

MIAC Men's Cross Country Championship Preview

10/27/2010

ST. PAUL, Minn. – The 2010 Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) Men's Cross Country Championships will take place Saturday, Oct. 30, at Como Park Golf Course in St. Paul, Minn. The race will begin at 2:15 p.m., with the women's race to follow at 3:15 p.m. The 2010 MIAC Cross Country Championships are hosted by St. Catherine University.



Hamline University returns as the defending MIAC champion after edging St. Olaf College by five points for the 2009 title. Bethel's **Dan Greeno** was last year's individual champ, but the top two finishers from a year ago both graduated, so the door is wide open for a new MIAC individual winner.

A pair of MIAC teams – Hamline and Saint John's appeared in the latest Men's Cross Country National Coaches' Poll. The Pipers hold the No. 20 ranking in Division III with 114 points, and recently made the big jump from No. 28 all the way to their current spot. Meanwhile the Johnnies are ranked No. 34 with 16 points.

The same two teams headline the MIAC representation in the Central Region rankings. Hamline is the top-ranked men's team in the region and Saint John's is also in the top three. The Johnnies are in third place with only Nebraska Wesleyan separating them from the Pipers. St. Olaf occupies the No. 7 region ranking and St. Thomas is also in the top 10 at No. 9.

Those four regionally ranked teams appear to be the favorites heading into Saturday's 8K race in St. Paul. Hamline lost its top runner from last year's title team to graduation, but returns a strong nucleus led by junior **Devin Monson** and a deep, balanced lineup. The Johnnies' title hopes are bolstered by seniors **Dustin Franta** and **David Forster**. St. Olaf graduated several of its top runners from a year ago, but is led by standout sophomore **Chris Massey** and a solid supporting cast.

The individual race promises to be equally intriguing thanks largely to a showdown that has been brewing all season. This fall, the MIAC Men's Cross Country Athlete-of-the-Week award has been presented six times – three times each to the league's top two runners in 2010. St. Thomas star **Ben Sathre** and Concordia's **Tom Sederquist** have both had unbelievable fall seasons, and it's expected both will be in strong contention for Saturday's MIAC individual title.

Sathre is the top returner in the men's field after finishing third at the 2009 MIAC meet and earning both All-Conference and All-American honors. Sederquist didn't compete in last year's MIAC race, but has dazzled thus far in 2010. In all, four All-MIAC performers return from 2009. They are Sathre (third), Monson (sixth), Franta (10th) and St. Olaf senior **Ben Wilson** (12th).

There will be a short awards ceremony following the conclusion of the women's race to honor the MIAC team and individual champions and All-Conference runners. The top 15 finishers in each race automatically earn All-MIAC accolades. Results, recaps and photos will be posted on the MIAC's Cross Country Championships home page following the event.

[2010 MIAC Cross Country Championships Website](#)



Augsburg

Coach: Dennis Barker (17th season)

2009 Championship Finish: 4th (97 points)

Augsburg Championship Preview

Coming off one of its best seasons in recent history, the Augsburg College men's cross country team will look to continue its success at the Minnesota intercollegiate Athletic Conference championships again this season.

Despite the loss of four of the team's top-five performers from last year's fourth-place squad, this year's Augsburg team remains in good position to contend for a spot in the top half of the conference standings. The Auggies will enter the conference meet with momentum, as four of the team's top six runners are coming off season best times at the Wisconsin-LaCrosse Jim Drews Invitational on Oct. 16.

Augsburg has been paced this year by a young group of runners with limited



Bethel

Coach: Jim Timp (14th season)

2009 Championship Finish: 7th (177 points)

Bethel Championship Preview

With a disappointing 7th place team finish in 2009, the team is looking to finish in the top five in 2010. This without the most prolific runner in Bethel history – Dan Greeno due to graduation. Without that front runner that the Royals have relied on and enjoyed for the past 4 years, has forced the team to run more as a pack and rely more on depth. Every runner has a larger role to fill this year if they are to move up. The Royals are not without a good contingent of runners however. Led by sophomore Zach Haskins (So. Maple Grove) who just moved up to number four on the Bethel's all time list with a 25:29 clocking at the Brooks Invitational makes him a runner to watch in the conference meet. Also leading the charge for the team are senior co-captains Austin Hinrichs (Sr., Clara City, Minn.), and Denny Meints (Sr., Pine Island, Minn.), both of whom could figure into the top 15 spots. Rounding out the team that will be important team contributors this year include: Joel McDougall (Jr. Minneapolis, Minn.), Matt Neufeld (Sr. Mankato, MN), Justin Ivory (So. St. Charles, MO), Mark Bostrom (So. Mora, MN), and Brent Schultz (So. Wayzata, MN).



Carleton

Coach: David Ricks (4th season)

2009 Championship Finish: 6th (167 points)

Carleton Championship Preview

The Carleton men's cross country team hopes to utilize its depth and team camaraderie to improve upon last year's sixth-place finish.

"It would be a nice progression to finish fifth," Carleton head coach Dave Ricks said. "I expect it to be a tight battle between Carleton, Bethel, and Gustavus for the 5-7 spots."

The Knights are coming off a strong performance in their previous meet in Oregon, hosted by Lewis & Clark. The Knights finished second, ahead of two regionally ranked teams, and then rescued a woman from an overturned car on their way back up the coast following the meet. Couple that with the team's volunteering to sandbag during flooding in Northfield in late September and at Carleton's annual Halloween Carnival for local children last weekend, and Ricks knows his team has learned as much off the race course as on it this fall.

"With the young group of runners, we are just now beginning to come together as a team-- hopefully, just in time for the MIAC Championships," he said. "I am very proud of how these guys have worked together both on and off the running courses this year. I am excited to see them work together as a team at Como Park on Saturday."

The Knights are a team dominated in numbers by sophomore and first-year runners, so Ricks and the Knights need the youngsters to step forward.

"I am very happy with the team's progression over the course of the season," he said. "We have small junior and senior classes and therefore expect our younger runners to have a chance to contribute this year. As a team, we are the healthiest that we have been all season."

Leading the Knights is rookie **Marcus Huderle** (Fy./Eden Prairie, Minn./Eden Prairie) and sophomore **Bobby Davis** (So./Eden Prairie, Minn./Eden Prairie), both of whom finished in the top ten in Oregon. Showing the experience-youth balance that is this year's Knights, **Guthrie Cunningham** (Fy./Duluth, Minn./Duluth East) and **Colin Sinclair** (Sr./Madison, Wis./Madison West) were the next two runners to cross the finish line out west.

"The upperclassmen have been instrumental in helping our younger runners learn to be patient over the 8000-meter distance," Ricks said. "This team has the best depth that we have seen on the men's side in a number of years with 13 runners being among our top 7 runners on any given weekend. This depth will help us work together at Como Park this weekend."



Concordia

Coach: Garrick Larson (14th season)

2009 Championship Finish: 11th (348 points)

Concordia Championship Preview

The 2010 MIAC Men's Cross Country Championship Meet will have one of the most exciting individual subplots for Concordia in the history of the program. Cobber junior Tom Sederquist (Moorhead, Minn.) has a chance to become the third person in school history to win the conference individual championship.

What makes the story line for Sederquist and the Cobbers is the presence of quality competition. Sederquist will face conference rival Ben Sathre of St. Thomas and Concordia will square off against a group of teams as they fight for the middle spots in the conference.

Sederquist has won three individual titles at meets this season and has been named the MIAC Athlete of the Week on three occasions. He won the prestigious Roy Griak Invitational at the U of Minnesota and was also runner-up at the Wartburg Pre-National Meet. Sathre, who is a former All-American, has finished first in four meets this year and has also been named the MIAC Athlete of the Week three times.

Concordia is hoping to post their best team finish since 2002 when they finished in sixth place. The reason for head coach Garrick Larson's optimism is a core group of runners that has benefitted from Sederquist's emergence and a new-found sense of confidence. The Cobbers' No.2 runner Brad McConn (Fargo, N.D./Fargo South HS) has steadily improved throughout the season and has posted a pair of lifetime best marks.

In order for the Cobbers to get into the middle of the pack, they will need strong performances from their No.3, 4 and 5 runners. Tanner Sakrismo (Jr., Moorhead, Minn.), Paul Lillehaugen (Sr., Moorhead, Minn.) and Luke Olmstead (Sr., Fargo, N.D./Fargo Norths HS) have all had solid meets throughout the year and all three could be in the top 5 for Concordia.



Gustavus

Coach: Dale Bahr (2nd season)

2009 Championship Finish: 8th (207 points)

Gustavus Championship Preview

The Gustavus men's cross country team has been showing steady improvement throughout the season and Coach Dale Bahr is hoping that the squad is peaking just in time for the 2010 MIAC Championships. Coach Bahr thinks this group is capable of posting an upper division finish and improving on last year's eighth place finish. The Gusties have relied on balanced, pack running this season due to the fact that they have not had a clear frontrunner. Top performers for Gustavus have been seniors Nick Ross (Hastings, Minn.), Jeremy Kuhn (St. Michael, Minn.), Kurt Prieve (Faribault, Minn.) and Carson Smith (Prior Lake, Minn.), juniors Anders Bowman (Plymouth, Minn.) and Mark Bartley (Blue Earth, Minn.), sophomores Adam Lund (Burnsville, Minn.) and Preston Tomlinson (New Prague, Minn.) and freshman Chad Clayburgh (Excelsior, Minn.).



Hamline

Coach: Paul Schmaedeke (23rd season)

2009 Championship Finish: 1st (61 points)

Hamline Championship Preview

The Hamline University men's cross country team brings in the top ranking in the Central Region and a deep roster as the Pipers look to repeat as MIAC champions.

The Pipers, led by head coach Paul Schmaedeke in his 23rd season at the helm, will run without All-American Ian Bauer, who graduated from last year's championship team. Additionally, Jamison Hull, a regular top finisher last year for the Pipers, graduated.

However, returning to pace the team is Devin Monson (Jr., Thompson, N.D.), who has had a strong fall, including a race win at the Luther Invitational and a ninth-place finish at the Roy Griak.

The Pipers' trademark is to run in a pack, and that pack includes strong runners who can pile up points quickly. Jack Deichert (Jr., Golden Valley, Minn.) has come on strong in recent races, including a third place finish at the St. Catherine 4K, finishing just behind Monson.

Looking to help Deichert form that strong racing group will be a deep collection of runners in Ian Campbell (Sr., Blooming Prairie, Minn.), Joel Dieterich (Sr., Portland, Ore.), Nate Dobbins (So., Rochester, Minn.), Andy Johnson (Sr., Andover, Minn.), Ellis Richardson (Jr., Shoreview, Minn.), Colin Rogers (So., River Falls, Wis.) and Brendon Ruter (So., New London, Minn.).

All of these runners have held spots in the Piper top seven at some point in the season, and as all have the potential to score, it's anyone's guess as to how their positions will shake out on Saturday.

Macalester



Coach: Matt Haugen (8th season)

2009 Championship Finish: 9th (208 points)

Macalester Championship Preview

National meet competitor Wade Ekstrom graduated last spring, so eighth-year head coach Matt Haugen will look for team depth and balance to improve on the team's ninth place finish from a year ago.

"This team literally has to be a "Mac Pack" in order to match or surpass our ninth-place MIAC finish of '09," reports Coach Haugen, a former MIAC individual champ. "We have a squad that has a lot of upside this year."

Jon Bassen (Sr., Shorewood, Wis.) and Carl Biggers (Jr., Verona, Wis.) have been at the top of the Macalester lineup for most of the fall campaign. Bassen placed 26th at the St. Olaf Invitational, 115th at the Roy Griak Invite., and 93rd at the UW-Eau Claire Blugold Invitational, and 185th at the huge Jim Drew Invitational as the top runner in all three of those races. Biggers was Mac's No. 2 runner at the Jim Drews and several other meets.

The Scots are looking for some depth to be provided by the likes of Ollie St. John (Jr., Washington, D.C. / Edmund Burke School), Eric Biggers (Fy., Verona, Wis.), and Auburn Jimenez (Fy., East Los Angeles, Calif. / St. John Bosco). Jimenez, the kicker of Mac's football team, rarely trains with the team and has races just once, but he showed his potential by running as the team's No. 2 runner at La Crosse.

Saint John's



Coach: Tim Miles (32nd season)

2009 Championship Finish: 5th (101 points)

Saint John's Championship Preview

After disappointing finishes in last season’s MIAC Championship (fifth) and NCAA Central Regional (eighth), the Saint John’s cross country team will look to several key returnees and a promising freshman class to improve upon last season’s performance.

Illness and injuries plagued the Johnnies throughout the 2009 season. Despite struggling as a team, two Johnnies experienced individual success. Dustin Franta (La Crescent, Minn.) and Patrick Lowder earned All-MIAC honors with 10th- (26:25) and 14th-place (26:39) finishes, respectively, at the MIAC Championship in a pool of approximately 200 runners. Two weeks later, Franta led the Johnnies with an eighth-place finish (25:17) at the NCAA Central Regional. Franta’s finish qualified him to compete in the NCAA Championships in Cleveland, Ohio, the following weekend, where he placed 37th (26:09) overall, missing All-America honors by just two spots.

The Johnnies lose three of their top seven varsity runners from a year ago in Lowder, Ryan Noack and Andrew Stevens. In addition to Franta, who is a senior, head coach Tim Miles will look to senior David Forster (Minnetonka, Minn./Hopkins), junior Ruairi Moynihan (Fargo, N.D./South) and junior Andrew Clasen (Plymouth, Minn./Robbinsdale Armstrong) to lead the way for the Johnnies. All three finished in the top 100 at the 2009 NCAA Central Regional. Forster and Moynihan also finished 21st (27:01) and 25th (27:03), respectively, at the 2009 MIAC Championship.

Franta and Moynihan have finished in the Top 10 in three of the four races this fall.

Seniors Jimmy Backes (Lakeville, Minn./South) and Tom Hoffman (Mahtomedi, Minn.), juniors Joe Gair (Coon Rapids, Minn.) and Jordan Fladland (Coon Rapids, Minn.), and sophomore Matt Scherber (Sartell, Minn./Sartell-St. Stephen) all look to step up for a team that will rely on increased depth to compete for the MIAC championship this season. The Johnnies also hope a large class of 18 incoming freshmen will add to that depth.

Miles begins his 32nd season as head cross country coach at Saint John’s in 2010. He has produced a winning program that has finished among the MIAC's top two squads in 22 of the past 29 seasons, including nine MIAC titles (1981, 1982, 1983, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2006, and 2007) during his tenure. 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 22 times since 1979.



Saint Mary's

Coach: Ward Berndt (6th season)

2009 Championship Finish: 10th (277 points)

Saint Mary's Championship Preview

Saint Mary's University men's and women's cross country coach Ward Berndt could not have asked for a better way for his Cardinals to head into the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Championships.

In their final "tune-up" at the Jim Drews/Tori Neubauer Invitational, the Cardinals not only turned in their best performance of the season, but for virtually the entire squad, it was the best performance of their collegiate careers.

"It was the perfect final meet before the conference championships," said Berndt. "The guys put together the by far the best performance of the season — and probably the best performance in the program's last 15 years. It was great to see, especially with the conference championships right around the corner.

"And on the women's side, we bounced back from a sub-par showing (at the Dan Huston Invitational) and really turned the corner," Berndt added. "It was was a career day for us — everyone that ran had a PR, which tells me we are right where we want to be."

David Feather (Oak Creek, Wis.) has been the Cardinal men's leader all season, posting his fifth straight team-leading effort at the Jim Drews, touring the eight-kilometer course in a career-best 26:18. Peter Borash (Bowlus, Minn.), Jake Traxler (Le Center, Minn.), Michael Wolter (Rushford, Minn.), Benton Kodet () and Robby McGuire (Rochester, Minn.) have also enjoyed stellar seasons and Berndt is expecting more of the same at the conference championships.

"The guys have really gotten after it this year," Berndt said. "They came into the season with a different attitude and are really focused on making some noise at the MIAC meet."

On the women's side, Berndt has enjoyed the luxury of having a different athlete step up and be the lead runner virtually every week. Emily Dee (Racine, Minn.) was the latest, as the Cardinal senior posted a six-kilometer time of 24:19 at the Tori Neubauer Invitational.

Kristen Thelen (Rochester, Minn.), Amy Spitzmueller (New Brighton, Minn.) and Joanna Pace (Minocqua, Wis.) have also had their time as SMU's No. 1 runner, and Berndt is hoping that all four have saved their best for last.

"We're getting better with each week," the SMU head coach said. "Hopefully that will continue this weekend.

"Everyone's running pretty well right now, and everyone's eager to put together their best effort yet (at the MIAC Championships)."



St. Olaf

Coach: Phil Lundin (3rd season)

2009 Championship Finish: 2nd (66 points)

St. Olaf Championship Preview

The St. Olaf men's cross country team, ranked seventh in the latest regional poll, will look for a top three finish at the MIAC Championships. The Oles, who have been led by sophomore Chris Massey in each of their three varsity meets this fall, have a solid group of runners that could push the team towards the top. Massey was sixth at the St. Olaf Invite in September and 12th at the BluGold Invite on Oct. 1. Adrian Swanson, Reid Gilbertson, Pat Boland and Brian Saksa have each run well at times this season and could give the Oles a push at the MIAC's. Gilbertson was the Oles' second-best runner at the BluGold Invite in early October while Saksa, a first year, was 14th overall in a strong St. Olaf Invite field. Seniors Ben Bayer, Ben Wilson and Jon Lambert, as well as sophomore Kellen McMillen have also been in the mix. St. Olaf has won three MIAC titles, the last in 2008.



St. Thomas

Coach: Pete Wareham (18th season)

2009 Championship Finish: 3rd (82 points)

St. Thomas Championship Preview

A young St. Thomas men's cross country team will look for another top-five conference finish at Saturday's 11-team MIAC Championships at St. Paul's Como Golf Course. The 8,000-meter race is set for 2:15 p.m.

Under Coach Pete Wareham, UST is coming off back-to-back third-place MIAC Championships finishes. St. Thomas ran well last November as it tied for first in the 2009 NCAA regional meet and took 18th at nationals.

The 2010 Tommies, who have two sophomores and three freshmen in their top nine, will look to close the gap on Hamline, St. John's and St. Olaf -- three teams they have finished behind in two fall races.

Junior All-American Ben Sathre has won all four races he's entered this fall and appears to be a collision course with Concordia-Moorhead's Tom Sederquist and Hamline's Devin Monson. The last Tommie MIAC individual men's CC champion was Brian Preus in 2001.

Sathre has placed 14th and third in his previous MIAC meets and placed 26th at nationals last November. In the 2010 track and field season, Sathre ran a conference-best time of 14:34 for 5,000 meters and hit 3:55.19 for the 1,500. In his last cross country performance, Oct. 16 at the Oberlin (Ohio) Inter-Region Rumble, Sathre beat two Allegheny College All-Americans and took first in 24:45 in a field of 281 finishers.

UST has three other top-seven runners back from last season. Junior Tyler Iverson has finished 47th and 16th in his two MIAC Championships thus far; sophomore Brian Farley was 43rd at last year's conference meet; and junior Crawford Hubbell was 53rd at the 2009 MIAC meet. Senior Seth Rosvold, the Tommies' No. 4 runner in two of his three races this fall, placed 33rd at conference in 2007.