

2008 MIAC Men's Soccer Season Preview

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St. Paul, Minn. – The 2008 MIAC men's soccer season is looking to be as competitive as ever. Defending co-champions Gustavus and Carleton hope to capitalize on last season's success and battle for the top spot again this year. St. Thomas, Augsburg, and Saint John's rounded out the top five in the 2008 MIAC Preseason Coaches Poll.



Gustavus, while staying focused on the top, will try to rebuild a team that lost 12 seniors. Helping to fill this void are senior captains Flynn Stewart-Franzen and Todd Johnson who will be looked upon for leadership. Carleton has a promising return of 20 players from last year's squad ready to challenge MIAC opponents. Senior forwards Bobby Phillips and Brian TenHoor will lead the Knight's scoring punch this season.

St. Thomas finds itself in a similar situation to Gustavus in that it lost several seniors to graduation last year. Despite this fact, the Tommies return 23 players who are hungry to make the MIAC championship race after missing out in the final day last season. Augsburg's reputation for respectability in the MIAC will continue to grow this season as six seniors and 18 letter winners return in 2008. Head Coach Greg Holker's first true recruiting class looks to not only be a member of the four-team MIAC postseason playoffs, but the top finisher.

Saint John's returns their top six scorers from 2007, which they are hopeful will lead them to a MIAC championship season. Head Coach Pat Haws, a 1972 graduate of Saint John's, will begin his 31st season as the winningest coach in Minnesota college soccer history. St. Olaf returns nine starters from last year's team that made the MIAC championship game. Sophomore John Zietlow, All-MIAC last season, will lead the offensive output, one that yielded almost two goals a game last fall.

Macalester is eager to be a part of the MIAC playoffs this season after missing out by a point in 2007. A solid 11-man recruiting class provides the Scots with depth after they lost several key players to graduation. Hamline Head Coach Andy Coutts has three main goals this season; to create scoring chances, defend as a team, and play with self control. The biggest challenge for the Pipers will be fitting the pieces together quickly, as 12 new players join the team in 2008.

Concordia looks to improve on their three conference wins last season with the help of senior forward Justin Foss, junior goalkeeper Mads Schmidt and center midfielder Marco Riboli. A recruiting class of 15 freshmen, five of which could become potential starters, will also help the Cobbers move up in standings.

Bethel will entertain its hope to return to the MIAC postseason playoffs with many players returning including captains Randon Sommars, Matt Polding, and Matt VanBenschoten. Offensively, the Royals will look to Sommars, as well as Andreas Scott and Brandon Peplinski. The Saint Mary's men's soccer team will surely benefit from the attention they receive from Head Coach Chris Dembiec, who will no longer be the women's soccer coach this year. For the second straight year, Dembiec will be putting a youthful lineup together that he believes will continue to progress this season.

2008 MIAC Preseason Coaches Poll

Coaches voted for every team in the conference except their own team. Points were assigned for each vote (1 for first, 2 for second, etc.) Teams are ranked in order of lowest point total to highest with first place votes shown in parentheses.

1. Gustavus (5)
2. Carleton (4)
3. St. Thomas (1)
4. Augsburg
5. Saint John's (1)
6. St. Olaf
7. Macalester
8. Hamline
9. Concordia

10. Bethel
11. Saint Mary's

2008 MIAC Playoff Dates: Semifinals (Tuesday, November 4), Finals (Saturday, November 8).

Augsburg

Coach: Greg Holker

Career Record: 35-31-7 (5 seasons)

2007 Finish: 7th (5-5-0 MIAC, 10-8-0 overall)

Augsburg Season Preview

When Greg Holker was hired as head coach for the Augsburg men's soccer team in 2004, he set some lofty goals for a team that had won a grand total of 19 games in the four seasons prior to his arrival. One of the key goals was to establish a reputation for respectability for the Auggies in the always-challenging MIAC.

Four seasons, 35 victories and a berth in the 2006 MIAC postseason playoffs later, Augsburg's quest for respectability has been realized.

Now, with six seniors and 18 letterwinners returning, this season's goals are no longer pipe dreams, but now feasible -- making the four-team MIAC postseason playoffs for the second time in a three-year span, and contending for the school's first MIAC championship since 1980.

"This is our first true recruiting class' senior season, and I want them to be rewarded for their work with their greatest success," said Holker, entering his fifth season as the Auggies' mentor. "They took a risk joining a program that, at the time, had a history that wasn't great. They have helped change that stigma, and have created a program that is well respected for a lot of reasons. We couldn't be more excited for this season. It's a chance to prove to ourselves that we are capable of achieving what we set out to accomplish in the beginning."

Augsburg finished 10-8-0 overall, 5-5-0 in MIAC play last season, but with the depth and quality of the team's returning players, and one of the best recruiting/transfer classes in Holker's tenure, the Auggies' goals of a MIAC championship may be possible.

"Where we finish, like any team, will depend on how healthy we stay throughout the season and whether we get a few good bounces," Holker said. "I do feel that these players are good enough to win the MIAC -- and I am pretty sure they agree."

Complete season preview is online:

<http://www.augsburg.edu/athletics/msoccer/0809preview.html>

Bethel

Coach: Pepe Jon Chavez

Career Record: 4-14-0 (1 season)

2007 Finish: 10th (1-9-0 MIAC, 4-14-0 overall)

Bethel Season Preview

Optimism abounds as the Royals take the field in 2008. The Royals never let up their intensity last season and finished the 2007 campaign on a winning note under first year head coach Pepe Jon Chavez. The team returns a majority of its players, including captains Randon Sommars (Sr., Cambridge, Minn.), Matt Polding (Sr., Waconia, Minn.) and Matt VanBenschoten (Sr., Minnetonka, Minn.). They will help the coaches mentor a strong recruiting class in an effort to return to the conference playoffs.

OFFENSE

Offensively, the Royals will look to Sommars, as well as Andreas Scott (So., Cedar, Minn.) and Brandon Peplinski (So.,Maple Grove, Minn.) who both stepped up as freshmen to help lead the team in scoring. Coach Chavez desires to see the team improve on penetrating and maintaining ball control inside opponent territory, putting pressure on the defense. "My goal is to have our guys possess offensively, and work the ball around to create more finishing opportunities as a result," said Chavez.

DEFENSE

On defense, the Royals will have to replace four-year starter and All-MIAC honorable mention defender Jake Haws. Eric Johnson (Jr., Bloomington, Minn.) will be a key player this year in that role. Coach Chavez said, "Our defense kept us in games last season and gave us chances to earn points in the standings. We're going to need that effort from them again this season and I think we've got the right blend of talent to do so."

GOALKEEPER

Several players will compete for the starting position at goalie. Last season, Nick Kantor (Jr., Buffalo, Minn.) managed the position and showed positive development in the role. This season, he will once again have the opportunity to prove himself, as will incoming freshmen Erik Sorensen, and Leif Sundberg. "I was really proud of the way Nick played because he has one of the toughest jobs on the field. With the experience he has along with some of the talent we've brought in, I think we're going to be pretty solid in front of the net," said Chavez.

Overall, coach Chavez feels his team has made great strides and will compete at a high level. "I know our guys have been working hard in the off-season and I'm looking forward to seeing the payoff," said Chavez.

Carleton
Coach: Bob Carlson
Career Record: 104-76-17 (11 seasons)
2007 Finish: 1st/(8-0-2 MIAC, 14-2-3 overall)

Carleton Season Preview

In 2007, the Knights had a fantastic season on the pitch, running off a 16-match unbeaten streak en route to an undefeated conference season and the program's first MIAC regular-season championship. The 2008 team features 20 players from last year's squad, which climbed as high as No. 15 in the NSCAA/Adidas national poll.

Bob Carlson enters his 12th season at the helm of the Carleton program and knows the rigors of the MIAC season, having now won a conference crown as a player, assistant coach and a head coach.

The discussion about returning players begins with senior forwards Bobby Phillips (Vadnais Heights, Minn./Mounds View) and Brian TenHoor (Eden Prairie, Minn./Minnehaha Academy).

Phillips, a two-time All-MIAC performer, has led the Knights in goals in each of his first three seasons. He found the back of the net eight times in 2007 and added eight assists. TenHoor scored a critical goal in Carleton's 2-1 victory over cross-town rival St. Olaf to clinch a share of the 2007 regular-season title for the Knights. He finished among the team's top five scorers in each of the last three seasons.

The Knights possess a strong veteran presence in the midfield as well. Starters Paul Pedtke (Sr./Evanston, Ill./Evanston Township) and Ross Hamilton (Jr./Western Springs, Ill./Lyons Township) return as does Brett Adelman (Jr./Westminster, Colo./Legacy). Wes Elfman (So./Madison, Wis./Edgewood) might see time at an outside midfield spot.

Joe Lindner (Sr./Hanover Park, Ill./Glenbard North) joins Phillips and Pedtke as captains on this year's squad and will be vital to any success Carleton enjoys this year.

The Carleton defense was especially stingy last season, ranking 15th among Division III teams and 23rd among all NCAA squads with a 0.56 goals against average.

The Knights return a handful of players that filled crucial roles on defense a year ago. Robert Carlton (Jr./Madison, Wis./Memorial) was an All-Region and All-MIAC selection in 2007. He is joined on the roster by Courtney Morris (So./Lafayette, N.J./Taft School), Jack Boller (Sr./Charlottesville, Va./Albemarle), and Lyndon DeSalvo (Jr./Boxford, Mass./Brooks School) who all saw significant minutes in big games last season.

Goalkeeping was a huge question mark for Carlson entering 2007, but Pete Semmer (So./Del Mar, Calif./Bishop's School) won the job and owned a 0.542 goal against average, third among freshmen in Division III. Veterans Jerry McIntyre (Broomfield, Colo./Boulder Fairview) and Derek Orth (Sugarloaf, Pa./Hazleton Area) also return to compete for time in net.

Concordia
Coach: Dan Weiler
Career Record: 3-13-1 (1 season)
2007 Finish: 9th (2-8-1 MIAC, 3-13-1 overall)

Concordia Season Preview

The 2007 Concordia men's soccer team grew inch by inch and little by little. They made steady improvements under first-year head coach Dan Weiler as they snapped their three-year conference losing streak and posted the most wins for a season since 2003. The upward turn in confidence and a recruiting class that features 15 freshmen, five of whom could turn into starters, has given the Cobber men's soccer team a new sense of optimism to get back into the top half of the league.

Of the team's eight conference losses, five were by a single goal and seven of the eight were decided by two or fewer scores. By the end of the season, the team had started to gel into a productive squad that was on the verge of pulling off a major conference upset. Weiler is hoping that the first big win for the Cobbers will come early in 2008 so the team can use that to propel themselves into a top tier finish.

Leading the way for Concordia this season will be a forward, a midfielder and a goalie. Senior forward Justin Foss (Fargo, N.D./Fargo South HS) transferred to Concordia at the start of last season. His quickness and ability to find the seams of the defense make him a threat any time the ball gets into the attacking half of the field. He finished last year tied for the team lead in goals. Central midfielder Marco Riboli (So., Bergamo, Italy) had a solid freshman season in 2007. He led the team in scoring and was tied for the team lead in goals.

The defense will be anchored by goalkeeper Mads Schmidt (Jr., Rodding, Denmark). Schmidt broke his hand in the very first half of the very first game in 2007 and wound up only playing in seven games all season. When he returned at the end of the season, the Concordia defense did not allow more than two goals in any conference game and he was able to post his first career shutout in the squad's 2-0 win over Bethel.

Finding players to line up directly in front of Schmidt will be the most difficult task for Weiler. The team lost defensive mainstay and All-Conference Honorable Mention honoree Chad Morlock to graduation which leaves a big hole in the middle of the defense. Weiler could put out four newcomers on the back line as he tries to improve on a defense that finished ninth in the MIAC in goals allowed last season.

For more on Cobber men's soccer go to: www.cord.edu/dept/sports/fall/ms/index.php

Gustavus

Coach: Larry Zelenz

Career Record: 258-103-41 (23 seasons)

2007 Finish: 2nd/(9-1-0 MIAC, 16-4-1 overall)

Gustavus Season Preview

<p>The Gustavus men’s soccer team will have a much younger look in 2008 due to the graduation of 12 seniors that helped last year’s team post a record of 16-4-1 and tie for the conference title. Head coach Larry Zelenz, who has directed the Gusties to four consecutive conference titles, will look to senior captains Flynn Stewart-Franzen (Sr., Minneapolis, Minn.) and Todd Johnson (Sr., Bloomington, Minn.) for leadership. Zelenz will need to re-build the defense and the attack, while relying on a veteran midfield group to control play as the rest of the team adjusts to its new roles.</p> <p>The midfield returns starters Max Malmquist (So., Salt Lake City, Utah), Fraser Horton (Jr., Missoula, Montana), and Brett Vander Streek (Jr., Pella, Iowa), along with veterans Stefan Kolis (Jr., Eau Claire, Wis.) and Chris Adams (Jr., White Bear Lake, Minn.). Horton, a two-year starter, was an all-conference and all-region performer last season, while Malmquist made a big impact as a freshman and will likely become one of the team’s on-field leaders this season. Vander Streek, who started at forward a year ago, will slide back into the midfield as the Gusties adjust their basic playing formation this season.</p> <p>Up front, Gustavus will need to replace MIAC MVP Mike Butterworth , who graduated after last sesason. Coach Zelenz will be searching for individuals who can put the ball in the net and that could result in some shuffling of players on the attack early in the season. Seniors Jesus Espina-Velosa (Hopkins, Minn.) and Ben Eriksson (Madison, Wis.) are returning letterwinners with experience that will get an opportunity to fill this big need for the squad.</p> <p>Defensively, the Gusties will rely heavily on Flynn Stewart-Franzen, who is the lone returning starter in the back. He is a three-year starter who earned all-conference and all-region honors last season. Todd Johnson, who will likely become one of the starting outside backs, is a veteran who logged a lot of minutes last year. Junior Skylar Schulz (Tacoma, Wash.) will battle for the other starting outside back position. Sophomore Luke Strom (Plymouth, Minn.) will move into the starting goalkeeper position replacing Trevor Brown who also graduated.</p> <p>The team will begin its season on August 29-30 with challenging matches against Whitworth University andPacific Lutheran University in Spokane, Washington.</p>

Hamline
Coach: Andrew Coutts
Career Record: 68-78-12 (9 seasons)
2007 Finish: 8th/(4-5-1 MIAC, 8-7-1 overall)

<p>Hamline Season Preview</p> <p>Head coach Andy Coutts begins his 10th season at the helm of Hamline with three main goals for his team that he hopes will return the Pipers to the MIAC playoffs after an 8-7-1, 4-5-1 MIAC finish in 2007 ended their post-season appearance run at two seasons.</p> <p>Coutts has strong r</p>
<p>eturning players on both sides of the ball who will help meet the objectives set out for his team, including All-MIAC first team junior forward Drew Lukas (South St. Paul, Minn.) and his classmate Matt Warhol (Andover, Minn.) on offense. Senior Kellen Feeney (Nevada, Iowa) and sophomore Andrew Sauceman (Hudson, Wis.) will anchor the defense, while senior Jason Werthmann (Osceola, Wis), who is a midfielder on paper, returns with a versatility that could allow him to play anywhere. Additionally, a large class of young players with diverse soccer backgrounds will give the 2008 Pipers a new look.</p>

The Pipers' first goal is simple - create scoring chances. Lukas' offensive production exploded in his sophomore season, as he scored 13 goals and two assists to add on to his three goals from his first year. Meanwhile, Warhol has also continued to improve, and will be expected to add to his tally of nine career goals and two assists.

Two new midfielders will complement the veteran scorers, Moe Tageldin (Rochester, Minn.) and Javier Rios (Chihuahua, Mexico). Both players bring strength, athleticism and the ability to fill multiple roles to the Pipers.

Hamline's second goal is to defend as a team. Coutts hopes that Feeney's tough defensive play will not only thwart opponent attacks but also lead to attacking chances for the Pipers.

First-year Zach Nelson (Eagan, Minn.) is competing to be the man the Pipers can count on in goal, bringing good size (a 6'3" frame), athleticism and a history of success on strong teams to the goalkeeper position. He will be counting on help from classmate Tim Barklow (West St. Paul, Minn.), a strong and fit defender whose versatility may find him moving between the back and midfielder positions.

The final goal that the Pipers have is to play with self-control, not just athletically, but emotionally, as well. The biggest challenge for the Pipers will be fitting the pieces together quickly, as 12 new players join the team in 2008, and the speed at which the newest Pipers will learn the intricacies of the college soccer game.

Macalester

Coach: Ian Barker

Career Record: 51-32-11 (5 seasons)

2007 Finish: Tied 5th (5-4-1 MIAC, 8-6-4 overall)

Macalester Season Preview

Macalester went 8-6-4 on the season and 5-4-1 in the MIAC a year ago, just missing out for a spot in the conference playoffs by one point. Sixth-year head coach Ian Barker is eager to return among the top teams in the league in 2008.

The Scots lost several key players to graduation, including all-conference keeper Ryan Palmer, but the overall talent level is high this season, led by All-MIAC forward Carson Gorecki (Sr., Mahtomedi, Minn.). Gorecki will miss training camp and the early part of the schedule after suffering a foot injury over the summer, but when he returns he should once again be one of the league's top goal-scoring threats. Gorecki netted nine of the team's 20 goals in '07 and also tallied nine goals as a sophomore.

Joining Gorecki up front, and expected to take on primary goal-scoring responsibilities before he returns is Eric Tettegah (So., Brooklyn Park, Minn. / Breck School), who provided a spark off the bench last year, Jake Rocke (Jr., Lincoln, Neb. / East), Scott Petesch (Jr., Bethesda, Md. / Walter Johnson), Jeff Swick (Sr., Fond Du Lac, Wis.) and talented newcomer Reid Usedom (Fy., Ashville, N.C. / A.C.Reynolds). Leading the Macalester midfield will be Stephen Murphy-Logue (So., Anchorage, Ak. / West).

Michael Samuelson (Sr., Bethesda, Md. / Chevy Chase) has started every Macalester game over the past two seasons and returns to anchor the defenders. The Scots have other experienced and reliable defenders in Nate Juergens (So., St. Paul, Minn. / Como Park), David Hanold (Sr., Sharon, Mass.) and Andrew Yokom (Sr., Arden Hills, Minn. / Mounds View).

In nets, the Scots will open the pre-season with Drake Anderson (Sr., Des Plaines, Ill. / Maine West) and Mark Mullaney (So., Plymouth, Minn. / Robbinsdale Armstrong) looking to vie for minutes.

Among the sophomores looking to impact the varsity are Dan Calderon (St. Paul, Minn. / Cretin-Derham Hall), Jake Duscha (St. Paul, Minn. / Highland Park) and Erik Johnson (Bethesda, Md. / Johnson).

A solid 11-man recruiting class provides the Scots with depth. Usedom is expected to play a key role up front, while other freshmen looking for immediate action include goalkeeper Matt Weyer (Cedarburg, Wis.), Andrew Lund (Madison, Wis. / West), Ryan Marshall (Plymouth, Minn. / Robbinsdale Armstrong) and Jesse Geary (Duluth, Minn. / Marshall).

Saint John's

Coach: Pat Haws

Career Record: 325-123-47 (31 seasons)

2007 Finish: Tied 5th (5-4-1 MIAC, 7-6-2 overall)

Saint John's Season Preview

The 2008 Saint John's University soccer team is hopeful that a seasoned group of eight seniors and talented youth will lead them to a Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) title.

The Johnnies return their top six scorers and are expected to lose just four regular starters from a 2007 team that finished tied for fifth in the MIAC with a 5-4-1 record and a 7-6-2 record overall.

The Johnnies are expected to return three forwards from a year ago: seniors Cam Christensen (Bismarck, N.D./St. Mary's), Brian Horst (Stillwater, Minn./Stillwater Area) and Tyler Kodet (Rochester, Minn./Lourdes). A two-time All-MIAC first team selection, Kodet enters his senior season with 48 career points (20g/8a) in 49 games. Horst led the Johnnies with five assists last season, while Christensen was named to the 2007 ESPN The Magazine Academic All-District Five second team.

Six experienced midfielders return for SJU in 2008, including the Johnnies' top scorer from last year, senior Levi Lowell (Stillwater, Minn./Stillwater Area). An All-MIAC honorable mention selection in '07, Lowell tallied 11 points (4g/3a) last season. The other returning Johnnie midfielders include junior Paul Keane (Rochester, Minn./Mayo), and sophomores Tom Hoffman (Mahtomedi, Minn.) and Nick Serreyn (East Bethel, Minn./Totino-Grace). Sophomores J.C. Artavia (White Bear Lake, Minn.) and Andrew Lilly are also expected to be in the mix at midfielder in '08.

Head coach Pat Haws will need to replace his top two goalkeepers from last season, Matt Sundberg and Sean Hasselstrom. Sundberg posted a 25-7-3 career record with a 0.80 GAA during his four-year career at SJU, while Hasselstrom tallied a 2-3-1 record with two shutouts and a 1.00 GAA in nine games for the Johnnies last fall. Sophomore Luke Nelson (Caledonia, Minn.), who played football a year ago, returns to the soccer field for the Johnnies in '08. Sophomores Matt Anderson (Apple Valley, Minn.) and Tony Willaert (North Mankato, Minn./Lake Crystal-Wellcome Memorial) will also compete for minutes in net this season.

Haws, a 1972 graduate of Saint John's, will begin his 31st season at the helm of the Johnnies' soccer program. The winningest coach in Minnesota college soccer history, Haws owns a 325-123-47 (.704) career record and a 211-66-29 (.737) MIAC record with seven conference titles to his credit. Haws' career winning percentage of .704 is 26th among active coaches and 32nd all-time in NCAA Division III history.

Saint Mary's

Coach: Chris Dembiec

Career Record: 12-38-2 (3 seasons)

2007 Finish: 11th (0-10-0 MIAC, 4-13-1 overall)

Saint Mary's Season Preview

When it came to coaching, Chris Dembiec found himself seeing double a year ago, trying to juggle head-coaching duties for both the Saint Mary’s University men’s and women’s soccer teams.

This year, Dembiec is seeing much clearer — and thus far, he likes what he sees.

Shedding the “women’s head coach” title from his job description, Dembiec is focusing all of his attention on the men’s program — and with that single-minded focus, he sees a bright future for his young Cardinal squad.

“Last year was a bit chaotic, trying to juggle coaching both teams,” said Dembiec, who took over the women’s job when former coach Tony Guinn stepped down less than two weeks before the start of the 2007 season. “It’s been pretty nice being able to concentrate on just one team.”

“Training camp has been much smoother this year — everyone seems a little more relaxed,” said Dembiec. “I really like what I’ve seen thus far and I’m excited to see how this team performs this season.”

For the second straight year, Dembiec will be putting a youthful lineup together when his Cardinals kick off their season Aug. 29 at UM-Morris.

“We’ve got two big classes, and they happen to be our freshmen and sophomore classes,” said Dembiec, who lost his leading scorer — Joey Manley (6 goals, 14 points) — to graduation. “I think we are still a class away from having the depth that we need to really compete (in the MIAC), but we are definitely getting closer.

“We had to put a lot of young players into the lineup (a year ago), and I thought they did a pretty good job,” Dembiec added. “But more importantly, they got that first year of collegiate experience under their belts. Hopefully they can continue to progress this season.”

If they can, Dembiec feels his Cardinals can begin their climb up the conference ladder.

“Our approach to the season is simple: Give ourselves an opportunity to win. And to do that, we have to do a better job on the offensive end,” said Dembiec, whose team scored just 19 goals in 18 games a year ago. “That was our biggest downfall last year — our offense struggled, which put way too much pressure on our defense.

“We’ve got the tools to make a little noise (in the conference) — I think we’re going to surprise some people.”

St. Olaf
Coach: Kurt Anderson
Career Record: 187-135-20 (19 seasons)
2007 Finish: 4th (6-4-0 MIAC, 11-9-0 overall)

St. Olaf Season Preview

The 2008 St. Olaf men's soccer has nine starters back in hopes of a return to the MIAC Playoffs, where the 2007 team reached the tournament's championship match.

"We're excited about this year," said head coach Kurt Anderson who has led the Oles to a fourth place or better finish in the MIAC in 11 of his 19 seasons, including three league titles. "We need to stay healthy and improve our team defense - if we do that we can get back to the playoffs."

Midfielders

The St. Olaf midfield will be led by the Zietlow and Kennedy brothers.

Sophomore sensation John Zietlow (Rochester, Minn./Mayo) will lead the offensive output, one that yielded almost two goals a game last fall. Zietlow was All-MIAC as a first year after posting team-leading totals for goals (9), assists (7) and shots (73).

Older brother Mark Zietlow (Sr., Rochester, Minn./Mayo) will offer support in the midfield. Mark had four assists in 2007 and has 19 career points (six goals, seven assists).

Barrett (Sr., Eagan, Minn.) and Phil Kennedy (Jr., Eagan, Minn.) will hold down the other two midfield positions. Barrett, a two-year starter, had a career-best five tallies last season. Phil started all 20 games last season, 13 as a first year and has 12 career points (three goals, six assists).

Forwards

Nathan Swenson (Jr., De Pere, Wis.), the Oles' second-leading points man and an All-MIAC honorable mention pick in 2007, returns to the front line. Swenson had a team-best five game-winning goals last fall, including the tally in the semifinal win over top-seeded Carleton.

Scott Crider (Soph., Downers Grove, Ill.) returns at forward as well, after he had a solid breakout season last year with five goals and four assists.

Defenders

All-MIAC returnee Erik Van Mechelen (Jr., Houston, Texas/Cypress Creek) will anchor the backfield. Ryan Doyle will hold down another starting spot for the second straight season while Tyler Wadsworth (Soph.,Sioux Falls, S.D./O'Gorman) move into the starting lineup for the first time.

Goalies

Kevin Friede (Sr., Edina, Minn.) went 9-8-0 last season and will start in goal in 2008. He will be accompanied by quality backup Alex Kuehl, who appeared in two games last season and picked up a win in his only decision.

St. Thomas

Coach: Aaron Macke

Career Record: 66-30-11 (6 seasons)

2007 Finish: 3rd/(6-1-3 MIAC, 11-5-3 overall)

St. Thomas Season Preview

Despite several graduation losses, the St. Thomas men's soccer team will look to blend experience and some promising young players in its quest for another MIAC playoff berth.

Coach Aaron Macke starts his 15th consecutive season in the Tommie program as a player, assistant and head coach. Macke graduated some important players from an 11-5-3 team that was in the conference championship race until the final day. From a pool of 71 returnees and prospects who came to tryouts, UST kept 23 players from last year's varsity and JV teams plus 19 newcomers.

St. Thomas' graduation losses included six players honored on the 2007 All-MIAC teams. Goalie Dan Hutton plus forwards Joe Voeller, Thomas Gjervold and Max Weber were all first-team All-MIAC honorees who helped compile a 44-19-10 record in their four-year era.

Gjervold (7g/6a in nine games) and Voeller (5g/3a in 10 games) finished first and third in 2007 MIAC scoring. The Tommies were 14-0-3 on his career when Voeller scored a goal.

Hutton played in 49 games in goal and was 24-7-6 in his four-year career. His absence leaves senior Carlos Castelan, junior Cameron Roemhildt and sophomore Alexander Benson battling for the starting goalkeeper job.

Senior Jon Stillwell and sophomore Reid Moser-Bleil lead the defensive returnees. Returning goal scorers include juniors Henry Nwadula, Andy Gikling, Tommy Jungwirth, Derek Engler and senior Mike Molitor.

Another Hutton is expected to contribute for UST -- athletic freshman Mike Hutton, an all-stater from Apple Valley. Hutton and his twin brother Nick -- a Minnesota Gopher track and field signee -- ran on the Eagles' state champ 4x800 relay that set a state meet record.

Other newcomers pushing for varsity minutes include sophomore transfers Colin White of Robbinsdale Armstrong and Anthony Sadler; and freshmen Colten Llewellyn, an Iowa second-team all-state honoree from Waukee; Angel Riera, a Minnesota Class A all-state midfielder from DeLaSalle; and Alex Daley of Eagan.