

2008 MIAC Women's Golf Championship Preview

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St. Paul, Minn. -- The 20th annual MIAC Women's Golf Championship will be played this Saturday through Monday, October 4-6 at Bunker Hills Golf Course in Coon Rapids, Minn. The conference's automatic bid to the NCAA Division III Championships, held in May 2009, will be awarded to the MIAC Champion. This season will be the third consecutive year the Championship has been played at Bunker Hills and the second Championship played at the same time as the MIAC Men's Championship.



St. Thomas has won the last seven MIAC titles and will need to hold off a strong team from Gustavus to make it eight straight. In the history of MIAC Women's Golf, only two teams, St. Thomas and Concordia have won team titles. Gustavus will have the best shot to be the third team to take home the trophy as the Gusties have played well all fall and lead the conference in stroke average heading into the weekend. Led by 2007 MIAC Medalist Laura Heck, St. Thomas will still challenge the Gusties for the top spot.

St. Thomas, ranked #7 nationally, and #2 Gustavus have finished 1-2 every fall since 2004. Those two will be difficult to knock off the top of the standings, but five teams will give them a challenge. #25 Saint Benedict, #22 Carleton, Macalester, St. Olaf, and Concordia all have scoring averages within nine strokes of each other. This should make for an exciting battle in the middle of the team standings. Bethel in it's first season of sponsoring a team, Saint Mary's, and Augsburg all will enter the field with young teams hoping to compete for a upper tier finish.

A talented field will take to the course in pursuit of the individual title. Reigning champion St. Thomas junior Laura Heck, will be tough to beat as she leads the conference in scoring average coming into the Championship. Macalester's Jordan Matheson, and the Gustavus trio of Kimbra Kosak, Katie Schenfeld, and Kali Griggs should all put in low rounds. St. Olaf's Britta Hendrickson, St. Thomas' Amy Anderson and Augsburg's Johanna Frykmark also return from the 2007 All-Conference team.

[2008 MIAC Golf Championships Website](#)

Augsburg

Coach: Laura Patrick (4th season)

2007 Finish: 8th (+313)

Augsburg Championship Preview

The Augsburg College women's golf team will aim to improve from last season's eighth-place MIAC championships finish. All four golfers return from last year's squad and have shown improvement during the course of the season.

Last year, Johanna Frykmark (SO, Stockholm, Sweden/Rollingby Gymnasium HS) became just the second women's golfer in Augsburg history to earn All-MIAC honors, with a 10th-place finish in the league meet. She will try to duplicate her All-MIAC standing this season, and enters this weekend's conference championships with a 92.8 stroke average. Teammate Stefani Zappa (SO, Minneapolis, Minn./Patrick Henry HS) has led the team in scoring this year, with a career-best 90.7 stroke average entering the league meet.

Kelsey Corrick (SO, Glencoe, Minn./Glencoe-Silver Lake HS) has continued to show improvement this season, as has senior Ellen Watters (SR, Lindstrom, Minn.), who earned the Minnesota Women's Collegiate Golf Association Most Improved Golfer of the Year honors in 2007-08. As a team, Augsburg enters the MIAC championships with a stroke average of 396.7.

Bethel

Coach: Joel Johnson (1st season)

2007 Finish: 2008 is the first season of Bethel Women's Golf

Bethel Championship Preview

Constant improvement is a goal for many teams, and the Bethel University women's golf team has exemplified that so far in their inaugural season. Beginning with a decisive victory over Northwestern College in their first ever meet, the Royals have steadily cut down on their strokes, scoring as low as a collective 372 during the second round of the Division III Midwest Classic in mid-September. They also won their dual meet against Saint Mary's, whom they finished behind just four days earlier in the D-III Midwest Classic. So far, Paige Lemieux and Hannah Hunstad have led the way for the fledgling team, each averaging a score of 90 per round. Bree Eastlack has also been a consistent scorer for Bethel and looks to play well to help Bethel to a strong finish in their first year.

The addition of a women's golf program to Bethel University brings the playing field up to 10 teams for the MIAC Championship in 2008, and despite having just four rounds under their belt, Head Coach Joel Johnson likes the progression he's seen his team make. "This being our first year, I honestly didn't know what kind of talent we'd have come out for the team. Right now I'd say we have a good mix of younger players and upper classmen who are all anxious to compete. I've been both surprised and impressed with our performances so far, but there's definitely room for improvement. Regardless of the outcome at the championships, it'll be a good building block for the team and it'll set the standard for the future of this young program," said Johnson.

Carleton
Coach: Eric Sieger (8th season)

2007 Finish: Tied 5th (+184)

Carleton Championship Preview
Carleton heads into the 2008 MIAC Championships anticipating a fierce battle in its quest to record the program's first top-three conference championship finish. The Knights, ranked in a tie for 22nd in the latest National Golf Coaches Association (NGCA)/<i>Golf World</i> Division III coaches poll, tied for fifth at last year's championship and enters this year's event with the conference's fourth-best team stroke average, trailing St. Benedict by six but leading St. Olaf and Macalester by one shot and Concordia by three. "It really should be a battle for that third spot," Carleton head coach and last year's MIAC coach of the year Eric Sieger said. "All of those teams have traded positioning with each other the whole season." Senior Katrina Wood, a 2006 All-MIAC pick and 2007-08 all-region selection leads the Knights. She qualified as an individual for last year's NCAA Championships, finishing tied for 37th. Her 82.3 stroke average this year is threatening the school record as she seeks to be the first Carleton golfer to earn multiple All-MIAC honors and erase the disappointment of last year's conference event when a poor start and finish left her three shots shy of all-conference honors. Carleton figures to rely heavily on its trio of sophomores. Laura Knutson leads this group, as she set nearly every first-year scoring record in the Carleton record books last year. Her 85.05 average was the best by a Carleton rookie, she finished 16th at last year's MIAC Championships and a top-10 finish isn't out of the question for the talented second-year player, as she brings an 84.4 stroke average into the final two weeks of the season. Louise Buckler and Meghan Gajare also return and their ability to improve on last year's scores may well determine the depth of Carleton's success. Both have worked hard on their games over the summer, according to Sieger, and could be poised to post the low scores from the third and fourth spots that Carleton needs. Joining the four returnees in Carleton's line-up is rookie Traci Johnson, who played on Lakeville North's state-qualifying team this past spring and is a three-time All-Lake Conference honorable mention selection. "For us to be successful, we need to get solid play from the bottom of our line-up," Sieger said. "Katrina and Laura have been pretty solid all year, but when we've found those good third and fourth scores, we've been tough."

Concordia
Coach: Duane Siverson (25th season)

2007 Finish: Tied 5th (+184)

Concordia Championship Preview

The 2008 Cobber women's golf season has been one of the most interesting in several seasons. The reason for the intrigue has been the return of long-time successful coach Duane Siverson and the improved play of the team which saw them win their first meet in a long time.

Siverson was placed in charge of the Cobber golf program after spending 24 seasons as the women's coach in the 80's, 90's and early 2000 era. He won multiple MIAC championships and regularly had his team competing for the national title. It didn't take long for Siverson to weave his magic as the Cobbers won their very first meet of the year, taking the team championship at the Jimmie Open in early September.

Concordia leveled out throughout the rest of the year but they have been playing a better brand of golf from top to bottom in their lineup than they had produced in many years.

The individual leader for CC is senior Afton Pender (Cohasset, Minn./Grand Rapids HS). Pender earned All-Conference honors in 2006 and has been the top Concordia golfer for the past four years. This year she has a team-best 80.9 average and has finished in the top 20 in four the five meets this year. She earned medalist honors at the Jimmie Open and has two other top 10 finishes.

The Cobbers have one other golfer right behind Pender and finding three other athletes to round out the top five will be Siverson's biggest challenge. Sophomore Hilary Vokovan (Coon Rapids, Minn.) has been close behind Pender all year long and has beaten Pender once in 2008. Vokovan has a pair of top 10 finishes on the year and is currently carding an 83.6 average.

The final three spots on the No.1 team could be filled by a handful of players. Concordia has five players who are all averaging in the 90's on the season. The top player among the quintet is junior Amy Hintzen (Sauk Centre, Minn.) who has a 93.7 average in her six rounds on the year.

Gustavus

Coach: Scott Moe (6th season)

2007 Finish: 2nd (+110)

Gustavus Championship Preview

The Gustavus women's golf team hopes to be able to take the next step and win the MIAC Championship in 2008 after four consecutive second place finishes at the conference tournament. The Gusties are currently ranked #2 in the latest National Golf Coaches Association Division III poll and have won three of the four tournaments they have competed in this fall. Coach Scott Moe's squad is 52-0 against Division III opponents this fall after posting first place finishes at the UW-Eau Claire Invitational, the Wartburg Invitational, and the Division III Midwest Classic.

The Gusties are led by senior All-American Kimbra Kosak (Grand Rapids, Minn.). Kosak is averaging 79.5 strokes per round through eight rounds this fall and she has posted three top-five finishes in four tournaments. Kosak is joined by junior All-American Kali Griggs (Burnsville, Minn.), who is averaging 80.3 strokes per round and sophomore Katie Schenfeld (Indianola, Iowa), who is averaging 79.8 strokes per round. Kosak (fifth), Griggs (seventh), and Schenfeld (tenth) all earned All-Conference honors last year by finishing in the top ten at the MIAC Championships.

Others expected to compete for the Gusties at this year's conference tournament are a couple of talented first year players, Taylor Drenttel (Eagan, Minn.) and Amanda Woodhull (Minnetonka, Minn). Drenttel, who has posted one top-ten and three top-twenty finishes this fall is averaging 82.8 strokes per round, while Woodhull, who has registered one top-five, one top-ten and two top-20 finishes, is averaging 83.9 strokes per round.

As a team, the Gusties are averaging 321.0 strokes per round (which ranks first in the MIAC), with a season low score of 309, which they registered in the second round of the Wartburg Invitational.

Macalester

Coach: Martha Nause (8th season)

2007 Finish: 7th (+224)

Macalester Championship Preview

The Scots feature a pair of the MIAC's top players in Jordan Matheson (Sr., Vancouver, B.C. / Nichols School) and Karla Leon (Jr., Quito, Ecuador / Colegio Menor SFQ). Both were selected to play in last spring's NCAA Division III tournament, where Matheson placed 13th. Matheson was the conference runner-up as a sophomore and last year placed seventh. Earlier this fall she finished second at the Division III Midwest Classic and is currently posting the MIAC's second-lowest average round this fall at 79.3. She was Minnesota state meet champ in the spring of her sophomore year.

Leon was 13th nationally as a frosh when she earned All-America status and she has played in two national tournaments. She was fifth in the MIAC in '06 and like Matheson, should once again vie for another high conference placing. Leon's 81.8 fall average is seventh best in the conference.

If the Scots are going to move up from last year's seventh-place MIAC finish, the bottom half of the lineup will have to come through and that is a strong possibility as Ali Fuhrman (Jr., Boulder, Colo. / Fairview) and Ellen Bubak (Jr., Sioux Falls, S.D. / Lincoln) as golfing as well as they ever have this fall.

Saint Benedict

Coach: Patrick Michaud (3rd season)

2007 Finish: 4th (+170)

Saint Benedict Championship Preview

The College of Saint Benedict Blazers come to Bunker Hill and the MIAC Championships with a team loaded with talent and ready to play. After returning all players from last year's fourth place finish, the Blazers are expecting to be in contention all three days.

CSB started the fall portion of their season with an 11th place finish at the UW-Eau-Claire Invitational, but rebounded in the subsequent Cobbler Open and Concordia Invite by earning second place finishes in both tournaments. In the Cobbler Open, first-year golfer Kathryn Hauff took medalist honors in dramatic fashion, winning a two-hole playoff after shooting 78 for the day.

The team was able to follow up with a fourth place finish at the rain soaked Midwest DIII Classic at Majestic Oaks Golf Course.

Look for the Blazers to use their depth this weekend to go low. Senior co-captain Ann Dressen has played brilliantly this fall having turned in five of her seven rounds at 82 or below. Hauff in addition to capturing medalist honors in the Cobbler Open has played strong for the Blazers all season. Her short game should benefit her on Bunkers tough greens. The Blazers will be counting on sophomore Sarah Hupperts, junior April Damman, and senior Leigh Bartholomew to round out the team's scores. All three play long off the tee and have MIAC Championship experience.

As head coach Pat Michaud said "we need to take that next step." Well, that step is here and now for this team.

Saint Mary's

Coach: Jeff Stangl (1st season)

2007 Finish: 9th (+338)

Saint Mary's Championship Preview

When Jeff Stangl was named the new head coach of the Saint Mary’s University men’s and women’s golf teams, he joked that he is the only coach on the Cardinals staff who is looking for sub-par performances from his teams.

And if the Cardinals are going to make any type of move up the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference ladder, rounds in the low 80s and high 70s need to be a more common appearance.

Stangl’s Cardinals struggled a bit in the fall, finishing ninth at the MIAC Championships, but rebounded with a solid spring season that included a first-place finish at the Viterbo Invitational.

And the picked up right where they left off this fall, turning in some solid performances during a busy two-month season.

While Stangl will have to deal with the loss of four-year letterwinner Katie O’Connor, he does return a pair of talented juniors, including Katelyn Rizzi (Austin, Minn.), who boasted a team-best 89.7 scoring average in her first collegiate season a year ago.

“Katelyn and Brittney Nielsen (Apple Valley, Minn.) will be the anchors for us this year,” said Stangl, who has also gotten a solid first year from freshman Gia Puch (Des Plaines, Ill.). “We’re a pretty young squad, but, hopefully, we can put together a combination of players who can play consistent golf.

“If we can do that, we’ll do all right.”

St. Olaf

Coach: Luke Benoit (3rd season)

2007 Finish: 3rd (+147)

St. Olaf Championship Preview
St. Olaf, who finished third in last year's MIAC Championships, returns four of their top golfers in 2008.
The Oles have tallied up sixth place finishes at both the Division III Midwest Classic and Cobber Open in addition to a fourth place finish at the Concordia Invite at Wildflower Golf Course in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota. The Oles have averaged 351.8 strokes.
St. Olaf is led by senior Britta Hendrickson, who finished third individually at the 2007 MIAC Championships. Also returning for the Oles are seniors Emily Segar (88.6 stroke average) and Alyssa Zuehl (91.0 stroke average), and junior Lizzy Zahn (88.7 stroke average). First-year Vanessa Kleckner has also appeared for the team, golfing in each event this season.

St. Thomas

Coach: Sara Evens (5th season)

2007 Finish: 1st (+91)

St. Thomas Championship Preview

The St. Thomas women's golf team, ranked seventh in the Division III national preseason poll, is looking to make the NCAA tournament for the fifth time in eight seasons.

After winning seven consecutive team championships, the Tommies will be hard pressed to extend their string of MIAC titles in the Oct. 4-6 tournament. They have been outscored by Gustavus in all six rounds thus far this fall. Gustavus is averaging 321.0 to UST's 334.1.

Since Evens was hired as coach in January 2004 through spring 2008, St. Thomas has a 12-15 record in head-to-head tournament results vs. rival Gustavus, but is 4-0 in MIAC tourney play

The Toms had three key graduation losses -- All-American Holly Noble, two-time All-MIAC player Laura Klatt, and Katie Potts. And UST's Katie Mich is on study abroad this fall and will return for the spring season.

Junior All-American and MIAC medalist Laura Heck leads seven returners for the Tommies. The All-American and MIAC Player of the Year leads all conference players this fall with a 78.7 average.

Juniors Amy Anderson, Stephanie Kreb and Kelly Westerham and seniors Stephanie Hird and Megan Owens are others who played last season.

Division I transfer Chelsa Dooley of Cincinnati, one of three newcomers on the roster, ranks 10th this fall in MIAC scoring at 83.2. The Willmar native averaged 80.1 over 27 rounds as a freshman at Cincy in 2005-2006 and was ranked first in the state in 2005 with a 73.3 average as a prep senior at Kerkhoven-Murdoch-Sundberg High.