in 2014-15. Hamline will again be led by versatile swimmer Hannah Hawker and have high hopes for rookie Kaitlyn Allee, and Anne Raecker is back to lead Saint Mary's this season.

HIGH HOPES FOR MIAC MEN IN 2014-15

Last year, St. Olaf captured a second-straight title, and could have a team in place to pull off a three-peat. Star Mike Gratz is back after winning three individual titles last season (200-yard IM, 100-back, 100-free) and he's ready to cap a stellar career with a great senior season. Tanner roe also returns after winning a pair of MIAC freestyle titles (50, 200), Nick Wilkerson returns after winning the 200-breast title, and Billy Brebrick is back to lead the Oles in the butterfly events. The Oles are also set on the boards, as Scott Hodgson returns after finishing second on both boards a year ago.

The Tommies certainly start out in good shape with MIAC Swimmer-of-the-Year Lanz back in the pool after wowing the MIAC Championships crowd with his conference records in the two butterfly events a year ago. He'll be joined by All-MIAC swimmer Walker Matthews, who was third in both the mile and the 400-IM last season. Carleon's Evan Lahr returns after finishing in the top three in both the 50- and 100-free last season, and Stephen Grinich gives the team more sprinting talent after coming in second in the 50-free in 2014. Evan Harris and George McAneny also give the Knights more returning talent.

The Gustavus men delivered plenty of highlights at the 2014 MIAC Championships, with Zac Solis claiming the 500-free title, and Dante Colucci winning the 200-back. They'll be joined by Bennett Woltjer, who will be among the top returning divers in 2014-15. Saint John's also returns a talented, balanced nucleus with All-MIAC backstroke Braden McCormack leading the way. Joe Duxbury gives the Johnnies another talented returner in the poll, while diver Justin Wollin is also back with high hopes this season.

Hamline has a trio of swimmers leading its expectations in 2014-15, starting with talented first-year Hodd Gorman. Gorman, Parker Johnson and Ethan Ross all won events in the Pipers' season opener last Saturday. Macalester has high hopes for distance freestyle swimmer Ben Kromash, and has added talented rookie Max Edmonds to the Scots' squad this season. Saint Mary's expects big things from freestyle sprinter P.J. Heller and diver Evan Lecy in 2014-15.

MORE TO COME

This year, the full MIAC preview with a conference outlook and team-by-team previews will be released in advance of the 2014-15 MIAC Swimming and Diving Championships in an effort to promote the sport's marquee event. However, below are helpful links to track all the MIAC swimming and diving action this winter, including links to the 2014-15 schedules, championship home page and team pages for each MIAC squad.

MIAC Men's Swimming and Diving Links: | [Home Page](#) | [2015 MIAC Championships](#) | [Schedule](#) | [Team Pages](#) | [Top Times](#) | [Archives](#) | [Recordbook](#) |

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