

# 2018 MIAC Men's Tennis Preview & Preseason Coaches' Poll

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**BLOOMINGTON, Minn.** – The 2018 Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) men's tennis season is set to get underway this weekend and once again, Gustavus Adolphus College is picked to finish atop the standings.

The Gusties – ranked 16th in the nation in the latest [Oracle/ITA Division III National Poll](#) – garnered nine first-place votes and 81 total points in the annual MIAC Men's Tennis Preseason Coaches' Poll, and with good reason. Gustavus has won 29 consecutive Conference titles and each of the last seven MIAC playoff crowns. With Oracle/ITA's top-ranked singles competitor in the nation, senior **Mohanad Alhouni**, back to lead the charge, head coach Tommy Valentini's squad looks to be in the driver's seat for an unprecedented three decades of dominance.

A host of talented MIAC teams will do their best to spoil the celebration, however. MIAC coaches selected Carleton College as the Gusties' top challenger. The Knights claimed the No. 2 spot in the Poll with 73 points and one first-place vote. Carleton will need to replace the production of 2017 MIAC Arthur Ashe Award winner Patton McClelland this spring, and junior **Jordon O'Kelley** could well be the man for the job.

Macalester finished third in the MIAC Preseason Coaches' Poll with 58 points. The Scots went 4-5 in Conference play last season but show great promise heading into the new year with a quality balance of youth and experience, led by three-time All-Conference selection **Josh Doyle**.

Coming in at No. 4 in the Preseason Poll is Saint John's, a team heavy with underclassman talent. All-MIAC selection **Tim Larson** is the program's only senior; however, juniors **Ryan Meger** and **Jonah Punnoose**, along with sophomore **Jess Hansen** all bring quality experience to the court for the Johnnies.

After compiling a 6-3 record in Conference play last season, Bethel seized the No. 5 spot in the Preseason Coaches' Poll. Junior **Hunter Fernelius** will look to maintain the momentum of an excellent 2017 campaign as the Royals attempt to climb the MIAC rankings this season.

## Complete 2018 Preseason Coaches' Poll

Coaches voted for every team in the conference except their own team. Points were assigned for each vote (9 for first, 8 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.

### 2018 MIAC Men's Tennis Preseason Coaches' Poll

Rank	Institution (First-Place Votes)	Total
1.	Gustavus (9)	81
2.	Carleton (1)	73
3.	Macalester	58
4.	Saint John's	56
5.	Bethel	50
6.	St. Thomas	47
T7.	Concordia	25
T7.	St. Olaf	25
9.	Saint Mary's	19
10.	Hamline	16



### **Around the MIAC**

- St. Thomas senior **Martin Beck** was an ITA All-America honoree in doubles two falls ago and posted records of 21-6 in doubles and 11-5 in singles last season.
- The Gusties' team of **Mohanad Alhouni** and **Patrick Whaling** is ranked No. 6 in the nation by Oracle/ITA and won the ITA Midwest Regional Doubles title this past fall.
- St. Olaf boasts of a pair of All-MIAC honorees with junior **Christian Beck** and senior **Danny Hogan** poised to return to the court in 2018.

### **2018 MIAC Men's Tennis Playoffs**

The 2018 MIAC Men's Tennis Playoffs will include the top five teams in the conference standings, squaring off in a single-elimination, high-seed host tournament. The No. 4 and 5 seeds will square off on May 2 in the quarterfinals, with the winner joining the top three seeds in the semifinals on May 4. The championship match will be held May 6 on the home court of the top remaining seed. The winner will receive the MIAC's automatic bid to the 2018 NCAA Division III Men's Tennis Tournament.

### **Odds and Ends**

- Ted Lauer enters his first season as head coach at St. Thomas after spending nine years as an assistant for the Tommies. Lauer was selected to multiple All-MIAC teams during his four years as a competitor at rival Saint John's.
- Also a member of the Cardinals' men's soccer team, sophomore **Robbie Sobczak** shared the team lead with 11 singles wins in 2017 while adding eight doubles victories as well.
- Concordia sophomore **David Youngs** earned All-Conference honors as a freshman last season while teaming with Isaac Toivonen. The pair had more doubles wins last year (9) than the entire Cobbers team had in all of 2016.
- Hamline head coach Julia Courter is in her second year with the Pipers and is one of six female head coaches of a men's team in the MIAC.