

Christy Gries, St. Thomas

Sioux Falls, S.D. / Lincoln
Week of: 2011-05-02



The St. Thomas softball team had to get out of a few tight spots last week to continue its remarkable winning streak and clinch the MIAC championship, and the Tommies are thankful they were able to turn to junior pitcher **Christy Gries** (Sioux Falls, S.D./Lincoln) in those situations. Gries was 3-0 last week with an ERA of 0.72 with one start and two big wins in relief. For her clutch performances, Gries has been named the MIAC Softball Pitcher-of-the-Week.

Gries did her best escape act in a tight 8-7, comeback win over Saint Benedict. She stranded the tying run on third with one out, and came in to record the final seven outs of the on-run victory. She started the second game of the sweep and threw five innings, allowing just a single run in the 6-2 UST win. She also came into a tie game the next day against Macalester and recorded the last seven outs once again as the Tommies pulled away for the win and the eventual sweep. In addition to her 3-0 record and 0.72 ERA, Gries allowed just two runs (one earned) over 9.2 innings with nine strikeouts, no walks and a .222 opponent batting average. This season, she is 5-1 with one save in 11 appearances with a 2.97 ERA.

Though the Tommies wrapped up the MIAC regular season title and the top seed in the conference playoffs, they still have the chance to continue their remarkable winning streak and run the table in conference play. UST is 34-4 overall, 20-0 in MIAC play and it has won 24 straight games. St. Thomas closes the regular season Monday with a conference doubleheader at St. Olaf at 4 p.m.

Katie Truax, St. Olaf

Waukesha, Wis. / West
Week of: 2011-04-25



Most coaches feel extremely fortunate if they can get a complete-game shutout from their starting pitcher. However, St. Olaf's **Katie Truax** (Waukesha, Wis./West) went above and beyond for her team last week to help the Oles score a crucial 5-0 extra-innings win over Augsburg. Truax worked overtime to keep the Auggies off the board for all nine innings, and the St. Olaf offense finally broke through to help her to earn the shutout and the victory Thursday in Minneapolis. For her performance, Truax has been named the MIAC Softball Pitcher-of-the-Week.

Augsburg had their chances against Truax, but she continually found a way to work out of trouble, leaving 10 Auggie runners stranded on the bases while putting up zero after zero on the scoreboard. Truax scattered seven hits and walked four in the win, but she countered with three strikeouts and made big pitches when she had to, especially in the late innings. She left six runners on base in the sixth, seventh and eighth before closing the door with a 1-2-3 ninth inning. Truax also started the St. Olaf ninth-inning rally with a leadoff single that resulted in the winning run. This season, Truax is second on the team with three wins, a 5.03 ERA and 32 strikeouts, and she's also second with a .383 batting average to go along with 18 RBI and 13 runs.

The win helped St. Olaf split the twin bill with Augsburg and move to 7-17 overall and 4-6 in MIAC play. The Oles are currently tied for seventh place in the conference, and still have playoff hopes heading into the final week of the regular season. Due to the spring weather, St. Olaf faces a daunting final week with six MIAC doubleheaders – one every day this week Monday through Saturday.

Erin Truebenbach, Gustavus

Mapleton, Minn. / Maple River
Week of: 2011-04-18



Gustavus pitcher **Erin Truebenbach** (Mapleton, Minn./Maple River) missed a great deal of the 2011 season with an injury, but it hasn't taken the senior long to regain her form. Last week, she helped the Gusties win two key MIAC games thanks to brilliant complete-game pitching performances. For the week, Truebenbach went 2-0 with a 0.50 ERA with a shutout and a 15-to-1 strikeout ratio. As a result, the senior has been named the MIAC Softball Pitcher-of-the-Week.

Truebenbach appeared to be in midseason form in her first start last week, a complete-game shutout win over St. Olaf. In seven innings, the Gustie pitcher allowed just five hits with four strikeouts and just one walk. She was just as good two days later in another complete-game victory, this time over Carleton. Truebenbach again threw all seven innings, allowing just a single run on four hits. She dominated the Knights to the tune of 11 strikeouts with no walks. In her short time back, Truebenbach is 4-2 in seven appearances with three shutouts and 31 strikeouts in 40 innings.

With its four wins last week, the Gusties have now won eight straight games, and are 9-0-1 in MIAC play (16-9-1 overall). Gustavus will try to continue its streak and remain unbeaten in the MIAC Tuesday when it hosts Saint Mary's for a conference doubleheader at 4 p.m. Thursday, the Gusties will travel to St. Paul for a marquee twin bill against St. Thomas (28-4, 14-0 MIAC) at 4 p.m. and Friday it will host Bethel for two more MIAC games.

Biz Sitzmann, St. Thomas

Appleton, Wis. / North
Week of: 2011-04-11



The St. Thomas softball team has found its winning formula lately, as the Tommies have racked up 14 straight wins and a perfect 10-0 start in MIAC play, and that formula involves giving the ball to pitcher **Biz Sitzmann** (Appleton, Wis./North). Last week, the senior hurler went 3-0, winning the first game of all three of UST's MIAC doubleheaders, to help the team go 6-0 and keep its winning streak intact. The righty allowed just one earned run in 15.1 innings (0.46 ERA) and struck out seven with just a single walk. For her dominance on the mound, Sitzmann has been named the MIAC Pitcher-of-the-Week.

Sitzmann threw 4.1 shutout innings, allowing just three hits with three strikeouts in a 9-0 win over Augsburg. She picked up another win with 4.0 innings, one earned run, eight hits and no walks in a 9-1 win over Concordia, and she went the full seven innings allowing seven hits, two runs (none earned) with four strikeouts and just one walk in a 6-2 win over Hamline to improve to 3-0 on the week. Overall, Sitzmann is 10-1 this season with a MIAC-leading 1.55 ERA. She's allowed just 15 earned runs in 67.2 innings with 31 strikeouts and just 15 walks.

With six more wins last week, St. Thomas improved to 24-4 overall and 10-0 in MIAC play with the 14-game winning streak still alive. In order to continue its great play, the Tommies will have to continue to play well against MIAC foes. This week, UST travels across town for a doubleheader at St. Catherine Wednesday at 4 p.m., and it hosts Bethel Saturday for a 1 p.m. MIAC twin bill.

Kylee Persing, Augsburg

Mound, Minn. / Mound-Westonka

Week of: 2011-04-04



With 10 straight wins, Augsburg entered MIAC play as the league's hottest team last week, and much of that can be attributed to the pitching the Auggies have received from junior starter **Kylee Persing** (Mound, Minn./Mound-Westonka). Last week, Persing played a big part in three of Augsburgs' four wins, recording two complete-game victories and a two-inning save with a 1.50 ERA to help the Auggies continue their long unbeaten streak. For her continued excellence, Persing has been named the MIAC Softball Pitcher-of-the-Week for the second-straight week.

Persing started her big week with a complete-game (five innings) non-conference shutout of Northwestern College, where she allowed just four hits and two walks while striking out six. She came on in relief of game two and tossed two scoreless innings of relief to earn the save in a 5-3 win to complete the sweep. Persing got her first MIAC win of the season Saturday against St. Catherine, as she went the distance in a 5-4 win, allowing three earned runs with one strike out and adding a home run at the plate. This season, Persing is 10-5 with a 2.64 ERA, 50 strikeouts, 33 walks and a .273 opponent batting average in 92.2 innings. She leads the MIAC in wins, is second in strikeouts and fourth in ERA.

Thanks to its 10 straight wins, Augsburg is now 13-7 overall and off to a 2-0 start in the MIAC. The Auggies will try to keep its streak alive this week as its hosts St. Thomas for a MIAC doubleheader Tuesday at 4 p.m. Augsburg is also scheduled to host St. Benedict Thursday at 4 p.m. and it travels to Carleton Saturday for a 1 p.m. twin bill.

Kylee Persing, Augsburg

Mound, Minn. / Mound-Westonka

Week of: 2011-03-28



The Augsburg College softball team is on a roll, with six wins in a row, and it's no coincidence that their recent surge has gone hand-in-hand with great pitching from junior **Kylee Persing** (Mound, Minn./Mound-Westonka). Persing has started – and won – five straight decisions for the Auggies, and thus far she has two victories over Top 25-ranked teams. Persing is currently 8-5 with a 2.85 ERA. Thanks to her outstanding work on the mound thus far, Persing has been named the first MIAC Softball Pitcher-of-the-Week for the 2011 season.

Persing started the season strong with three consecutive victories, then countered a five-game streak where she was saddled with the loss with her current five-game winning streak to pull her record to 8-5. She currently leads the MIAC with 78.2 innings pitched this season with 15 appearances and 13 starts. Her 42 strikeouts are the second-most in the league, and she's thrown eight complete games. Four of Persing's five losses came to teams ranked 24th or better in Division III, and she received three runs or less of support in all five losses.

Through the early part of the season, the Auggies are sitting above .500 with a 9-7 record. They are one of just four conference teams to have a record above .500 at this point in the season, and just one of three to record at least nine wins in 2011. Out of 16 games thus far, Augsburg has faced a ranked opponent seven times – nearly half of its games this season.

Bethany Hine, Hamline

Carver, Minn. / Chaska
Week of: 2011-05-02



It's often said that a leadoff hitter's job is to "set the table." In that case, the Hamline softball team's table was set all week as **Bethany Hine** (Carver, Minn./Chaska) was constantly on base, leading the Pipers to an impressive sweep of Macalester Sunday after losing a high-scoring suspended game against Augsburg Saturday. She hit .667 for the week with six runs and seven RBI with three extra-base hits. For her performance, Hine has been named the MIAC Softball Player-of-the-Week.

Hine started the week by completing a fine performance in the 15-12 suspended loss to Augsburg. Despite the outcome, she finished with a double, a walk, three runs and an RBI. She was even better in a sweep of Macalester, as Hamline won both games in five innings by the scores 14-6 and 9-0. Hine finished the doubleheader 6-for-8 at the plate with three runs and six RBI, including two triples and a 1.250 slugging percentage to two with four putouts in center field. Hine ranks second in the MIAC in triples (four) and fifth in runs (32) and leads the Pipers with a .389 batting average this season.

With the sweep of Macalester, Hamline improved to .500 overall at 16-16, and the Pipers are now 10-8 in the MIAC with a shot at a spot in the conference playoffs. Hamline has a pair of make-up doubleheaders this week – Monday against St. Catherine and Tuesday at St. Olaf – and it closes the regular season Wednesday with a home twin bill against UW-Stout.

Kayla Boward, St. Thomas

Ostego, Minn. / Elk River
Week of: 2011-04-25



Despite the inconsistent spring weather, the marquee matchup of the week was able to take place when St. Thomas met Gustavus for control of first place in the MIAC softball standings. The Tommies swept the Gusties, 8-0 (five innings) and 11-3 (six innings) in an emphatic statement that was led by junior third baseman **Kayla Boward** (Ostego, Minn./Elk River) and her astounding efficiency at the plate. In the twin bill, Boward went 6-for-7 while reaching base in all seven plate appearances to spark the Tommies to 19 runs in 11 innings. For her performance at the plate, Boward has been named the MIAC Softball Player-of-the-Week for the second time this season.

Boward accounted for nine of the 19 runs herself with six RBI and three runs scored in the decisive doubleheader, to go along with her .857 batting average and a 1.000 slugging percentage. She singled in each of her first five at-bats, reached on an error in her sixth, and ended the doubleheader with a run-scoring double in the sixth inning of the seventh game that enacted the eight-run mercy rule. She was also perfect in the field with one putout, five assists and no errors. The huge week was part of an incredible season for Boward, who leads the MIAC in batting average (.610), hits (25) doubles (eight) and total bases (), and she ranks second in RBI (18).

The two wins pushed St. Thomas' incredible run to 20-straight wins, as the Tommies improved to 30-4 overall and a perfect 16-0 in the MIAC. UST will try to keep rolling this week with its final three MIAC doubleheaders of the regular season. St. Thomas will travel to St. Olaf Tuesday for a 4 p.m. start before hosting Saint Benedict Wednesday and Macalester Saturday.

Laura Randall, Hamline

Fridley, Minn. / Spring Lake Park
Week of: 2011-04-18



The Hamline University softball team went 4-0 in MIAC play last week to jump back into contention in the conference race, and the Piper swinging the biggest bat during the surge was sophomore **Laura Randall** (Fridley, Minn./Spring Lake Park). Randall went 8-for-19 last week (.421) with six runs, eight RBI, a double and two home runs in Hamline's six overall games. She added two stolen bases and a .789 slugging percentage as the Hamline bats put up big offensive numbers all week. For her performance, Randall has been named the MIAC Softball Player-of-the-Week.

Last week, Randall was at her best in the Pipers' four conference games, going 7-for-13 (.538) with five runs, all eight RBI, a double and two home runs. In a sweep of Saint Benedict, she went 2-for-3 with two runs, a double and an RBI in the first game, and was even better in game two. She led a 12-run outburst with three hits, two home runs and six RBI in four at-bats. Randall had another big game the next day against Concordia, going 2-for-3 with a run and an RBI in an 11-3, six-inning win. Her big week boosted Randall's season numbers to a .310 batting average, 14 runs, 23 RBI, 22 hits, two doubles, one triple and two home runs.

With the wins, Hamline moved back to .500 in the MIAC at 5-5, and its overall record improved to 11-13. This week, the Pipers have three big MIAC doubleheaders on the schedule with home contests against Augsburg and Carleton Tuesday and Thursday, respectively. Friday, Hamline will travel to Winona, Minn., for another MIAC twin bill at Saint Mary's.

Kayla Boward, St. Thomas

Ostego, Minn. / Elk River
Week of: 2011-04-11



The St. Thomas softball team continued its outstanding stretch last week, winning all six of its games and running its current streak to 14 victories in a row. One constant during the Tommies' surge has been the torrid hitting of junior **Kayla Boward** (Ostego, Minn./Elk River). The third baseman helped UST sweep three MIAC series last week with an out-of-this-world .813 batting average to go along with 13 hits, six runs, four RBI and three doubles with a 1.000 slugging percentage and just one error in 16 chances. For her performance, Boward has been named the MIAC Softball Co-Player-of-the-Week.

Boward started slow in the nonconference season with just three hits in her first 21 at-bats, but she has been dominant since MIAC play started. In UST's 10-0 conference start, she is hitting .680 with 17 hits, 10 runs, seven RBI, four doubles, two home runs and two walks with a 1.080 slugging percentage, and it's possible Boward is just getting started if her great play last week (13 hits in 16 at-bats) is any indication. Despite her slow start this season, she has raised her average to .441, which is tied for fifth in the MIAC. Her eight doubles tie for third in the MIAC and she also has 26 hits, 20 runs, 18 RBI, one triple and two home runs in her overall stat line this season.

With six more wins last week, St. Thomas improved to 24-4 overall and 10-0 in MIAC play with the 14-game winning streak still alive. In order to continue its great play, the Tommies will have to continue to play well against MIAC foes. This week, UST travels across town for a doubleheader at St. Catherine Wednesday at 4 p.m., and it hosts Bethel Saturday for a 1 p.m. MIAC twin bill.

Katy Gannon, Saint Mary's

Roselle, Ill. / St. Viator
Week of: 2011-04-11



Saint Mary's senior **Katy Gannon** (Roselle, Ill./St. Viator) staged her own personal home run derby against MIAC competition last week. The shortstop sent a ball over the fence in four straight games – and five-of-six to start the week – including one game-winning blast as she helped the Cardinals go 4-2 in conference play and 4-4 overall in eight games. Gannon added a .318 batting average, seven hits, seven runs, 11 RBI and a 1.000 slugging percentage to her five home runs to lead the SMU offense last week. For her power display, Gannon has been named the MIAC Softball Co-Player-of-the-Week.

Gannon opened the week by homering in each of the Cardinals first four games, an 8-0, 1-0 sweep of St. Olaf and an 8-1, 9-1 sweep of Macalester. Her seventh-inning blast was the difference in Tuesday's second win over the Oles. Her streak ended at four as she went homerless in a 7-4 loss to Bethel, but she followed with another homer in the second game (a 4-1 loss) to give her as many home runs in a one-week span as she had hit in any of her first three complete seasons. Gannon moved into second place on Saint Mary's all-time list with 17 homers during her big week and she moved to the top of the MIAC's home run leaderboard as well. This season, Gannon is hitting .328 with 20 runs, 16 RBI and the five homers to go along with a .590 slugging percentage and a .423 on-base percentage.

The four conference wins helped SMU even its MIAC record at 5-5, and it remains two games above .500 with a 12-10 overall mark. The Cardinals return to conference play Wednesday with a 4 p.m. twin bill at Augsburg. Saint Mary's will have a busy weekend at home as Hamline is scheduled to come to Winona for a 1 p.m. doubleheader Saturday, and Concordia comes to town for an 11 a.m. twin bill Sunday.

Jenny Ramey, Carleton

Cottage Grove, Minn. / New Life Academy
Week of: 2011-04-04



Just a few short weeks into her Carleton softball career, freshman infielder **Jenny Ramey** (Cottage Grove, Minn./New Life Academy) has adjusted to the collegiate level incredibly fast, and her great all-around talents have been a huge boost to the Knights. Ramey's skills were on full display last week, as she hit .636 with seven runs, two home runs, a triple, five RBI and a .938 slugging percentage with two stolen bases to help Carleton go 2-2 in its first two MIAC series of 2011. For her performance, Ramey has been named the MIAC Softball Player-of-the-Week.

The Knights opened MIAC play with a pair of losses against defending champ St. Thomas, but Ramey kept Carleton close in a 6-5 loss in game two, going 2-for-3 with two home runs and four RBI. She continued to swing a hot bat in the Knights' sweep of St. Catherine, reaching base seen times and scoring five runs in the two-game series. Ramey was 2-for-4 with three runs, a stolen base and a walk in a 6-2 game-one win, and she followed that up with a 3-for-3 performance with two runs, another steal and a walk in a 5-4 win in game two. This season, Carleton's freshman phenom ranks in the top three in the MIAC in most key offensive categories. Ramey is third in hitting (.441), second in hits (26), first in runs (21) and second in total bases (38) to go along with a .644 slugging percentage and a .485 on-base percentage.

With last week's split, the Knights moved to 5-13 overall this season, and 2-2 in the MIAC. Carleton is scheduled to host its MIAC home opener Tuesday at Bell Field at 4 p.m. when Macalester travels to Northfield for a double header. The Knights are also scheduled to host Bethany Lutheran Wednesday at 4 p.m. and a pair of MIAC twin bills – Augsburg Saturday and Concordia Sunday – at home this weekend.

Paige Carter, Saint Mary's



The Saint Mary's softball team is off to a hot start in 2011, and no single player personifies that hot start better than outfielder **Paige Carter** (Rosemount, Minn.). Carter crushed the ball throughout the Cardinals' spring trip, and has opened the season with a .375 batting average to go along with her .781 slugging percentage and 17 RBI. Seven of Carter's 12 hits thus far have gone for extra bases, including three home runs. For her contributions, Carter has been named the first MIAC Softball Player-of-the-Week of the 2011 season.

Through 10 games, Carter has been the Cardinals' main offensive catalyst. She has 12 hits, 17 RBI, seven runs scores, four doubles and three homers with one stolen base. Two of her home runs were grand slams. Carter has also been good in the field, recording 14 putouts and three assists while committing just two errors in the SMU outfield.

Thanks largely to Carter's hot hitting, the Cardinals got off to a 7-3 start to the 2011 season, with all 10 games coming on their spring trip to Tuscon, Ariz. Two of the seven wins game against nationally-ranked foes Coe College and Central College. Saint Mary's .700 winning percentage in nonconference contests trails only St. Thomas' .764 mark in the MIAC.