

2007 MIAC Men's Cross Country Championship Preview

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St. Paul, Minn. (Courtesy of Andy Johnson, Macalester College) -- Saint John's captured its 14th team championship a year ago at Como Park, ending a six-year drought after claiming four team trophies in a row in the late 90s. Now, the Johnnies are going for their second straight title as the No. 1-ranked team in the Central Region and tenth-ranked team in the nation.



Last year, the Johnnies edged Hamline by just six points (35 to 41) for the team trophy with five underclassmen finishing in the top 12. Hamline graduated MIAC champ Travis Bristow and third-place finisher Chris Yotter, and this season the Carleton Knights have emerged as SJU's most dangerous challenger. Carleton is rated fourth in the region and 25th in NCAA Division III.

The MIAC features four other regionally-ranked squads which could pose darkhorse challenges to SJU and Carleton: Hamline, Macalester, St. Olaf and St. Thomas.

Saint John's is led by Chris Erichsen and Kelly Fermoye, a pair of top-six MIAC finishers from a year ago. They were first and second-respectively, at the Willamette (Ore.) Invitational and two weeks ago were the only two MIAC finishers in the top 10 at the Wisconsin-La Crosse Jim Drews Invitational. Erichsen also crossed the tape first in the Saint John's Invitational. The veteran Johnnie team is as deep as they are fast at the top of the lineup and boast five all-conference runners.

Carleton won the Grinnell Les Duke Invitational and like SJU, also won a race in Oregon, taking first at the Lewis & Clark Pioneer Open. Joe Sepe and Quentin Kennedy were named MIAC co-runners of the week after leading the way at the Lewis & Clark meet. Kennedy placed 17th at the Griak Invitational.

Conference champs two years ago and runners-up in '07, Hamline should still be a factor despite the losses of Bristow and Yotter. The Pipers used pack running to place fifth at the Griak and 10th at the Jim Drews. Macalester has placed fourth in each of the past four championship meets and is looking to finally break into the top three, while St. Olaf and St. Thomas are also ranked in the Central Region.

The race for individual placing should be as strong as ever. Eleven of the 15 All-MIAC harriers return and several could vie for first-place honors. SJU has five returning all-conference runners: Erichsen, Fermoye, Mitch Vanbrugeen, Andrew Stevens and Darren Larson. Other returning All-MIAC runners include the Bethel pair of Dan Greeno and Carl Gladitsch, John Nowinski of Carleton, Chris deLaubenfels of Gustavus and Jon Murphy of Hamline.

Augsburg

Coach: Dennis Barker (14th season)

2006 Championship Finish: 9th

Augsburg Athletes to Watch
Brent Haglund (So., Fridley, Minn.)
Chris Scribner (So., New York, N.Y./Port Townsend)
Shane Wyborny (So., Detroit Lakes, Minn.)
Keagan Marble (Fr., Waseca, Minn.)
Victor Sanchez (So., Minneapolis, Minn./Southwest)
Jason Chrudimsky (Fr., Antigo, Wis.)

Augsburg Championship Preview

<p>The Augsburg men's cross country team is beginning to peak at the perfect time. With the MIAC Championships coming up, the Auggies are coming off one of their best performances of the season, as all six runners produced personal-best 8,000-meter times at the Wisconsin-La Crosse Jim Drews Invitational on Oct. 13.</p> <p>The six Auggie runners are all sophomores or freshmen, and the young lineup has goals of improving from last season's ninth-place finish at the MIAC Championships and 16th-place finish at the NCAA Division III Central Regional.</p> <p>Augsburg has been led this season by sophomore Brent Haglund (So., Fridley, Minn.), who claimed a personal-best 26:07.25 at the Wisconsin-La Crosse meet, finishing 25th in the competitive field (third-fastest among MIAC runners at the meet). At the New York University Invitational on Sept. 15, he produced a five-mile 26:15.0 time, placing sixth overall, and he placed 42nd overall with a 27:05.7 time at the Minnesota Roy Griak Invitational on Sept. 29, the eighth-best time among the MIAC runners at the event. In very warm conditions on Oct. 6, Haglund finished fourth at the St. Olaf Pre-Nationals Invitational in 27:11.78.</p> <p>Chris Scribner (So., New York, N.Y./Port Townsen HS) has been a solid No. 2 runner for the Auggies all season long, with a personal-best 27:36.28 time at the Wisconsin-La Crosse meet. Shane Wyborny (So., Detroit Lakes, Minn.), Augsburg's No. 3 runner, cracked the 28-minute barrier for the first time at the Wisconsin-La Crosse meet with a personal-best 27:55.27.</p> <p>Keagan Marble (Fr., Waseca, Minn.) has had a solid first campaign as a collegian, taking a personal-best 28:42.86 into the MIAC meet. Victor Sanchez (So., Minneapolis, Minn./Southwest HS) smashed his previous personal best by 51 seconds at the Wisconsin-La Crosse meet with a 29:23.42 finish, and Jason Chrudimsky (Fr., Antigo, Wis.) has also shown strong improvement, with a 31:27.93 personal-best time entering the MIAC meet.</p>

Bethel
Coach: Jim Timp (11th season)

2006 Championship Finish: 5th

Bethel Athletes to Watch
Dan Greeno
Carl Gladitsch
Tyler Hinrichs
Austin Hinrichs

Bethel Championship Preview
The Bethel University Men's

Carleton
Coach: Dave Ricks (1st season)

2006 Championship Finish: 3rd

Carleton Athletes to Watch
Quentin Kennedy (Sr., Chariton, Iowa)
John Nowinski (Sr., Black River Falls, Wis.)
Joe Sepe (Sr., Fargo, N.D./South)

Carleton Championship Preview

The Knights bring an experienced squad to this year's MIAC Championships and look to capture their first conference crown since 2002. Carleton has placed among the top three teams in the MIAC during each of the last five years, including runner-up finishes in 2003, 2004 and 2005 before coming in third last season.

Carleton's strong fall includes team victories at the Les Duke Invitational and the Lewis & Clark Pioneer Open. The Knights also finished fourth at the prestigious Roy Griak Invitational in September.

John Nowinski (Sr./Black River Falls, Wis.) has received All-MIAC honors after finishing fifth at the 2005 conference meet and ninth during last year's race.

Joe Sepe (Sr./ Fargo, N.D./South) has a pair of top three finishes this season and placed 28th at the Roy Griak Invitational. He was All-MIAC honorable mention following a 12th place finish in 2005 and placed 19th at last year's event.

Quentin Kennedy (Sr./Chariton, Iowa) has improved his MIAC Championships finish in each of the three previous races. After coming in 35th in 2004, he moved up to 26th the next year and earned All-MIAC honorable mention with a 22nd place finish a year ago. Additionally, he owns a pair of top four finishes this season and was 17th across the line at the Roy Griak Invitational.

Concordia

Coach: Garrick Larson (11th season)

2006 Championship Finish: 10th

Concordia Athletes to Watch
Tom Sederquist (Fr., Moorhead, Minn.)

Concordia Championship Preview
The Concordia men's cross country team will be hoping to peak at just the right time as they prepare for the 2007 MIAC Men's Cross Country Championship Meet. The Cobbers have steadily improved throughout the season and will be looking to improve on last year's 10 th -place finish at the meet.
Leading the way for the Cobbers will be freshman Tom Sederquist (Moorhead, Minn.). Sederquist has led the Cobbers in all five meets this season and has posted some of the top times by a first-year runner in program history. His best finish came at the Jamestown Invitational where he finished ninth in a time of 27:42.47. His fastest time of the year came at the UND Invitational where he posted his only sub-27 minute finish by recording a time of 26:43.00. That time is believed to be one of the fastest ever run by a freshman at Concordia.
The next four runners will hold the key for the Cobbers if they want to finish in the top 10 of the conference. There have been several different runners that have occupied the top four for CC throughout the season but the most consistent have been seniors Dustin Weege (Buffalo, Minn.) and Steve Astrup (Dilworth, Minn./Moorhead HS), sophomores Mike Reponen (Baxter, Minn./Brainerd HS) and Josh Ydstie (Milbank, S.D.) and freshman Paul Lillehaugen (Moorhead, Minn.)

Gustavus

Coach: Jed Friedrich (4th season)

2006 Championship Finish: 8th

Gustavus Athletes to Watch
Chris deLaubenfels (Sr.)
Dan Foley (Jr.)

Gustavus Championship Preview

<p>The 2007 Gustavus men's cross country team looks to improve on its eighth place finish at the conference championships in 2006. Senior Chris deLaubenfels earned all-conference honors a year ago with a 14th place finish. deLaubenfels has been working to return to form after suffering an early season injury. Junior Dan Foley finished 17th at last year's conference meet, just missing all-conference honors.</p>

<p>Joining deLaubenfels and Foley on the conference squad are junior John Leaf and sophomores John Kennedy and Mark Hartman. Leaf earned a 55th-place finish at the MIAC meet last year, while Kennedy finished 63rd-place and Hartman placed 73rd at last year's conference meet. The Gusties were just 12 points away from a sixth place finish last year and it appears that the battle for the middle four spots will be very tight again this year. Coach Friedrich is hoping that a strong performance on race day could result in a top five finish for the Gusties.</p>
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Hamline

Coach: Paul Schmaedeke (20th season)

2006 Championship Finish: 2nd

Hamline Athletes to Watch

<p>Dan Peterson (Sr., Edina, Minn.)</p>
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<p>Dan Steinbrecher (Sr., Hinckley, Minn.)</p>

<p>Kevin Groh (Jr., Austin, Minn.)</p>

<p>Jon Murphy (Jr., North St. Paul, Minn.)</p>

<p>Ian Bauer (So., Roseville, Minn.)</p>

Hamline Championship Preview

<p>Only returning two of five points finishers from the 2006 Central Region championship team means that the Hamline University men's cross country team offers a lot of opportunities for a core of returning, yet previously untested, runners to make their mark in the MIAC this season. These key returning runners will be leading a group of young and excited teammates as head coach</p>

Macalester

Coach: Matt Haugen (5th season)

2006 Championship Finish: 4th

Macalester Athletes to Watch

<p>Tim Burns (Jr., Neenah, Wis.)</p>

<p>Martin Mudry (Jr., University Heights, Ohio / University School)</p>
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<p>Kyle Braam (Sr., Burnsville, Minn.)</p>

Macalester Championship Preview
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Four consecutive fourth-place MIAC finishes have the Scots eager to move into the top three and the team has shown the potential to move up after a successful, but light, fall campaign. The Scots enter off just one small meet and three larger invitationals, and enjoyed a three-week break of competition during the middle of the season.

The Scots, coached by 1977 MIAC champ Matt Haugen, are ranked eighth in the most recent Central Region poll as the fourth of six conference teams in the top-ten. Macalester's best team effort came when it placed third out of 20 teams at the Eau Claire Blugold Open. The team was also 12th of 27 at the St. Olaf Invitational and 13th of 22 at the Wisconsin-Oshkosh Brooks Invitational.

Macalester graduated two-time All-MIAC harrier Dylan Keith from a team which used superior depth at the fourth and fifth positions to hold off Bethel, St. Olaf, St. Thomas and Gustavus for fourth place. This year, Macalester hopes its depth makes a difference again. The Scots have been running as a pack throughout the fall and when third at the Blugold meet have their five point-scorers cross the finish line within 22 seconds of each other.

Tim Burns (Jr., Neenah, Wis.) and Martin Mudry (Jr., University Heights, Ohio / University School) have been Mac's top runners in the team's last two races. Burns placed 20th at the Blugold meet and 45th at the Brooks Invite. Mudry was 30th at the Blugold and 64th at the Brooks meet. Kyle Braam (Sr., Burnsville, Minn.) has been consistent all year and has been the team's No. 3 runner most of the way, while Matt Wegmann (Sr., North Oaks, Minn. / Mounds View) was the top runner when the Scots won the St. Mary's Invitational to open the season. The Scots will miss Wade Eckstrom (So., La Crescent, Minn.) who will not run at the conference meet due to a family wedding.

Saint John's

Coach: Tim Miles (29th season)

2006 Championship Finish: 1st

Saint John's Athletes to Watch

- Chris Erichsen (Sr., Spring Valley, Minn./Kingsland)
- Kelly Fermoye (Sr., Mendota Heights, Minn./Henry Sibley)
- Darren Larsen (Sr., Alexandria, Minn.)
- Mitch VanBruggen (Sr., Buffalo, Minn.)

Saint John's Championship Preview

The Saint John’s University cross country team will look to defend its 2006 MIAC title and return to the NCAA Division III Championship. SJU replaced just one runner from the squad that claimed fifth place at the NCAA Division III Championship last fall.

Seniors Chris Erichsen (Spring Valley, Minn./Kingsland, Kelly Fermoyle (Mendota Heights, Minn./Henry Sibley), Darren Larsen (Alexandria, Minn.) and Mitch VanBruggen (Buffalo, Minn.) have all returned following outstanding performances last season. Fermoyle earned All-America honors with his 28th-place finish (27:33) at the 2006 NCAA National Championship. VanBruggen led the Johnnies at the 2006 MIAC Championship with a second-place finish (26:09), while Fermoyle finished fifth (27:18), Erichsen finished sixth (26:21) and Larsen finished 12th (26:43). At the NCAA National Championship, Erichsen finished 50th (28:03), VanBruggen finished 86th (28:24) and Larsen finished 122nd (28:44). Erichsen and VanBruggen were both named to the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches' Association (USTFCCCA) Division III All-Academic Cross Country Team. In addition, Erichsen was named to the ESPN The Magazine Academic All-District V College Division First Team.

Junior Zack Hunter (Billings, Mont.) and sophomore Andrew Stevens (Stillwater, Minn.) have also returned for SJU this season. Stevens finished 10th (26:42) at the MIAC Championships and 66th (28:10) at the NCAA Division III National Championships, while Hunter finished 24th (27:05) at the MIAC Championships and 103rd (28:33) at the national meet last fall. Both Stevens and Hunter were named to the 2006 USTFCCCA Division III All-Academic Cross Country Team.

The Johnnies started this fall with a first-place tie (10 teams) at their own invitational on Sept. 8. Erichsen won the race with a time of 25:25, while Fermoyle came in third with a time of 25:45. Six of the top 10 runners were Johnnies. SJU finished third out of 27 teams at the Willamette Invitational in Salem, Ore. on Sept. 29. Erichsen and Fermoyle finished first (24:10.65) and second (24:24:40) overall, respectively. SJU then took fourth at the 25-team Wis.-La Crosse Invitational on Oct. 13. Once again, Erichsen led the Johnnies with a second-place finish (25:00), while Fermoyle finished 39 seconds later for eighth-place overall. Senior Cam Green (Edina, Minn.) bolstered the SJU lineup by finishing 37th at the Willamette Invitational and 22nd at the Wis.-La Crosse Invite.

The 2006 MIAC Men’s Cross Country Coach of the Year, head coach Tim Miles is in his 29th season as head cross country coach at Saint John’s. During his tenure, Miles has produced a winning program that has finished among the MIAC's top two squads in 21 of the past 27 seasons, including eight MIAC titles (1981, 1982, 1983, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2006). At the national level, Miles' teams have gained 16 top-15 finishes at the NCAA Division III meet and have produced 16 All-Americans. The Johnnies have qualified as a team for the national meet 20 times since 1979.

Saint Mary's
Coach: Ward Berndt (3rd season)
2006 Championship Finish: 11th

Saint Mary's Championship to Watch
John Vallez (So., Eagan, Minn.)
Jared Brandenburg (Fr., Independence, Wis.)
Quentin Moore (Fr., Minneapolis, Minn.)
Jerod Baertsch (Jr., Winona, Minn.)

Saint Mary's Season Preview

<p>John Vallez concluded his first year as a collegiate runner in impressive fashion, placing 32nd at the NCAA Central Regional, becoming Saint Mary’s University’s first All-Region performer since Mark Bolster in 1999.</p> <p>And Vallez certainly hasn’t shown any signs of a sophomore slump.</p> <p>The Cardinal sophomore has been SMU’s top finisher in each of the team’s five meets, including a season-best 8K time of 26:57 in SMU’s final MIAC tune-up, the Jim Drews Invitational.</p> <p>“John has done a great job,” said SMU coach Ward Berndt. “He showed us what he was capable of at the end of last year, and has just picked up where he left off.”</p> <p>Vallez hasn’t been the only Cardinal turning heads as SMU gears up for the MIAC Championships. Freshmen Jared Brandenberg and Quentin Moore have also shared some time in the spotlight.</p> <p>“The young guys have really impressed me, thus far,” said Berndt, whose team is looking to improve on last year’s 11th-place finish. “Hopefully we’ll be able to put it all together at the conference championships.”</p>
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St. Olaf
Coach: Bill Thornton (25th season)
2006 Championship Finish: 6th

St. Olaf Championship to Watch
<p>David Swanson</p> <p>David Green</p> <p>Cullen O'Neill</p>

St. Olaf Season Preview
<p>The St. Olaf men's cross country team will rely on three experienced runners and a variety of fresh faces at the MIAC Championships.</p> <p>David Swanson, David Green and Cullen O'Neill have been the Oles' most consistent runners this fall. Swanson has finished as high as third this season (Pre-Nationals) and has been the top runner for St. Olaf in each race he has run.</p> <p>First year Jon Lambert, too, should compete well in his first MIAC Championships. Lambert was the Oles' third-best runner in their last meet - the Jim Drews Invitational on Oct. 13.</p> <p>St. Olaf finished sixth at last year's MIAC's.</p>

St. Thomas
Coach: Pete Wareham (15th season)
2006 Championship Finish: 7th

St. Thomas Championship to Watch
<p>Matt Boumeester (Jr.)</p> <p>Neil Atzinger (Sr.)</p> <p>Kyle Brandon (Jr.)</p> <p>Rorak Hooten (Jr.)</p> <p>Seth Rosvold (So,)</p>

St. Thomas Season Preview

St. Thomas placed seventh at the 2006 MIAC Championships with all sophomores and freshmen in its top six.

The Tommies' lone All-MIAC honore last year, sophomore Logan O'Grady, transferred to UW-LaCrosse where he's now the No. 7 runner on the nation's third-ranked team.

St. Thomas has shown steady improvement this season as it bids for a top-five conference team placing. Junior Matt Boumeester, 33rd last year at the MIAC meet, is among the MIAC's most improved runners. Boumeester and senior Neil Atzinger will bid for All-MIAC honors. Juniors Kyle Brandon and Rorak Hooten and sophomores Seth Rosvold, Greg Dowe and Brian Sames will look for top 40 placings. Coach Pete Wareham has several fast 400- to 1,500-meter runners trying to adjust to 8,000-meter races and he's hoping for breakthrough races at the MIAC and regional meets.