

2012 MIAC Volleyball Preview and Preseason Coaches' Poll

Posted: Aug 22, 2012



ST. PAUL, Minn. -- The Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) was clearly one of the deepest and most-talented volleyball leagues in all of Division III in 2011, evidenced by four teams earning a bid to the national tournament. However, the MIAC enters the 2012 season with expectations of that strength and depth to continue in full force.

A season ago, Concordia and St. Thomas led the way, sharing the MIAC regular season crown, then each achieving significant postseason success. The Cobbers outlasted the Tommies to claim the MIAC Playoff title, while UST got revenge in the NCAA Regional championship to advance to the national quarterfinals. This year, those teams will again be among the elite in the MIAC - and the nation - as St. Thomas opens ranked No. 7 in D-III, and Concordia is tied for the No. 19 ranking in the nation.

Saint Benedict - one of the MIAC's other NCAA tournament teams and a MIAC Playoff semifinalist a year ago - also received votes in the national preseason poll. The Blazers were the sixth team in the "Others receiving votes" section, essentially ranking them 31st in Division III. Bethel also returns a strong team after advancing to the second round of the national playoffs in 2011.

The MIAC's success was highlighted by those teams a year ago, but it certainly wasn't limited to just the teams at the top. As a whole, the MIAC had four 20-win teams, with seven teams winning at least 16 matches and 10 of its 12 teams won at least 13 matches. Remarkably, three-fourths of the conference (9 of 12) finished above .500 overall.

Those facts, coupled with the excitement surround the returning stars and bright new faces have campuses across the conference eagerly anticipating the start of the season. The action begins next weekend, and another action-packed fall of MIAC volleyball is sure to transpire.

Tommies top preseason prediction

In addition to its top-10 ranking and Elite 8 run a year ago, St. Thomas also opens the 2012 season as the favorite to claim another league title. UST received 10 of 12 first-place votes and 120 total points to headline the 2012 MIAC Volleyball Preseason Coaches' Poll. Thanh Pham's club has won or shared each of the last five league titles, so it's no surprise to see their name on the top line once again.

MIAC coaches expect Saint Benedict to continue its rise in 2012, tabbing the Blazers to finish second with the other two first-place votes and 103 total points. The 19th-ranked Cobbers came in third after sharing the 2011 title with the Tommies with a total of 91 points, and lead a group of four extremely close teams. Just 13 points separate Concordia, No. 4 Bethel (89 points), No. 5 Gustavus (80) and No. 6 Augsburg (78 points), as the coaches predict all six MIAC Playoff teams from a year ago will again make the postseason field.

The next trio of teams, which could also challenge for Playoff bids, was grouped even closer. Saint Mary's snuck out a seventh-place finish with 55 points, while St. Olaf (54) was just a point behind in eighth and St. Catherine (53) was one more point behind in ninth. Carleton (36), Hamline (22) and Macalester (11) rounded out the final three spots in the preseason poll.

Calm on the coaching front

While some other MIAC sports saw turnover in the head coaching ranks, volleyball remains the most stable group for the second-straight season. Prior to the 2010 campaign, exactly half of the teams hired new coaches, but there hasn't been a change in the league since, creating an interesting dividing line between the league's seasoned veterans and the rookie class of 2010.

Concordia's Tim Mosser and St. Olaf's Cindy Book are each starting their milestone 20th seasons with their respective teams to headline the veteran half of the MIAC coaching ranks, which features six coaches who have all been in their current roles for at least 10 seasons. Joining Mosser and Book are Saint Mary's Mike Lester (15th season), Carleton's Heidi Jayne's (14th season), Bethel's Gretchen Hunt (12th season) and St. Thomas' Pham (10th season).

Meanwhile, Augsburg's Jane Becker, Gustavus' Rachelle Dosch, Hamline's Audrey Ludwig, Macalester's Annie Doman, Saint Benedict's Nicole Hess and St. Catherine's Corey Phelps are all entering their third season in their current positions. However, Hess was a veteran head coach in the league prior to her hiring at CSB - she preceded Phelps at St. Catherine from 2003 to 2009, also making her a 10-year MIAC coaching vet.

Who's back?

MIAC Player-of-the-Year Jenna Green graduated from Concordia's star-studded lineup, but the seventh-ranked Tommies bring back two individual award-winners to headline all the returning talent in the league. Kaitlain Wachter is back for her senior season as the Tommies' libero after earning MIAC Defensive Player-of-the-Year honors in addition to AVCA All-American, All-Region and All-MIAC recognition. Also back for Pham's squad is sophomore middle Kelly Foley, the MIAC Rookie-of-the-Year and Division III National Freshman-of-the-Year to go along with All-Region and All-MIAC honors in her stellar rookie campaign.

A pair of two-time All-MIAC middles are also back to write the final chapter to their outstanding careers. St. Olaf's Ari Carlson and Bethel's Caitie Helle will again be two of the top hitters in the league as they seek their third-straight All-Conference honor. Helle's teammate, Amy Baumetz, was also an All-MIAC middle last season and another reason for the Royals' high hopes.

Saint Benedict also had a standout freshman a year ago, and Alexa Rinde is back at her outside hitter spot for the Blazers after earning All-MIAC honors in 2011. She'll team up with Lexi Alm, who topped the 300 mark for both digs and kills last season. Augsburg brings back its

top player - All-MIAC setter Emily McCourt - for her junior season, and All-MIAC hitter Laura Avena is also a junior on Macalester's roster. Both Carleton and St. Catherine bring back an All-MIAC senior hitter as Jessa Youso returns for the Knights and Brittnei Wangerin is back in the Wildcats' lineup.

The Cobbers graduated some of their top talent, but have a talented tandem of hitters ready for expanded roles in Allison Bruggeman and Kelly Reed. Emily Phillips is Gustavus' top returning hitter, and she'll team up with sophomore defensive specialist Paige Brenneman, who had a great rookie year with a team-high 439 digs. Saint Mary's offense will be in good hands with junior setter Lexi Assimos, who handed out 1,036 assists in 2011, and Hamline's excited to bring back its top hitter - Sam Greeney-Hamlin - and assist leader - Sammie Miller - from a season ago.

Circle these dates

The long wait for the season to start is almost over, with most teams starting the 2012 season in just eight days. Many MIAC teams start at various tournaments on Aug. 31 and roughly two weeks of nonconference play to open the season. Conference play and the quest for the MIAC title begins on Sept. 12 and runs through the season's final day, Saturday, Oct. 27. The MIAC Playoffs will follow, with quarterfinals on Oct. 30, semifinals on Nov. 1 and the championship on Nov. 3.

There are several standout matchups that highlight the schedule over the next two months, starting with the top two teams from the coaches' poll squaring off in an all-important MIAC match. St. Thomas will host Saint Benedict on Sept. 22 at 3 p.m. in an early-season match with big-time seeding and championship implications. The MIAC's other two NCAA tourney teams - Concordia and Bethel - will meet in Moorhead a few days earlier, with the Royals heading north for a 7 p.m. match on Sept. 19.

Augsburg and Gustavus square off in a key match in Minneapolis on Sept. 29 at 5 p.m. with another fun twist. Augsburg's Becker and Gustavus' Dosch played together at St. Thomas and coached together prior to their head coaching jobs in the MIAC. Macalester and Carleton will also meet that day at 3 p.m. in a battle of two of the MIAC's premier academic teams in a key match for squads looking to move up in the standings in 2012.

Veteran coaches Book and Lester will go head-to-head in a MIAC match on Oct. 3 at 7 p.m. in Northfield, and after both St. Olaf and Saint Mary's missed the postseason a year ago, this could be a huge key to one of them working their way back towards the top. St. Paul rivals St. Catherine and Hamline square off on the Pipers' home court on Oct. 3 as well at 7 p.m. in an important match of teams on the rise.

A closer look

The rest of the 2012 MIAC Volleyball Preview contains more details and information about each team to provide a closer look at each MIAC squad as the season draws near. Scroll down to see complete results from the 2012 MIAC Volleyball Preseason Poll, Playoff information, helpful links and team-by-team previews along with links to each team's volleyball home page. This season, the team previews - provided by each school's sports information director - received a facelift to give fans a more user-friendly way to prepare for the upcoming season.

Continue to visit the MIAC Web site throughout the season for updated scores, standings, stats and more, and for additional updates and interaction connect to the MIAC on its social media pages, including [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

2012 MIAC Volleyball Preseason Coaches' Poll

Coaches voted for every team in the conference except their own team. Points were assigned for each vote (11 for first, 10 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.

2012 MIAC Volleyball Preseason Coaches' Poll		
Rank	Institution	Total
1	St. Thomas (10)	120
2	Saint Benedict (2)	103
3	Concordia	91
4	Bethel	89
5	Gustavus	80
6	Augsburg	78
7	Saint Mary's	55
8	St. Olaf	54
9	St. Catherine	53
10	Carleton	36
11	Hamline	22
12	Macalester	11

2012 MIAC Volleyball Playoffs

The 2012 MIAC Playoffs will feature the top six teams in the conference standings playing in a high-seed-host, single-elimination

postseason tournament. The two top seeds will receive a bye to the semifinal round, while the No. 3 seed will host the No. 6 seed, and the No. 4 seed will host the No. 5 seeds during the quarterfinals, which will be held Tuesday, Oct. 30. The No. 3/6 winner will play at the No. 2 seed and the No. 4/5 winner will play at the No. 1 seed during the semifinals, which are scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 1. The championship match is set for Saturday, Nov. 3, with the two semifinal winners meeting on home court of the top remaining seed. All MIAC Volleyball Playoff matches will start at 7 p.m. The winner will receive the MIAC's automatic bid to the 2012 NCAA Division III Volleyball Tournament.

| [MIAC Volleyball Playoffs Websites](#) | [2011](#) | [2012](#) |

MIAC Volleyball Links

| [2012 MIAC Schedule](#) | [2011 MIAC Statistics](#) | [MIAC Recordbook](#) | [MIAC Archives](#) |



AUGSBURG | [Auggies' volleyball home page](#) |

Head Coach

- Jane Becker (Third season)

A Year Ago

- 7-4 MIAC | 16-12 Overall

In the 2011 Postseason

- MIAC Playoff Quarterfinals -- Lost at Bethel 3-1

Top Returners

- Emily McCourt (JR, S | All-MIAC, Academic All-MIAC in 2011; Augsburg Invitational All-Tournament Team; ranked 2nd in the MIAC in assists per-set (10.51) and 4th in service aces per-set (.46))
- Colleen Ourada (JR, OH/RS | Ranked 5th in MIAC in both kills per-set (3.46) and blocks per-set (1.03))
- Katelyn Berens (JR, DS | UW-Superior Stinger Classic All-Tournament Team selection; ranked 2nd in the MIAC in digs per-set (5.26))

Key Losses

- Amy Jo Opsal (DS | appeared in all 28 matches; 5th on the team in digs (156) and 4th in service aces (17))

By the Numbers

- 184: Career blocks by Augsburg middle hitter Nikolene Miller, which currently ranks seventh all-time in Augsburg history
- 27: Kills recorded by outside hitter Colleen Ourada during the Auggies' thrilling five-set road win over Bethel on Sept. 28
- 4: Number of seasons in a row the Auggies have recorded 15 or more wins

Did You Know?

- Augsburg setter Emily McCourt is currently ranked second in school history with a career 8.80 assist per-set average

Off the Court

- The Auggies spent their second day of preseason volunteering with the Special Olympics Minnesota organization in Woodbury, Minn.
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BETHEL | [Royals' volleyball home page](#) |

Head coach

- Gretchen Hunt (12th season)

A Year Ago

- 8-3 MIAC (T-3rd) | 24-10 Overall

In the 2011 Postseason

- Advanced to MIAC Tournament semifinals – Defeated Augsburg 3-1, defeated by St. Thomas 3-0
- 2011 Regional Semifinalist at the NCAA Division III Tournament – Defeated Northwestern (Minn.) 3-0, defeated by Concordia-Moorhead 3-0.

Top Returners

- Caitie Helle, SR, MB, 5-11: 2010 and 2011 MIAC All-Conference, 2.85 kills per set, .210 attacking percentage, 0.81 blocks per set
- Amy Baumetz, SR, MB, 6-0: 2011 MIAC All-Conference, 2.89 kills per set, .239 attacking percentage, 1.16 blocks per set
- Val Smith, SR, L, 5-7: Led the team in service aces (36), 5.39 digs per set

Key Losses

- Nicole Wriedt, Opp., 6-0: 2010 and 2011 MIAC All-Conference, AVCA All-Central Region Honorable Mention, selected to NCAA Division III Tournament All-Region Team, 2.91 kills per set, .218 attacking percentage, .93 digs per set, .61 blocks per set
- Kate Smith, S, 6-0: 2011 MIAC All-Conference, 1.24 kills per set, .211 attacking percentage, 9.67 assists per set, 2.01 digs per set, .57 blocks per set
- Haley Toter: 1.28 kills per set, 2.87 digs per set, .26 blocks per set

By the Numbers

- 5.41: Senior libero Val Smith finished the 2011 campaign with 5.41 digs per set, which not gave her the second-most digs in the conference, but placed her No. 43 among all Division III institutions. Smith also enabled the Royals, as a team, to tally 16.88 digs per set.
- 9: Bethel was nearly flawless in neutral court settings, as the Royals captured nine wins opposed to just two losses in neutral locations. With five tournaments and 13 neutral contests, BU hopes the trend continues in 2012.
- 10: The Royals rattled off ten wins in a row near the end of the 2011 season, which was a critical factor that allowed BU to not only make the MIAC Playoffs, but also the NCAA Division III Tournament. Of those ten wins, one was on Bethel's home court.

Did You Know?

- The Royals led the league in total blocks throughout 2011, calculating 269 blocks over 121 games. Bethel is excited to see their top two blockers return in 2012, as senior middle blockers Caitie Helle and Amy Baumetz will both be a force in the middle. Baumetz totaled 1.16 blocks per set (16th nationwide), while Helle finished with .81. As a team, BU finished 25th nation wide (2.22 blocks per set).

Off the Court

- In order to build team chemistry early and show its commitment to the community, Bethel University's volleyball squad is partnering with the Special Olympics to help them in their fall games. BU will be helping with the golf day at Oak Marsh Golf Course in Oakdale, Minn., where they will serve as scorekeepers, starters, and award givers.



CARLETON | [Knights' volleyball home page](#) |

Head coach

- Heidi Jaynes (14th season)

A Year Ago

- 3-8 MIAC | 13-12 Overall

Top Returners

- Jessa Youso (Sr., Middle Hitter | All-MIAC first team in 2011; team-best 235 kills and 74 blocks, second among conference players with .339 attack percentage)
- Sarah Nielsen (Sr., Right Side | second on squad with 176 kills and 63 blocks)
- Alicia Flatt (So., Setter | 704 assists, tops among conference rookies)

Key Loss

- Erin Anderson (Libero | All-MIAC first team in 2011; fourth among conference players with 5.01 digs/set)

By the Numbers

- 15: Jessa Youso led the Knights in kills 15 times last season.
- 40: Erin Anderson collected a MAIC-best 40 digs in a four-set match against UW-Superior on Sept. 17, 2011.
- .692: Jessa Youso posted a .692 attack percentage (18 kills, 0 errors, 26 attempts) against Buena Vista University on Sept. 10, 2011, the highest figure by a Knight in eight years and third-best in program history.

Did You Know?

- Carleton split its two 5-set matches last season (both versus non-conference opponents). Every other MIAC team went the distance at least four times last fall.

Off the Court

- Carleton received the American Volleyball Coaches Association's (AVCA) Team Academic Award once again last year. This was the 10th time in the last 11 years that the Knights earned the accolade. Since 2002, Carleton has picked up the honor 10 times, two more than any other MIAC program.
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CONCORDIA | [Cobbers' volleyball home page](#) |

Head Coach

- Tim Mosser (20th season)

A Year Ago

- 10-1 MIAC | 27-4 Overall

In the 2011 Postseason

- 2011 MIAC Playoffs Champion – Defeated Saint Benedict (3-0) in semifinals, Defeated Saint Thomas (3-2) in championship
- 2011 NCAA Division III Playoffs – Defeated UW-Stevens Point (3-2), Defeated Bethel (3-0), Lost to Saint Thomas (3-0)

Top Returners

- Allison Bruggeman (Jr., MH, .940 Serve Percentage, 151 Kills)
- Kelly Reed (So., MH, .249 Kill Percentage, 140 Kills)

Key Losses

- Jenna Green (OH, Div. III All-American First Team, MIAC All-Conference, MIAC Player of the Year)
- Amy Sykora (S, Div. III All-American Honorable Mention, MIAC All-Conference)
- Katie Vohnoutka (OH/MH, Div. III All-American First team, MIAC All-Conference)

By the Numbers

- 2: Concordia has advanced to the Regional Final of the NCAA Tournament in two of the last four seasons.
- 3: The Cobbers had three senior All-Americans last season – the most in a single year in school history
- 8: Concordia has posted eight 20-win seasons in the past 10 years.

Did You Know?

- Concordia head coach Tim Mosser has 373 career wins – the most by any active coach in the MIAC.
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GUSTAVUS | [Gusties' volleyball home page](#) |

Head coach

- Rachelle Dosch (Third Season)

A Year Ago

- 7-4 MIAC | 20-10 Overall

In the 2011 Postseason

- 2011 MIAC Playoffs First Round – No. 5 seed Gustavus fell to No. 4 seed Saint Benedict 3-1 in the opening round of the MIAC Playoffs.

Top Returners

- Emily Phillips (Sr., MH, Cleveland, Minn.) – Gustavus' top returning hitter who averaged 2.79 kills per set while playing in all 108 sets last season...Finished second on the team in blocks (85), averaging .79 per set...Recorded an attack percentage of .253 (2nd/team).
- Paige Breneman (So., DS, Sherburn, Minn.) – Led the team in digs with 439 (4.48 d/set) at libero during her rookie campaign...Tallied a reception percentage of .901 after a team-high 473 attempts...Registered double-digit digs in all but seven matches, including a 34-dig showing in a 3-2 win over UW-La Crosse.

Key Losses?

- Angela Ahrendt (MH, Shoreview, Minn.) – 2011 All-Conference...Gustavus' top hitter the past two seasons, averaging 2.87 kills per set in a total of 419 sets...Registered a career hitting percentage of .284...Ranks sixth all-time at Gustavus in both kills (1,201) and blocks (386).
- Malea Noennig (S, Norwood Young America, Minn.) – 2011 All-Conference...Gustavus' primary setter in 2011 recorded career highs in set-assists (927), digs (225), aces (39), and kills (38)...Dished out 40 or more assists in six matches last season...Ranks fifth all-time at Gustavus in set-assists with 2,370 in 292 sets.

By the Numbers

- 29.2 – The number of digs per match rookies Paige Breneman (17.6) and Shelby Nosan (Baudette, Minn.) combined to average down the backstretch of Gustavus' last 12 contests last season.
- 16 – The number of road tournament matches the Gustavus volleyball team will take part in during its 2012 campaign. The Gusties will play in the UW-Whitewater Tournament, Augsburg Tournament, UW-River Falls Tournament, and Wartburg Tournament this season.

- 11-0 – Gustavus' record when the team recorded an attack percentage over .250 last season.

Did You Know?

- The Gustavus volleyball team in Head Coach Rachelle Dosch's second year at the helm went from a last place finish in the league in 2010 with a record of 7-19 overall and 1-10 in the MIAC, to a spot in the MIAC Playoffs in 2011. The Gusties reached the 20-win plateau for just the third time in the last 15 years last season.

Off the Court

- Gustavus had four volleyball student-athletes earn Academic All-MIAC honors in 2011, including Dana Boerboom (Jr., Cottonwood, Minn.), Jenna Legatt (Jr., Sartell, Minn.), Erin Sherman (Sr., Golden Valley, Minn.), and Olivia Warren `12 (Goodhue, Minn.).



HAMLIN | [Pipers' volleyball home page](#) |

Head coach

- Audrey Ludwig (Third season)

A Year Ago

- 1-10 MIAC | 9-19 Overall

Top Returners

- Sam Greeney-Hamlin (Jr., MH, St. Cloud, Minn.), led team in kills (257) and blocks (44)
- Sammie Miller (So., S, Grand Island, Neb.), led team with 754 sets
- Frankie Miller (So., S, Grand Island, Neb.), second on team in Digs with 214 and third in Service Aces with 22

Key Losses

- None

By the Numbers

- 12: The number of home matches for the Pipers in 2012. That is exactly twice as many as home matches as the team played at Hutton Arena in 2011.
- 1.59: The Pipers' average of Service Aces per game. That ranked fourth in the MIAC.
- 0: Number of volleyball players lost to graduation in 2011 and 2012

Did You Know?

- Jamie Rubbelke, a first-year player from North St. Uaul, Minn,, is the daughter of HU softball coach Jim Rubbelke. She intends to play that sport in the spring.

Off the Court

- The Pipers will take a day off from preseason drills Saturday, August 25 to help package food items at Feed My Starving Children in Eagan, Minn.



MACALESTER | [Scots' volleyball home page](#) |

Head coach

- Annie Doman (Third season)

A Year Ago

- 1-10 MIAC | 6-23 Overall

Top Returners

- Laura Avena (Jr., OH | 4.2 k/s, .256 hitting, 2.6 d/s, 0.47 aces, All-MIAC, 2nd in MIAC in kills and 1st in aces)
- Anna Trier (Sr., OH | 3.2 k/s)
- Glasha Marcon (Sr., DS | 3.6 d/s)

Key Losses

- Taylor Tinkham (MH | 3.7 k/s, 0.64 b/s)
- Danielle Dweck (S | 7.6 a/s)

By the Numbers

- 29: Laura Avena had 29 kills in a four-set match with Buena Vista.
- 5: The Scots had five Academic All-MIAC volleyball players last year.
- 541: Avena heads into her junior campaign with 541 kills.

Did You Know?

- Annie Doman is one of three Macalester fall sport head coaches (along with the new men's and women's soccer coaches) to have played Division I competition. Doman was a standout setter at Austin Peay State (Tenn.) and finished with just under 5,000 assists.

Off the Court

- Defensive specialist Glasha Marcon worked an internship over the January break at the World Bank. The international studies major then was on a Study Abroad program last spring semester in Brazil.



SAINT BENEDICT | [Blazers volleyball home page](#) |

Head coach

- Nicole Hess (Third Season)

A Year Ago

- 8-3 MIAC (3rd-T) | 18-13 Overall

In The 2011 Post-Season

- MIAC Tournament: vs. St. Olaf (W, 3-1), at Concordia (L, 3-0)
- NCAA Tournament: vs. St. Scholastica (L, 3-2)

Top Returners

- Alexa Rinde (5-8, So., OH | 114 sets played, 338 kills, .264 Hitting%, 55 total blocks | All-MIAC)
- Lexi Alm (5-11, Jr., OH | 115 sets played, 325 kills, 18 serve aces, 300 digs, 43 total blocks)
- Taya Kockelman (6-0, So., S | 117 sets played, 838 assists, 161 kills, 238 digs 50 total blocks)

Key Losses

- Chelsie Sobieck (113 sets played, 355 kills, 21 serve aces, 270 digs, 18 total blocks | All-MIAC)

By The Numbers

- 593: Kills for the Blazers in MIAC games last season tops in the conference.
- 18: Wins in each of head coach Nicole Hess' first two seasons.
- 4: NCAA Tournament appearances in the last five years



ST. CATHERINE | [Wildcats' volleyball home page](#) |

Head Coach

- Corey Phelps (Third season)

A Year Ago

- 4-7 MIAC | 18-11 Overall

Top Returners

- Brittni Wangerin (Sr., OH) | Ranked eighth overall in MIAC for kills (328), ranked fourth in the MIAC for service aces (41), 3.38 kills per set, 339 digs and earned All-MIAC honors
- Stephanie Meschke (Sr., OH/RS) | 204 kills, 15 assists, 11 solo blocks, 50 total blocks and 89 digs
- Marie O'Niel (Sr., MB) | 162 kills, 22 assists, 11 solo blocks, 72 total blocks and 28 service aces

Key Losses

- Kayla Sis (RS) | 226 kills, ranked seventh in the MIAC with .293 attacking percentage, 2.63 kills per set and 44 digs
- Callie Tiegan (L) | 384 digs and 21 service aces

By the Numbers

- 1: The Wildcats ranked first in the conference for service aces with 236, averaging 2.27 aces per game. The next highest average was 1.70 aces per game.
- 3: Wangerin had over 20 kills in three matches during the 2011 season, the most by any Wildcat last year. This included 21 kills vs. Crown, 21 kills vs. St. Olaf and 23 kills vs. Bethel.
- 52: In her first year as a Wildcat, Ashley Kahlow led the MIAC with 52 service aces and ranked third in conference matches.

Did you know?

- In Phelps' second season at the helm of the volleyball program in 2011, the team doubled its total number of wins (9) from 2010 with its 18-11 record.

Off the Court

- Four Wildcats earned Academic All-MIAC Honors for Fall 2011 including Katherine Ellis, Stephanie Meschke, Marie O'Neil and Nicole Pothén. The team also earned the AVCA Team Academic Award for the fourth-consecutive year, averaging a 3.47 team GPA.
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SAINT MARY'S | [Cardinals' volleyball home page](#) |

Head coach

- Mike Lester (15th season)

A Year Ago

- 3-8 MIAC | 17-14 Overall

Top Returners

- Lexi Assimos (5-9, Jr., Setter | 26 MP, 111 Kills, 1,036 Assists, 249 Digs)
- Mary Nordick (6-3, So., MH | 31 MP, 256 Kills, 131 Blocks)
- Carissa Hahn (5-9, Sr., OH | 143 Kills, 15 Aces, 149 Digs)

Key Losses

- Kara Grant (31 MP, 462 Kills, 23 Aces, 244 Digs, 37 Blocks | First-Team All-MIAC)
- Amy Kujak (8 MP, 60 Kills, 11 Digs, 2 Blocks)
- Erika Hurley (31 MP, 24 Aces, 369 Digs)

By The Numbers

- 100: Kara Grant boasted a team-leading 462 kills and was one of seven Cardinals with 100 or more kills this season. Mary Nordick was second with 256, followed by Sabrina Bushlack (201), Carissa Hahn (143), Molly Grover (135), Kaylee Bunne (113) and Lexi Assimos (111).
- 1,036: Lexi Assimos eclipsed the 1,000-assist mark for the season on Oct. 26, dishing out 46 assists vs. Carleton. Assimos closed out the year with 1,036 assists.
- 2: The Cardinals set a pair of single-match records in the rally scoring era in their 3-0 victory over Finlandia on Sept. 2. SMU held the Lions to a record-low four points in their Set 3, 25-4 win, while the Cardinals' 19 service aces were also a single-match record.

Did You Know?

- The Cardinals closed out the 2011 season with eight straight road matches, playing four matches at the North Central (Ill.) Tournament and MIAC road contests at St. Thomas, Hamline, Carleton and Gustavus. Thirteen of SMU's 17 wins came on the road.

Off The Court

- Along with boasting four players on the Academic All-MIAC Team, the Cardinal also earned the 2011-2012 AVCA Team Academic Award.
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ST. OLAF | [Oles' volleyball home page](#) |

Head coach

- Cindy Book (20th Season)

A Year Ago

- 4-7 MIAC | 13-14 Overall

Top Returners

- Ari Carlson (Sr., MH | Two-time All-MIAC, 2.74 kills/set, .279, 271 kills)
- Katie Wolfram (Sr., OH | 2.93 kills/set)
- Kirstee Rotty (Sr., DS | 2.43 digs/set)

Key Losses

- Kristin Boyum (4.28 digs/set)
- Katie McDonald (1.20 digs/set)

By the Numbers

- 13: St. Olaf opens the season with 13 straight games on the road.
- 162: Senior outside hitter Katie Wolfram needs 162 kills to reach 1,000 for her career.
- 251: Senior right Melissa Burch needs 251 kills to eclipse 1,000 for her career. She has averaged 249.7 kills in her first three seasons.

Did You Know?

- All of the Oles' 20 non-conference games in 2012 are outside Minnesota. St. Olaf will play four in Washington, eight in Wisconsin and eight in Iowa.



ST. THOMAS | [Tommies' volleyball home page](#) |

Head coach

- Thanh Pham (10th season)

A Year Ago

- 10-1 MIAC | 32-5 Overall

In the 2011 Postseason

- 2011 MIAC Playoff runner-up (1-1) - - Defeated Bethel (3-0) in semifinals, lost to Concordia (3-2) in championship
- Advanced to NCAA Division III National Quarterfinals (3-1) -- Defeated UW-Eau Claire (3-0), defeated St. Scholastica (3-2), defeated Concordia (3-0), lost to Eastern (Pa.) (3-0)

Top Returners

- Kaitlain Wachter, SR, Libero; 3X starter; 2,163 career digs; AVCA All-America; MIAC Defensive POY
- Kelly Foley, SO, MB, .328 attack%, 3.65 kps, National Freshman of the Year, All-Region, MIAC Rookie of the Year
- Jill Greenfield, SO, OH 3.65 kps, 3.82 dps, 0.35 aces per set

Key Losses

- Ashley Maher (Setter, Division-III-best 11.61 apg, 2011 All-America, Academic All-America in first year as starter)
- Taylor Cross (MB, .306 attack%, 2.56 kpg, All-MIAC in first year as starter)

By the Numbers

- 7: 2012 AVCA Division III preseason ranking, program's 82nd time ranked in last 83 polls
- 14: Number who returned from a 17-player varsity roster of 2011
- 3.49: Toms' 2011 team grade-point average, to qualify for AVCA academic honors (seventh times in last 11 years)

Did You Know?

- Since losing the facility's debut match in 2010 to St. Olaf, Tommie volleyball has won 17 in a row on its home court in Schoenecker Arena

Off the Court

- Senior Kia Johnson has been awarded a Goldwater scholarship plus a UNCF/Merck Undergraduate Scholarship. The latter includes paid summer research internships for both 2012 and 2013. Johnson also was the 2011 NCAA volleyball Elite 89 recipient with the top grade-point average among the eight teams at the national tournament.
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