

# 2011 MIAC Men's Tennis Coaches' Poll and Preview

3/3/2011

## 2011 MIAC Men's Tennis Preseason Coaches' Poll

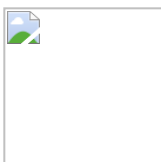
Coaches voted for every team in the conference except their own team. Points were assigned for each vote (nine for first, eight for second, etc.) Teams are ranked in order of highest point total to lowest with vote totals listed and first-place votes shown in parentheses.

2011 MIAC Men's Tennis Preseason Coaches' Poll		
Rank	Institution	Total
1	Gustavus (5)	77
2	Carleton (5)	75
3	St. Thomas	67
4	St. Olaf	47
5	Macalester	46
6	Saint John's	39
7	Concordia	30
8	Hamline	24
9	Bethel	23
10	Saint Mary's	22



**2011 MIAC Playoffs:** Top Six Teams, May 6-7, Gustavus Adolphus College - St. Peter, Minn.

| [2011 MIAC Schedule](#) | [2010 MIAC Statistics](#) | [MIAC Recordbook](#) | [MIAC Archives](#) |

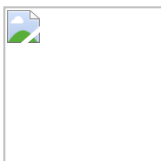


### Bethel

**Coach:** Dan Morton (11 seasons)

**2010 Finish:** 4th (5-4 MIAC, 11-6 overall)

Bethel Season Preview
The Royals are coming off a season, which saw them finish fourth in the MIAC standings behind annual powers, Gustavus and Carleton. St. Thomas also climbed ahead of the Royals in the standings for the first time in three years, however the Royals 5-4 MIAC mark was enough to propel them once again into the MIAC Playoffs.
The Royals lose key performers from last year's squad in Joel Cassens and Tom Ronning to graduation. Cassens sported a 10-6 solo mark, while also finishing 9-6 in his doubles pairing. Ronning was also 10-6 in singles play with a 9-6 doubles record. Both Cassens and Ronning received All-MIAC honors for their play last season.
Helping to fill the void left from those two players will be fellow All-MIAC performer Tucker Morris (So., Arden Hills, Minn.). Morris compiled a 12-2 overall record at #4 singles. He nearly went unbeaten in conference play and finished with an 8-1 record in the MIAC. Morris was the lone Royal to win a singles match against Carleton last year. Kent Nichols (Jr., Zimmerman, Minn.) will also be looked upon to help carry the Royals squad into the playoffs this season as well. Nichols was named to the All-MIAC doubles team last year as he was a significant contributor to the Royals effort. He finished the season with an overall record of 8-7 in doubles play with partners Ronning and Cassens. Also making an impact on the Royals team this year will be Reggie Ronning (So., Alexandria, Minn.) who will take over the #3 singles spot. Ronning will also be paired with Morris as the #1 doubles team.



### Carleton

**Coach:** Stephan Zweifel (13 seasons)

**2010 Finish:** 2nd (8-1 MIAC, 20-4 overall)

### Carleton Season Preview

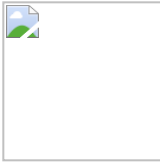
Carleton enters the 2011 season fresh off its best campaign in school history, going 20-4, winning the MIAC Playoff title and advancing to the NCAA Championships for the first time since 2004. They ended 2010 ranked 29th in the country after notching the programs first NCAA Tournament win since 1985.

As usual, the Knights' lofty goals are placed into proper perspective by head coach Stephan Zweifel. "Aside from not leaving anybody behind at an away match in Concordia, the team is looking to build on last year's success," he said. "Although we graduated two key members of the 2010 squad, we still believe we can compete for one of the top spots in the MIAC."

Leading the Knights in 2011 are junior Peter Dunn and sophomore Austin Jiang, who both earned All-MIAC honors in 2010 for their play in both singles and doubles. Dunn was 7-1 in MIAC play and 17-9 overall while Jiang posted a perfect 9-0 MIAC mark and a 22-1 record overall. Two time All-MIAC honoree Dan Vollman is back for his junior year after posting a 6-2 singles record in conference play. Paul Cooper also earned All-MIAC honors in doubles in 2010, posting a 6-2 mark with three different partners. The Knights must replace four-time All-MIAC singles player Winston Park '10, as well as stalwart Colin Russell '10, a two-time all-conference performer in singles and in doubles.

The Knights seek a return to the conference championship, which is hosted against by Gustavus. "The incentive of spending as much time as possible at the Erbert and Gerberts will hopefully push our team to make it to the final day of competition," Zweifel said.

As for the key for the Knights, Zweifel turns philosophical. "This is difficult to predict - it is often not the best player on the team, but rather the player who inspires others to be their best," he said. "It will be interesting to see who rises to this challenge."



### Concordia

**Coach:** Troy Hanestad (4 seasons)

**2010 Finish:** Tied 7th (3-6 MIAC, 7-10 overall)

### Concordia Season Preview

The 2011 Concordia-Moorhead men's tennis team will be hoping that the trend of one-match losses from 2010 will turn around and the 5-4 losses turn into 5-4 wins. The Cobbers lost three conference matches by a single point which was the difference between sitting home in the postseason and placing fourth in the final standings.

The reason for optimism in 2011 for the Cobbers is that they return five of their six singles players from last year. Topping the returning players is No. 1 singles player Matt Edin (Staples, Minn./Staples-Motley HS). Edin is a three-time All-Conference performer who compiled a 10-6 record in 2010. He also went 6-3 in conference play as the team's top singles player and was tied for second in victories among the No.1 singles players in the league.

Concordia will also return their No.2, 4, 5 and 6 singles from 2010. CC sophomore Devin Larson (Baxter, Minn./Brainerd HS) led the team in victories last season. He was 11-6 overall as the team's No.6 singles player. He also teamed with fellow sophomore Bryan Olson (West Fargo, N.D.) to pick up the most doubles wins in 2010. The pair was 9-5 at No.3 doubles. Larson will be jumped to the No.1 doubles spot in 2011 and team with Edin to give CC a formidable tandem at the top of the lineup.

Junior Chad Smith (Grand Forks, N.D./Red River HS) returns as the team's No.2 singles player. His gritty determination will keep him in every match and the former North Dakota State High School champ has a chance to post a career-high win total in 2011.

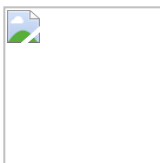
Olson, who won seven matches last year as the No.5 singles player, will slide up to the No.3 spot this season. Head Coach Troy Hanestad will be hoping that Olson's year of college experience will help him acclimate to the new singles position.

Larson will move to the No.4 singles spot and should continue to have success in singles play.

The final member of the returning top 5 is senior Jordan Swanson (Thief River Falls, Minn./Lincoln HS). Swanson will stay at No.5 singles where he went 7-10 in 2010 and has 19 career wins.

The race for the No.6 singles spot will come down to either David Bloomquist (Sr., Spicer, Minn./New London-Spicer HS) and Bryn Homuth (Jr., Fargo, N.D./Fargo South HS). Bloomquist has the most experience between the two, having won four career singles matches.

The Cobbers will once again head to Florida for their annual spring break trip at the end of February. Concordia will need that experience against top-flight teams as they will return home and open conference play against defending league tournament champion Carleton and perennial national power Gustavus in the first two weeks of March.



### **Gustavus**

**Coach:** Tommy Valentini (2nd season)

**2010 Finish:** 1st (9-0 MIAC, 15-10 overall)

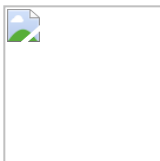
#### **Gustavus Season Preview**

The Gustavus men's tennis team has high hopes for the 2011 season as it returns four of its top six singles players and two doubles teams from the 2010 squad that won the MIAC Regular Season Championship with a 9-0 record. Second year head coach Tommy Valentini will look to returning all-conference performers Amrik Donkena (So., Rochester, Minn.), Patrick Clark (Jr., Glen Ellyn, Ill.), Tyler Johnson (So., West Bend, Wis.), and Daniel Pomeranc (Jr., Sao Paulo, Brazil) to lead another young Gustie squad.

Amrik Donkena made a significant contribution in his freshman season as he posted a mark of 19-7 at #1 singles and qualified for the singles draw at the NCAA Championship. Donkena will be joined at the top of the line-up by Patrick Clark, Tyler Johnson, and Daniel Pomeranc, who return at the #2, #3, and #4 positions respectively. Clark posted a record of 17-8 at the #2 spot last year, while Johnson was 16-9 at the #3 spot and Pomeranc was 14-11 at the #4 spot. Valentini will look to a talented group of freshman and sophomore players to fill out the final two spots in the singles line-up.

In doubles play, Donkena will join with Clark to form the #1 doubles tandem, however the rest of the doubles line-up is uncertain at the start. Valentini will look to pair Johnson and Pomeranc with several different players early in the season before deciding on the teams that will complete the line-up for the late regular season and MIAC Tournament.

Along with the challenging conference schedule, the Gusties will once again play a demanding non-conference schedule that includes eight squads ranked in the top twenty nationally at the start of the year.



### **Hamline**

**Coach:** Jon Henning (3 seasons)

**2010 Finish:** Tied 9th (1-8 MIAC, 9-9 overall)

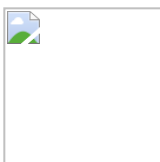
#### **Hamline Season Preview**

The expectation and theme for the 2011 Hamline University men's tennis team is building strong character within each individual and together as a whole. With this being the focus for 2011, the Pipers' goals - both individually and as a team - can be achieved for one of the deepest men's teams in Hamline tennis history.

With the loss of 2010 captain and contributor Dan Cromwell, other players are looking to step into leadership roles. The senior captain for this year's squad is three-year letter winner, MIAC All-Academic, and ITA Scholar-Athlete Kyle Helgemoe (Sr., Lakeville, Minn.). David Croonquist (So., North Oaks, Minn.) had a fabulous first year at #1 singles and #1 doubles and will be a force again in the MIAC this year. The goal for the junior class is to start the season playing and competing how they ended last year. Robert Becker (Jr., Hopkins, Minn.) and Bernard Mitambo (Jr., Minneapolis, Minn.) played very well at the ITA tournament this fall and will hold down some of the top spots in the lineup. Sam Teitelbaum (Jr., Stillwater, Minn.) and Andrew Lutz (Jr., Pine City, Minn.) blossomed at the end of last year, pulling out some thrilling MIAC matches in both singles and doubles.

There are several key additions to the team in 2011 that will look to contribute. Transfers Connor Hart (So., Dellwood, Minn.) and Andrew Johnson (So., Saint Paul, Minn.) are exceptional players that will compete for spots in the lineup. The type of exceptional attitude and work ethic that it takes to be a great team is on full display from our first year tennis student-athletes. These tremendous young individuals include Derek Lutz (Fy., Pine City, Minn.), Robert Johnson (Fy., Elk River, Minn.), Dylan Sperry (Fy., Scandia, Minn.), and Tyler Antil (Fy., Fridley, Minn.).

The 2011 seasons is going to be entertaining and exciting for the Hamline men's tennis team. The schedule includes some top notch opponents and the MIAC is as tough as it has ever been from top to bottom.



### **Macalester**

**Coach:** Jason Muhl (6 seasons)

**2010 Finish:** Tied 5th (4-5 MIAC, 13-8 overall)

### **Macalester Season Preview**

Nearly everyone returns to the Macalester lineup this season under 2010 MIAC Coach of the Year Jason Muhl and the Scots are poised to continue their climb this spring. The upstart Scots made it into the MIAC tournament in '10 and knocked off No. 3 seed St. Thomas in the opening round, and finished the campaign at 13-8 overall and 4-5 in the MIAC.

The Scots boast a pair of reliable and hard-working veterans at the top of the singles lineup in All-MIAC players Michael Coleman (Sr., Westlake Village, Calif. / Agoura) and Chris Fowler (Jr., Toronto, Ont. / Royal St. George's). Coleman went 12-8 at first singles (4-5 in the MIAC) and enters the spring season with a 32-23 career record (13-14 in the MIAC). Fowler went 4-5 in the league and 8-8 overall playing both first and second singles.

The middle part of Mac's singles lineup from last season must be replaced, and the Scots have plenty of candidates in the likes of Max Edwards (So., Rochester, Minn. / Mayo), Justin Margolies (Sr., Madison, Wis. / West), doubles standout Paul Mairret (Sr., Rochester, Minn. / Century), Lewis Wilcox (Jr., Minneapolis, Minn. / Southwest) and Ali Bandeali (Jr., Karachi, Pakistan / Karachi Grammar School). Edwards went 14-8 last year, mostly at fourth and fifth singles, and Margolies was 10-8.



### **Saint John's**

**Coach:** Jack Bowe (13 seasons)

**2010 Finish:** Tied 7th (3-6 MIAC, 9-9 overall)

### **Saint John's Season Preview**

The 2011 Saint John's tennis team looks to improve upon its seventh-place MIAC finish and 9-9 record (3-6 MIAC) from last year. The finish was the lowest for SJU since head coach Jack Bowe's first year in 1998 (eighth).

Leading the way for the Johnnies this season are junior Ian Hansen (Dawson, Minn./Dawson-Boyd) and sophomore Fabricio Moncada (Managua, Nicaragua/Lincoln International Academy). Last season, Moncada earned All-MIAC honors as a freshman by posting an 8-5 singles record (5-4 MIAC) in and a 7-7 record (4-5 MIAC) in doubles competition. Hansen, meanwhile, finished with a 9-9 singles record (4-5 MIAC) and a 6-10 record (4-5 MIAC) in doubles competition. Moncada and Hansen teamed up to post a 5-4 doubles record (4-3 MIAC).

Senior Elliott Elm (Eagan, Minn./Academy of Holy Angels) and sophomore Zach Shriwise (Overland Park, Kan./Blue Valley West) teamed up to post an 8-6 record (5-3 MIAC) in doubles competition. Elm also posted a 6-10 singles record (0-7 MIAC), while Shriwise posted a 1-1 mark.

Junior Justin LaBeaux (Sartell, Minn. /Sartell-St. Stephen) finished the season 7-4 in singles (1-6 MIAC) and a 2-1 doubles record with junior Matt Peckskamp (Sartell, Minn./Sartell-St. Stephen). Junior John Burns (Maple Grove, Minn. /Osseo) finished the 2010 season with a 5-3 tally in singles competition with a 1-2 MIAC record.

Moncada advanced to the quarterfinals with three victories at the 2010 USTA/ITA Midwest Regional earlier this fall, before falling in the semifinals against the No. 3 seed. Moncada and Hansen teamed up for a 1-1 record in the doubles competition.

The Johnnies graduated two-time All-MIAC selection Dutch Hansen, Luke Odegard and Tyler McKay. Hansen ended his career with a 21-23 singles record (9-11 MIAC) and a 22-28 record (7-14 MIAC) in doubles competition. Odegard closed his career with a 41-30 (22-14 MIAC) singles record and 40-37 (17-20 MIAC) record in doubles competition. Odegard and Hanson were honored with Academic All-MIAC honors. McKay finished with 10-3 records in both singles and doubles competitions.

The Johnnies again will call three different locations home in 2011 – Gold's Gym in Sartell, the SJU tennis courts and the Donald McNeely Spectrum in Collegeville.

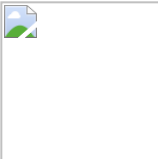
Bowe is in his 14th season with the Johnnies this spring. Bowe enters the 2011 campaign with a 130-125 career record (63-54 MIAC).



### **Saint Mary's**

**Coach:** Jeff Halberg (12 seasons)  
**2010 Finish:** Tied 9th (1-8 MIAC, 10-13 overall)

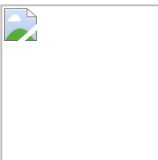
Saint Mary's Season Preview
<p>Saint Mary's University men's tennis coach Jeff Halberg knows that this years team may be the deepest and most talented team he has had in in his 13 years as coach.</p> <p>What he doesn't know is what that will translate to on the court and in the standings. But boy is he ready to find out.</p> <p>"Our depth is the best it's been in years, but with the strength of this conference, it is the effort we put in day in and day out that will decide our fate," Halberg said. "We'll have to make our own luck."</p> <p>SMU returns two all-conference performers in Michael Lunka (Eagan, Minn.) and Bobby Steingraeber (La Crosse, Wis.). Halberg will look for those two to improve on last years impressive seasons, but he stresses the importance of the entire team improving, if the Cardinals are to make noise in the MIAC.</p> <p>"(Lunka and Steingraeber) will need to again strive for excellence," Halberg said. "But the entire squad is totally focused on what needs to be done."</p> <p>Halberg is also excited about the arrivals of Tim Wolford (Maple Grove, Minn.) and Gavin Smith (White Bear Lake, Minn.).</p> <p>While the wins and losses are nice, Halberg really wants his Cardinals to enjoy the time they have playing. If they do that, everything else will fall into place.</p> <p>"Goals are necessary and useful, but what I wish more than anything is for my teams to enjoy the battle or the 'journey' as you might say," Halberg said. "Varsity Athletics is one of those unique areas where we put ourselves into stressful situations on purpose.</p> <p>"Hopefully we embrace that challenge and find out what we're made of."</p>



**St. Olaf**

**Coach:** Scott Nesbit (20 seasons)  
**2010 Finish:** 5th (4-5 MIAC, 5-11 overall)

St. Olaf Season Preview
<p>The St. Olaf men's tennis team looks to improve on last year's 5-11 (4-5 MIAC) record this spring. The Ole's return six players from last year's team. Returning are Will Mitchell (Sr.), Knute Gunderson (Jr.), Andy Catania (So.), Charlie Reinertsen (So.), John Wight (Jr.) and John Foss (Jr.). Gunderson will play first singles this spring after playing six matches there last year. Wight will move up to second singles from third. The rest of the singles line-up will likely be composed of Reinertsen, Foss, Catania, and Mitchell. For doubles, Mitchell and Gunderson will team up at the first spot after going 7-4 last year between first and second doubles. The pair of Reinertsen and Catania along with Wight and first-year Jeffrey Hudson will likely round out the doubles line-up. Also on the team this spring are first-years Scott Abdella, Nick Hoelmer, David Martin, and sophomore Ryan Abdella.</p>



**St. Thomas**

**Coach:** Terry Peck (20 seasons)  
**2010 Finish:** 3rd (7-2 MIAC, 11-6 overall)

St. Thomas Season Preview

The 2011 Tommie men's tennis team has a good mix of returners and talented newcomers. UST comes into March with a 4-1 record. The Tommies had five thtree-set defeats in an 8-1 loss to Carleton, but Coach Terry Peck said the team is closing the gap on the Knights and Gustavus.

The Tommies had three February matches at home in the new Anderson Fieldhouse -- UST's first on-campus tennis competitions in 23 months. St. Thomas played all 35 matches in 2010 off campus as its new facility was under construction.

Peck, who's starting his 21st season directing the UST men and 16th as women's head coach, had his 600th college match last spring and is closing in on 450 wins. He also was a UST assistant coach for five seasons from 1985-1990. Add in his 13 seasons as a high school coach at Wayzata and St. Louis Park, and he's approaching 600 coaching victories.

Injuries took a toll last season as the Tommie men started their season 8-0 but eventually finished 11-6. UST returns six of its top eight players from 2010. Seniors include Andy Michels, a two-time All-MIAC doubles honoree, who went 12-3 in doubles and 6-9 in singles last spring. On his three-year career he's built won-loss records of 29-19 in singles and 36-16 in doubles.

Brendan O'Connell made All-MIAC in both singles and doubles in 2010 as a freshman. O'Connell went 12-3 in singles, including an 8-1 record in MIAC play. He also went 10-4 in doubles.

Junior Dan Cooper made All-MIAC in doubles after he went 7-5 in doubles and 8-6 in singles last spring. His two-year records are 21-11 in doubles and 23-11 in singles.

Other seniors back are Kevin Walker (Career: 19-9 in doubles, 18-15 singles) and Matthew Bergstrom (24-16 singles, 7-5 doubles). Mitch Blackey was 11-3 in doubles and 2-2 in singles last season as a freshman.

Top newcomers include sophomore Brian McCarthy, a UW-Green Bay transfer; junior Henry Mandell, a transfer who played Nos. 1-2 singles last season at Bellhaven (Miss.); freshman Grant Bakke, a two-time North Dakota state singles champion; and junior Peter Wright, a native of Dubuque, Iowa, is a transfer from Gustavus, where he was 5-1 in singles and 1-0 in doubles in 2009. His twin sisters Anna and Rachel Wright are freshmen for the Tommie women's tennis team.

ST. PAUL, Minn. – A season ago, the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) coaches picked Carleton to topple Gustavus for the first time in recent memory for the men's tennis conference title. That prediction didn't come true, as the Gusties ran the table in league play and held off the 9-0 Knights to win another MIAC crown, but this year the coaches are predicting another extremely close finish atop the standings.

The Gustavus men were picked to finish first in the 2011 MIAC Men's Tennis Preseason Coaches' Poll, but not by much. The Gusties received five of the 10 first place votes and 77 points to take the top spot, but Carleton received the other five first-place votes and 75 points to prove the two teams at the head of the class are almost impossible to separate at this point. That's just fine by MIAC fans, who will get to watch the entertaining conference race play out on the court.

St. Thomas, who was 7-2 in league play a year ago, took the third spot in the poll with 67 points before a 20-point drop off. However, the rest of the standings were extremely close, which means there could be some great matches and a great race for the final three spots in the MIAC playoffs. In fact, all 10 teams were picked to finish as high as fifth in the standings by at least one coach.

St. Olaf (47) edged Macalester (46) by a single point for fourth place in the standings, and Saint John's wasn't far behind in sixth with 39 points in the poll. Just eight points separated the final four teams in the field, as Concordia received 30 points, Hamline had 24, Bethel had 23 and Saint Mary's finished with 22. If the coaches are correct, the MIAC could be an excellent league from top to bottom in 2011.

Four of the Gusties' top six singles players return for second-year coach **Tommy Valentini** and last year's title team. All are All-Conference performers, and there isn't a senior in the bunch between juniors **Patrick Clark** and **Daniel Pomeranc** and sophomores **Amrik Donkena** and **Tyler Johnson**. Gustavus' youthful talent and experience not only bodes well for this year, but it ensures the future is bright in St. Peter as well.

The Knights didn't take Gustavus' regular season crown a year ago, but Carleton did manage to win the MIAC Playoffs, and has high hopes after last year's 20-4 campaign. The Knights lose a pair of talented seniors from last year's squad, but two-time All-MIAC performer **Dan Vollman** is back, along with All-Conference picks **Peter Dunn** and **Austin Jiang**, as well as All-Conference doubles selection **Paul Cooper**. With its returning nucleus, Carleton has the firepower to challenge Gustavus for the title, and a real rivalry could be blossoming atop the MIAC standings.

St. Thomas started last season 8-0, but injuries hurt the Tommies the rest of the way as they finished 11-6 overall and 7-2 in the MIAC. This year, St. Thomas hopes for better health with six of its top eight players back from a year ago. All-MIAC picks **Andy Michels**, **Brendan O'Connell** and **Dan Cooper** are among the talented Tommies back to try to lead the team back to a top-three finish and a playoff spot in 2011.

Just a point separates St. Olaf and Macalester in the coaches' poll after both tied with 4-5 conference records in 2010. The Oles have six key players back in their lineup, including **Knute Gunderson** and **John Wight**, who will anchor the singles lineup. Almost everyone is back for Macalester and reigning MIAC Coach-of-the-Year **Jason Muhl** after the Scots advanced to the MIAC tournament semifinals in 2010. All-MIAC selections **Michael Coleman** and **Chris Fowler** are Macalester's top two returners.

Saint John's has its sights set on a return trip to the MIAC Playoffs after finishing seventh in 2010. Junior **Ian Hansen** and sophomore **Fabricio Moncada** lead the singles lineup and will team up as doubles partners to lead the Johnnies in 2011. Three-time All-Conference performer **Matt Edin** is back to lead Concordia this season, and four of the Cobbers other top singles players also return as the team tries to reverse its luck both overall, and in close matches (it lost three MIAC matches by a single point in 2010).

Hamline will be led by No. 1 singles and doubles player **David Croonquist**, who the Pipers hope continues the excellence he displayed as a sophomore, and will count on senior **Kyle Helgemoe** for leadership this season. Bethel would love to return to the MIAC playoffs after finishing fourth a year ago, and it will look to All-Conference returnees **Tucker Morris** and **Kent Nichols** to lead the way in 2011. Finally, Saint Mary's will also depend on two All-MIAC picks – **Michael Lunka** and **Bobby Steingraeber** – to be the Cardinals' backbone again this season.

The MIAC regular season is already under way with each team playing a nine-match season between now and late April. The top six teams in the regular season standings will advance to the 2011 MIAC Men's Tennis Playoffs, which will be held May 6-7 at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minn.

Complete results from the 2011 MIAC Men's Tennis Preseason Coaches' Poll are listed below, as well as team-by-team previews for all 10 conference schools.