

2009 MIAC Men's Soccer Season Preview

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St. Paul, Minn. -- As the 11 Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) men's soccer teams take to the field to open up the 2009 season, expect to see another year of thrilling plays, close contests, and an intense battle for the top of the conference standings. Gustavus took the top spot in the 2009 MIAC Men's Soccer Preseason Coaches' Poll. The Gusties were followed closely in the poll by Augsburg, Carleton, St. Thomas, and Saint John's. Gustavus received seven first place votes and Augsburg and Carleton had two each.

With 13 letterwinners returning from Gustavus' second place team in 2008, the Gusties will be one of the favorites in the MIAC in 2009. All-Conference midfielder Fraser Horton and defender Justin Eglseider will be key for this season's Gusties.

After reaching the "Sweet Sixteen" round of the NCAA Playoffs in 2008, Augsburg looks to continue the success they experienced last year. Senior goalkeeper Pascaul Venter and senior centerback Alex Hildebrandt have both earned All-American honors in their career and will anchor a stingy Auggie defense.

Carleton, ranked No. 14 in the 2009 Preseason NSCAA/adidas national poll, won both the MIAC Regular Season and Playoff titles a year ago. All-American centerback Robert Carleton will lead a strong Carleton defense while All-Region performer Ross Hamilton leads a talented Knight midfield.

St. Thomas will look to continue to move up the MIAC standings with 20 returners and 20 newcomers on the 2009 roster. Mike Hutton, who scored 13 goals and five assists as a freshman last year, and junior defender Reid Moser-Bleil are First-Team All-MIAC returnees for the Tommies.

Despite losing nine seniors to graduation, Saint John's is optimistic about their outlook for 2009 after finishing last year 6-0-1 versus MIAC foes. A trio of juniors (forward A.J. Sollom, midfielder Colin Hall, and defenseman Austin Neuburger) along with senior goalkeeper Luke Nelson will lead the Johnnies.

A high-powered, veteran roster will look to lead St. Olaf back into the MIAC Playoffs in 2009. Junior All-America candidate John Zietlow, who had 13 goals and 13 assists last season, will pace an Ole offense that led the MIAC in goals per game (2.06).

With nearly all its top players back, Macalester is looking to make the conference playoffs for the first time since sharing the crown in 2005. The Scots return eight starters from last year including All-MIAC junior defender Nate Juergens.

Nine Concordia starters from last year return as the Cobbers plan to continue their upward move in the MIAC standings. A strong recruiting class of nine freshman will follow the lead of goalkeeper Mads Schmidt and midfielder Marco Riboli.

Bethel will look to build off the success that a young Royal team experienced last season and turn in a playoff run in 2009. Bethel features a strong group of senior leaders in addition to the junior scoring tandem of Andreas Scott and Brandon Peplinski.

First year Hamline head coach Jon Lowery inherits a talented group of seniors and brings in a large group of new faces to the 2009 Piper roster. The senior class includes the Pipers' all-time leading goal scorer in Drew Lukas.

After starting nine freshmen at times in 2008, Saint Mary's will look to an experienced group of sophomores to lead them in 2009. Senior All-MIAC goalkeeper Jon Szafranski is coming a season where stopped a school record-tying 152 shots.

2009 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 (7)
2. Augsburg (2)
3. Carleton (2)
4. St. Thomas
5. Saint John's
6. St. Olaf
7. Macalester
8. Concordia
9. Bethel
10. Hamline
11. Saint Mary's

2009 MIAC Playoff Dates: Semifinals (Wednesday, November 4), Finals (Saturday, November 7).

| [2009 MIAC Schedule](#) | [2008 MIAC Statistics](#) | [MIAC Recordbook](#) | [MIAC Archives](#) |



Augsburg

Coach: Greg Holker

Career Record: 48-34-14 (5 seasons)

2008 Finish: 3rd (7-2-1 MIAC, 12-4-7 overall)

Augsburg Season Preview

Last season, the Augsburg College men's soccer team reached heights not seen in the program in more than two decades.

The 2008 Auggies finished as runners-up in the MIAC playoffs, after qualifying for the conference postseason for the second time in a three-year span. The Auggies reached the NCAA Division III national playoffs for the first time in school history, reaching the third round and the "Sweet Sixteen."

But there was something missing from last year's thrilling season -- hoisting a conference championship trophy.

That's something the 2009 Auggies want to accomplish.

"We want to pull off the 'double'," said Augsburg head coach Greg Holker, speaking of the "double" of winning both the MIAC regular-season and playoff titles. "Our team has been talking about that since the conclusion of last season. We did not transform our ambition into a championship. Although we were pretty close in the MIAC playoff championship game, and to get to the final 16 of the NCAA tournament was pretty exciting -- our guys certainly enjoyed that experience -- but it was not fulfilling in the least."

This year's Auggies certainly will have the talent to reach their conference title ambition, an achievement not seen at Augsburg since 1980. Seven starters, including two players who have earned All-American honors in their careers, and 14 letterwinners are back on a roster that should feature more than 30 student-athletes -- one of the largest rosters in program history. Players who accounted for 30 of Augsburg's 35 goals scored last season will return to the lineup.

During Holker's tenure, Augsburg has been blessed with stingy defending. Last year's defense allowed just 13 goals -- the second-lowest total among MIAC teams -- resulting in a team goals-against-average of 0.52, ranking ninth-lowest among all NCAA Division III squads.

Four of the five defensive stalwarts return, including two players who have earned All-American honors during their careers -- goalkeeper Pascaul Venter (SR, Rochester, Minn./John Marshall HS) and centerback Alex Hildebrandt (SR, St. Paul, Minn./Highland Park HS).

A 2006 D3Kicks.com All-American, Venter has earned a reputation as one of the top goalkeepers in the country. In 16 starts last season, Venter allowed just nine goals (0.52 GAA) and recorded nine shutouts, with an 8-3-5 record. His 0.70 career GAA, 22 victories and 22 shutouts put him among the best goalkeepers ever to play the position at Augsburg.

An outstanding student-athlete both on and off the field, Hildebrandt earned nearly every honor for both athletics and academics that a Division III soccer player could earn last year, being named both a National Soccer Coaches Association of America/Adidas All-American and an ESPN The Magazine Academic All-American. A defensive leader as well as a playmaker on free kicks, Hildebrandt ranked second on the team in overall scoring last season with 14 points (four goals, six assists). He enters his senior campaign with 10 career goals and nine career assists.

Joining the duo in the back are two returning all-conference selections -- All-MIAC first-team left back Lucas Ingram (SR, Woodbury, Minn.) and All-MIAC honorable-mention selection Peter Loyd (SO, Plymouth, Minn./Robbinsdale Armstrong HS) at centerback.

Augsburg will need to replace several outstanding graduating seniors in the midfield, but the level of depth and the solid recruiting class should help to keep the team strong up front, Holker noted. However, the coach also added that he would like to see an increase in goals from last year's 35.

Forwards D.J. Wendell (SR, Princeton, Minn./Charles M. Russell (Mont.) HS), Nick Anderson (SR, White Bear Lake, Minn.) and Van Hong (JR, St. Louis Park, Minn.) all return. As one of the first substitutes off the bench, Wendell shined in his playmaker role, leading the team with 13 goals, a total tied for second-best among MIAC players in overall play last season. He earned All-MIAC honorable-mention honors.

Holker describes his squad as "super-deep" in the midfield, buoyed by the addition of T.J. Haag (JR, Apple Valley, Minn./Burnsville HS), a transfer from Dakota County Technical College who earned junior college all-region honors in both his seasons there.

Joining Haag in the middle will be returner Ryan Sorensen (SR, Plymouth, Minn./Osseo HS), who scored two goals with two assists last season. On the outside, David Scheller (SO, Maple Grove, Minn.) returns, after contributing three goals and two assists in 23 games of a solid first campaign in 2008.

Complete Augsburg Season Preview



Bethel

Coach: Pepe Jon Chavez

Career Record: 9-27-0 (2 seasons)

2008 Finish: 11th (1-9-0 MIAC, 5-13-0 overall)

Bethel Season Preview

In 2008, the Royals made improvements to their game that resulted in more wins and twice as many goals scored as the previous season. This season, the team looks to continue building upon the successes of the past, while strengthening other areas of their game. Little has changed from a year ago in terms of personnel, as many of the starters were underclassmen. Captains Randon Sommars (Sr., Cambridge, Minn.) and Matt VanBenschoten (Sr., Minnetonka, Minn.) will be joined by Eric Johnson (Sr., Bloomington, Minn.) and Nick Kantor (Sr., Buffalo, Minn.) to help form a strong core of leaders anxious to guide the Royals to the postseason.

Last season, the tandem of Andreas Scott (Jr., Cedar, Minn.) and Brandon Peplinski (Jr., Maple Grove, Minn.) accounted for more than a third of the team's goals. Peplinski played the most minutes of anyone and had the game-winning goal against Simpson late in the season to give Bethel more wins than they had in 2007. Both Scott and Peplinski earned All-MIAC Honorable Mention awards for their efforts. They will once again look to lead an even more potent offense that includes Sommars, as well as Greg LeVere (Jr., Ft. Worth, Texas), Mike Voigtlander (Jr., Vadnais Heights, Minn.), and recruit Brian Holm (Fr., Champlin, Minn.).

While the offense scored twice as many goals in '08 as in '07, the defense also did its part to keep Bethel in games by helping significantly cut down on the number of goals allowed. Johnson returns to the defense, along with Kirk Darling (Jr., Portage, Mich.), Christopher Dirks (Jr., Excelsior, Minn.), and Zach Hurd (Jr., Portage, Mich.). Together, with the addition of David Kim (So., Vancouver, British Columbia) and Andy Miller (Fr., Brooklyn Park, Minn.), they look to keep the opposition's offense in check by containing the ball and getting it back up field.

Nick Kantor (Sr., Buffalo, Minn.) looks to resume his post in front of the net as goalie once again, with sophomores Erik Sorensen (So., Park Ridge, Ill.) and Leif Sundberg (So., Mahtomedi, Minn.) to back him up. Kantor led the MIAC in saves and finished second in save percentage for conference games last season.

With the goal of constant improvement deeply embedded into the psyche of the team, the 2009 Royals will be an exciting group of soccer players to watch.

[Complete Bethel Season Preview](#)



Carleton

Coach: Bob Carlson

Career Record: 121-78-21 (12 seasons)

2008 Finish: 1st (8-1-1 MIAC, 17-2-3 overall)

Carleton Season Preview

Two years ago, the Knights broke the school record for wins and captured their first MIAC regular-season crown, going 8-0-2 in league play and 14-2-3 overall. The squad improved upon that standard in '08, winning both the MIAC's regular- and post-season titles. The campaign culminated with a trip to the NCAA Championships and a 17-2-3 record, establishing a new program standard for victories.

What will this year's team accomplish? A full answer to that question won't be fully known for months, but the Knights are already nationally ranked for the third consecutive year. Carleton can be found at No. 14 in the pre-season 2009 NSCAA/adidas national poll.

The Knights did graduate eight members of last year's team, including a pair of all-region selections, forward Bobby Phillips and midfielder Paul Pedtke. Phillips is the program's all-time leading goal scorer, while Pedtke was voted the 2008 MIAC player-of-the-year.

Despite leading conference teams in scoring a year ago, the strength of the '09 team remains the defense, which ranked second among the nearly 700 NCAA Division I, II and III teams with a miniscule 0.31 goals against average and .916 save percentage in 2008.

Anchoring the defense is All-American center back Robert Carlton (Madison, Wis./Memorial), who returns for his senior season. Joining him on the backline will likely be 20-game starters Lyndon DeSalvo (Sr./Boxford, Mass./rooks School) and Courtney Morris (Jr./Lafayette, N.J./Taft School).

Opponents that manage to penetrate the Carleton defense must still contend with Knights' goalkeeper Pete Semmer (Del Mar, Calif./Bishop's School), who returns for his third season in net. He ranked second among NCAA Division III leaders in goals against average and save percentage last fall.

No drop-off in offensive production is expected as All-Region performer Ross Hamilton (Sr./Western Springs, Ill./Lyons Township) leads a group of skilled players returning at midfield for the Knights. Hamilton plays with surprising calm while under pressure, the exact reason the coaching staff slotted him into the final spot for the shootout at the conclusion of the 2008 MIAC Playoffs.

While Hamilton and Pedtke were controlling the ball on the inside, Brett Adelman (Westminster, Colo./Legacy) was creating havoc from his outside midfield slot in 2008. The rising senior's play was highlighted by repeated aggressive runs, leading to finishing only one off the team high in assists.

The speed of Wes Elfman (Jr./Madison, Wis./Edgewood) and the vision of Ryan Cammarota (So./Neenah, Wis.) give the Knights two more potent midfield weapons on offense. The pair teamed up to tally the lone goal in Carleton's victory over Wisconsin-Platteville in the second round of the NCAA Championships.

Carleton graduated a lot of its depth at the forward spot, but sophomore Tim Wills (Portland, Ore./Central Catholic) is back after a stellar rookie campaign. He paced the team in goals and tied for the team lead in assists despite starting only one contest all year.

[Complete Carleton Season Preview](#)



Concordia

Coach: Dan Weiler

Career Record: 12-22-1 (2 seasons)

2008 Finish: 8th (3-7-0 MIAC, 9-9-0 overall)

Concordia Season Preview

With nine freshmen and only two seniors on the 2009 roster, head coach Dan Weiler knows that the brightest days are still ahead for the Concordia men's soccer team. However, Weiler is starting to get a little less patient with talk of the future as he knows the Cobbers have the talent to make a run at the MIAC playoff race this season. His optimism stems from the fact that Concordia returns nine of the 11 starters from last year's team that won five of their final six games of the year and lost four games in conference play by a single goal.

The Cobbers will be even deeper in 2009 as Weiler brought in another strong class of newcomers to help push the upperclassmen and give Concordia much-needed bench strength during the grueling MIAC season.

Concordia's defense will be shored up by three returning starters and co-captain goalkeeper Mads Schmidt (Rodding, Denmark). Schmidt is a three-year starter who possesses strong shot-stopping skills as well as a keen knowledge of the position that will help the Cobbers in tight games.

The biggest difference in the 2009 squad will be in the midfield where a year of experience will give the Cobbers a better chance to control the middle of park. Central midfielder Marco Riboli (Bergamo, Italy) was named to the MIAC All-Conference Honorable Mention Team last year and gives CC a playmaking presence. Joining Riboli in the midline will be Alex Dahl (Fargo, N.D./Fargo South HS), Philip Bruckbauer (Fargo, N.D./Shanley HS) and Kyle Quimby (Mahtomedi, Minn.). All three were starters last year and Bruckbauer and Quimby had double-digit point totals to end the year. Dahl's attacking presence from the wing continually gave opposing defense fits and he helped lead the Cobbers' late-season charge.

The biggest loss from a year ago will come up front where Concordia lost their leading goal scorer from 2008. Justin Foss' end-of-the-year scoring rampage helped the Cobbers win five straight. He finished the year with 15 goals and two assists for 32 points which was the second highest single season point total in program history. The leading candidate to fill Foss' shoes will be sophomore Riley McGlynn who had four goals and four assists in his first year and will be aided by a year of college experience.

Several newcomers could have an impact for Concordia this season. First-year forward Kristian Reiersgord (Edina, Minn.) was an All-State Honorable Mention and four-year letter-winner for the Hornets. Weiler has once again brought in a quality crew from the F-M area as well as Montana. Fargo South product Michael Reddinger will see time on the back line and Montanans Jared Rice (Kalispell, Mont./Glacier HS) and Artem Shchepetkin (Tomsk, Russia/Bozeman HS) will also get looks with the varsity squad.

[Complete Concordia Season Preview](#)



Gustavus

Coach: Larry Zelenz

Career Record: 271-108-41 (23 seasons)

2008 Finish: 2nd (8-2-0 MIAC, 13-5-1 overall)

Gustavus Season Preview

The Gustavus men's soccer team appears to have the depth and talent to contend for the MIAC title for the sixth consecutive year as Head Coach Larry Zelenz returns seven starters and 13 letterwinners from a squad that finished 13-5-1 overall and placed second in the MIAC with a mark of 8-2-0 last season. Zelenz will build his squad around All-Conference and All-Region midfielder Fraser Horton (Sr., Missoula, Mont.) and All-Conference defender Justin Eglseider (So., Eden Prairie, Minn.).

In the defensive end, three starters return including two standout first year players from a year ago, Eglseider, and Ben Ceder (Oregon, Wis.), and junior goalkeeper Luke Strom (Plymouth, Minn.). Eglseider and Ceder started every match for the Gusties last season, while Strom turned in a very productive year in the nets posting a mark of 12-5-1, with a 1.01 goals against average and seven shutouts. Abdul Suleyman (Sr., Minneapolis, Minn.), and Dan Jarrett (Jr., Edina, Minn.) will compete for the two spots left vacant by the graduation of All-Conference and All-Region performer Flynn Stewart-Franzen and Todd Johnson.

In the midfield, the squad returns Horton, one of the premier players in the league, along with senior Skylar Schulz (Brown's Point, Wash.), senior Stefan Kolis (Eau Claire, Wis.), junior Max Malmquist (Salt Lake City, Utah) and sophomore Mark Adams. The team will miss the services of senior Chris Adams (White Bear Lake, Minn.), who suffered a season ending knee injury over the summer. The rest of the midfield will be made up of junior Ben Ikeda (Maple Grove, Minn.) and sophomore Doug Frey (Duluth, Minn.).

The lone returner up front is senior Bret Vander Streek (Pella, Iowa). Vander Streek, who led the team in scoring last season with four goals and four assists for eight points, will likely shoulder a large part of the scoring early, while Coach Zelenz decides who will join him in the attacking third.

[Complete Gustavus Season Preview](#)



Hamline

Coach: Jon Lowery

Career Record: 0-0-0 (1st season)

2008 Finish: Tied 9th (1-6-3 MIAC, 4-9-3 overall)

Hamline Season Preview

First year head coach Jon Lowery inherits a talented group of seniors and brings in a large group of new faces to the 2009 roster as he opens his inaugural season at Hamline. Included within that senior class is the Pipers' all-time leading goal scorer.

Lowery looks to improve upon the Pipers' 4-9-3 mark posted in 2008. With a team that has prepared well in the off-season and has a strong overall commitment to succeed in the MIAC, he anticipates steady improvement and better results. He will be heading into the season following the graduation of 2008 All-MIAC second team member Jason Werthmann, who brought leadership and experience to the center midfield position. Also not returning are a pair of defenders whose experience and consistency in play will be missed, Dan Frush and Kellen Feeney.

However, filling in the offensive gap left by Werthmann's graduation is senior Drew Lukas (South St. Paul, Minn.), who will graduate as one of the best players in school history. Last season he became Hamline's all-time leader in goals scored. He ended the 2008 season with 28 career goals. He is also second on the all-time points list with 59, just four shy of the school record.

Lukas' classmates include another attacking forward to whom Lowery will look for increased offensive production this fall, Matt Warhol (Andover, Minn.). Warhol is one of the better athletes on the team, also competing in track and field in the spring, and is seventh all-time in goals scored at Hamline.

Seniors Ian Davy (Saint Paul, Minn.) and Evan Falon (Minneapolis, Minn.) will return to provide experience to a very young back line. Lowery expects them to set and maintain a high standard for the new players adjusting to the college game.

Sophomore goal keeper Zach Nelson (Eagan, Minn.) returns with a year of experience under his belt and a greater comfort level at the collegiate level. Nelson started five games in net for the Pipers last season, tallying 35 saves in 650 minutes.

Playing in front of Nelson will be junior defenders Kor Cha (Rochester, Minn.) and Andrew Sauceman (Hudson, Wis.). They return to help secure the Piper back line, although their roles in 2009 may differ from years past. The duo may be split up, with Cha moving into midfield to allow Lowery to take advantage of his energy and ball winning ability. Lowery will then be looking for the right defensive partner for Sauceman while he helps anchor the defense as a center back, however there is no shortage of new players looking to step up and fill that role.

Lowery goal in his first recruiting class was to bring in a deep and talented pool of athletes that would add athleticism and size to the Piper attack. His recruiting class consists of a group that meets that requirement while also providing versatility to the team.

A collection of first-year players in D.J. Weil (Chaska, Minn.), Sam Studer (Northfield, Minn.), Erik Koeppen (Monticello, Minn.), Jesse Hawker (Wausau, Wis.), Sam Slagle (Appleton, Wis.), Oday Battah (Saint Paul, Minn.), Christian Kibler (Burnsville, Minn.), Justin Krasky (Cottage Grove, Minn.), Jordan Ward (Cedarburg, Wis.), goalkeeper Eric Feil (Eagan, Minn.) and transfer sophomore Andrew List (Warsaw, Poland) will all add depth while pushing to compete for starting jobs.

[Complete Hamline Season Preview](#)



Macalester

Coach: Ian Barker

Career Record: 60-40-12 (6 seasons)

2008 Finish: Tied 6th (4-5-1 MIAC, 9-8-1 overall)

Macalester Season Preview

Macalester went 9-8-1 on the season and 4-5-1 in the MIAC a year ago and with nearly all its top players back, is looking to make the conference playoffs for the first time since sharing the crown in 2005.

The Scots, who haven't suffered a losing record since 1986, are optimistic they can battle for a high league finish this fall under seventh-year head coach Ian Barker. The squad returns eight starters and returns players who netted 26 of the team's 27 goals. Coach Barker has brought in a deep recruiting class and several newcomers should compete for playing time.

"The 2009 Macalester team has the potential to really entertain and score a lot of goals," said Coach Barker. "The playoffs are an important goal and an MIAC championship is a realistic goal in a great conference. This should be a good year for our program."

All-MIAC defender Nate Juergens (Jr., St. Paul, Minn. / Como Park) returns to lead the charge after earning team MVP honors. Juergens and the rest of Mac's veteran defensive corps will try to tighten things up around goalkeepers Mark Mullaney (Jr., Plymouth, Minn. / Robbinsdale Armstrong) (1.40 goals against average) and Matt Weyer (So., Cedarburg, Wis.) (1.76 GAA).

Coach Barker's side will need to increase its offensive production after tallying 16 goals in 10 MIAC matches a year ago. The Scots are looking for Carson Gorecki (Sr., Mahtomedi, Minn.) to return to form after missing last season with injury. Two years ago, Gorecki netted nine of his team's 20 goals while making the All-MIAC team and in '06 also finished with nine scores.

Mac's top three goal producers last season, all whom are back, were Scott Petesch (Sr., Bethesda, Md. / Walter Johnson) with a team-best six goals, Ryan Marshall (So., Plymouth, Minn. / Robbinsdale Armstrong) with five markers, and Reid Usedom (So., Asheville, N.C. / A.C. Reynolds) with four.

Eric Tettegah (Jr., Brooklyn Park, Minn. / Breck School) and Jake Rocke (Sr., Lincoln, Neb. / East) added three goals each, while Tettegah and Usedom shared the team lead with four assists. Returning to the Macalester midfielder are starters Stephen Murphy-Logue (Jr., Anchorage, Ak. / West) and Ryan Geary (So., Duluth, Minn. / Marshall).

Among the new faces, Taylor Rasmussen (Fy., Eagan, Minn. / Eastview) will look to contribute up front, along with transfer Chris Lowen (So., Cherry Hills, N.J. / East). In the midfield, Ian Henderson-Charnow (Fy., Brooklyn, N.Y. / Bard) is highly-touted, and in the back, transfer Tim Marcantonio (Jr., Edina, Minn.) will be expected to play.

[Complete Macalester Season Preview](#)

SJUweb Saint John's

Coach: Pat Haws

Career Record: 336-129-48 (31 seasons)

2008 Finish: Tied 4th (6-3-1 MIAC, 11-6-1 overall)

Saint John's Season Preview

The Saint John's University soccer team knows a little about good news and bad news.

Good news: In 2008, the Johnnies finished the season with an impressive 6-0-1 streak against Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) foes. Bad news: Of the nine seniors lost to graduation, eight started, meaning some players will be adapting to new roles this season.

More good news this season? There are plenty of players who know their way around a college pitch, including two of their top six scorers, from a 2008 team that finished tied for fourth in the MIAC with a 6-3-1 record and posted an 11-6-1 record overall.

The Johnnies return a pair of junior forwards, A.J. Sollom (River Falls, Wis.) and Nelson Martinez (Bloomington, Minn./Kennedy). An Academic All-MIAC honoree a year ago, Sollom collected seven points (2g/3a) in 16 games. Martinez showed promise early in the season by scoring two goals on two shots before suffering a season-ending injury in the season's fifth match. Senior Henok Waldsmayate (Eagan, Minn.), who appeared in three games last season, will also vie for time in '09.

Head coach Pat Haws needs to replace Kellen Groves and Tyler Kodet, who both graduated last spring. Kodet ended his career tied for seventh in school history with 22 goals, including 10 game-winning goals. Meanwhile, Groves posted a career-high 11 points (5g/1a) and appeared in all 18 matches last fall.

Junior Colin Hall (Maple Grove, Minn.) leads a group of five experienced midfielders returning for SJU in 2009. Hall led all returners with 11 points (5g/1a) and two game-winning goals last season. Seniors Eric Bell (Little Falls, Minn.) and Paul Keane (Rochester, Minn./Mayo), and juniors J.C. Artavia (White Bear Lake, Minn.) and Clash Lo (St. Paul, Minn./Tartan) also return for the Johnnies. Lo saw action in 16 games and tallied three points, all assists, while Keane played in 18 games, eight of which were starts, and scored a game-winning goal. Artavia recorded one goal in eight games and Bell appeared in seven matches last fall. Junior Andre Blaine (Andover, Minn./Meadow Creek Christian) and sophomore Justin Rajtar (Mounds View, Minn./Totino-Grace) will also compete for time at midfielder this season.

The Johnnies need to replace Cam Christensen, Brian Horst and Levi Lowell, who all graduated last May. For the second consecutive season, Lowell led the Johnnies in scoring by totaling 25 points (9g/7a). In conference competition, the 2008 All-MIAC selection finished in the top two in eight of the nine individual categories while leading the MIAC in shots (42), shots per game (4.67), points (22) and points per game (2.44). He recorded the fifth-fastest hat trick (5:58 from the first goal to the third) in NCAA Division III history during the Johnnies' 5-1 win over Saint Mary's on Oct. 18 of last year. The Johnnies' leader in assists for the second straight year, Horst posted 17 points (5g/7a) and was named All-MIAC honorable mention. A two-time Academic All-District and three-time Academic All-MIAC selection, Christensen played in 14 games with an injured left knee last season and tallied three assists.

The Johnnies are expected to return their leading scorer among defenseman, junior Austin Neuburger (Millstone, N.J./Allentown), from a year ago. Neuburger registered eight points (2g/4a) in 18 matches, including 15 starts. SJU also returns senior Jake Archbold (Plymouth, Minn./Wayzata), junior Andrew Lilly (Maple Grove, Minn.) and sophomore Chris Hagen (Blacksburg, Va.). Archbold has appeared in 29 games, including 11 starts, and has three career points (1g/1a). Hagen recorded an assist in 15 games as a freshman last fall, while Lilly appeared in 11.

The defensive corps needs to replace a pair of two-time All-MIAC defenders in Jason Daly and Chris Schultz, who both graduated in May. Daly tallied four assists in four years and was also a three-time Academic All-District and three-time Academic All-MIAC selection. A two-time All-MIAC first-team selection, Schultz ended his career with 16 points (4g/8a) in 65 games. Schultz and Kodet were the only Johnnies to start all 18 games last season.

Senior Luke Nelson (Caledonia, Minn.) returns for the Johnnies in '09 after posting a 10-4-1 record with five shutouts last fall. An Academic All-MIAC honoree, Nelson made 90 saves in 1,348 minutes during his first season in goal with the Johnnies. Junior Matt Anderson (Apple Valley, Minn.), who posted a 1-1 record in seven appearances last fall, and sophomore Mike Sikich (Apple Valley, Minn.) will compete for minutes in 2009.

[Complete Saint John's Season Preview](#)

 **SMUweb Coach:** Chris Dembiec

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

2008 Finish: Tied 9th (2-7-1 MIAC, 4-13-1 overall)

Saint Mary's Season Preview

To the casual Saint Mary's University men's soccer fan, there wouldn't appear to be much good to come out of last year's 4-13-1 season.

Head coach Chris Dembiec, however, would beg to differ.

After all, that four-win season was accomplished with a lineup that, at times, included nine freshmen in the starting lineup.

Talk about a baptism by fire.

This year, those freshmen are sophomores — very experienced sophomores — and it's that experience that Dembiec is hoping will carry his squad to a more productive season in the win category.

"We've had to rely heavily on freshmen and sophomores over the past two years, and in a conference that is dominated by upperclassmen, that's tough," said Dembiec, who did not lose any players to graduation. "We've taken our lumps the past couple of seasons, but, hopefully, those experiences will pay big dividends this season."

In fact, while not about to make any guarantees, Dembiec is confident that this year's Cardinal squad will be vastly improved over a year ago.

"We're ready to make a jump (up the conference ladder)," the fourth-year head coach said. "We've been stuck down pretty low on the totem pole the last couple of years, and I think we have the personnel to realistically say we have a shot at battling for one of the conference playoff spots.

"It's not going to be easy, and we are going to need some breaks along the way, but if this team plays up to its potential, we could be in for a very interesting season."

[Complete Saint Mary's Season Preview](#)



St. Olaf

Coach: Kurt Anderson

Career Record: 197-142-21 (20 seasons)

2008 Finish: Tied 6th (4-5-1 MIAC, 10-7-1 overall)

St. Olaf Season Preview

The St. Olaf men's soccer team opens its 2009 season on Friday with optimism that an experienced, high-powered roster can lead the Oles towards the top of the MIAC standings.

The Oles' veteran roster includes almost 20 returners, including each of the top seven scorers. The 2008 Oles led the MIAC in goals per game (2.06), but the season (10-7-1) was one of highs and lows. The team's 10-win campaign included conference wins over the likes of Gustavus and Macalester and non-conference victories over Luther, Chapman and Pomona-Pitzer. However, the Oles were 0-4-0 on the road in MIAC play and finished the league season 4-5-1.

This season the team will lean on its offense - paced by junior All-America candidate John Zietlow - and a sturdier defense. Zietlow had a stellar campaign last fall collecting a league-best 39 points on

13 goals and 13 assists, which earned him All-Far West Region second team and All-MIAC honors.

Zietlow will stay in the midfield this season with other returners - seniors Erik van Mechelen and Phil Kennedy and junior Tommy Van Wylen.

Kennedy was second on the team with seven assists last year, while van Mechelen had two goals and two assists.

A crew of talented reserves, including Matt Fenske, Sam Harrington and Sean Legler, will also contribute quality minutes.

The forward spots will be held down, at the start of the season, by senior Nathan Swenson and sophomore transfer Blake Dressen. Swenson scored a career-high eight goals last year and added five assists for a 21-point season. He was an All-MIAC honorable mention pick for the second straight time. Dressen comes to St. Olaf after a one-year stint at Colby College, where he appeared in ten games. The Oles will also look to Logan Rathjen, who was third on the team in points in 2008 (five goals, one assist), Isaac Tut, Max Lund, and first year Jack Pueringer.

The Oles' defensive unit will be led by Scott Crider, Tyler Wadsworth, Nathan Van Wylen and David Anderson. Crider was an All-MIAC honorable mention pick last fall.

Juniors Tyler Pieper and Ben Langholz could also be in the mix with first years Will Totimeh, Preben Bay, Andrew Cowley and Spencer Schubert.

Alex Kuehl will likely start the team's opener on Friday. Kuehl was in 2008, splitting time. First year Harry Ullmann will also vie for the spot in net.

[Complete St. Olaf Season Preview](#)



St. Thomas

Coach: Aaron Macke

Career Record: 78-36-14 (7 seasons)

2008 Finish: Tied 4th (6-3-1 MIAC, 12-6-1 overall)

St. Thomas Season Preview

St. Thomas' 2009 roster has 20 returners and 20 newcomers, with a few varsity spots still up for grabs. Coach Aaron Macke hopes his depth and team chemistry will produce better consistency and fuel another MIAC playoff run for the Tommies.

In each of the last two years, the Tommies have been in the MIAC title race until the final week of the season. In 2008, UST closed its regular season with one-goal losses on the road to share fourth place in the conference, then fell 2-0 in the playoffs at Carleton to end the season.

St. Thomas had five comeback victories in its 12-6-1 finish. The Toms went 10-0 at home and outscored foes 26-8 in those games. That included victories over NCAA playoff teams Loras and Augsburg, shutouts of St. Olaf and Bethel, and overtime wins over St. John's and Oberlin.

UST graduation losses include two HM All-MIAC honorees: Jon Stilwell (11 goals/nine assists in 54 career games) and Derek Engler (eight goals/two assists in 35 career games).

St. Thomas returns four players who received All-MIAC recognition in 2008. Mike Hutton had a remarkable freshman season as he scored 13 goals and five assists in 18 games. The Tommies were 11-1 when he scored a point last season. Hutton also was an All-American 800-meter runner for UST last school year and helped the Tommies sweep the conference indoor and outdoor track and field team championships.

Junior defender Reid Moser-Bleil, who scored the game-winning goal in an overtime win over St. John's, also made first-team All-MIAC. Honorable mention honorees who return are junior defender Colin White and senior goalie Carlos Castelan (14-5-1, 0.85 GAA in 20 career games).

"Captains Carlos Castelan and Reid Moser-Bleil will lead a returning group of starters from last year – Mike Hutton, Elliot Amundson, Andy Gikling, Colin White, Angel Riera," Macke said. "Transfer Jeff Frank and freshmen Brett Day and Josh Pozner will join the varsity squad, along with several quality players from our previous junior-varsity teams.

Frank, a defender, played two seasons at Division-I Butler and is a native of Racine, Wis.; Day is a D-MF from Wayzata; Pozner is a D-MF from Roseville.

"I am excited about our team chemistry early on and look forward to that chemistry, along with hard work and discipline, being the core of our team," Macke noted.

Over the last six seasons, St. Thomas is tied for the MIAC's third-best record in conference games with a 64% win clip. The Tommies have eight consecutive first-division finishes in the conference.

[Complete St. Thomas Season Preview](#)