

2007-08 MIAC Women's Hockey Season Preview

Posted: Nov 07, 2007

St. Paul, Minn. -- Ten teams take to the ice in 2007-08 in attempt to capture the tenth MIAC Women's Hockey Championship. A lot has changed since the inaugural year of MIAC Women's Hockey in 1998-1999, but some things never change. Intense competition, spirited rivalries, great sportsmanship and some of the best women's collegiate hockey in the nation are the hallmarks of MIAC Women's Hockey.



This season, the five playoff spots are definitely up for grabs as teams that traditionally have finished in the bottom of the standings have squads capable of competing in every conference series. At the top of the standings, look for Gustavus and St. Thomas to once again lead the way. The two have combined for the last seven MIAC titles with the Gusties sweeping the last three.

MIAC Preseason Coaches Poll: 1. Gustavus, 2. St. Thomas, 3. St. Olaf, 4. Hamline, 5. Saint Mary's, 6. Concordia, 7. Bethel, 8. Augsburg, 9. Saint Benedict, 10. St. Catherine

2007 MIAC Playoff Dates: First Round (Thursday, February 28), Semifinals (Saturday, March 1), Finals (Wednesday, March 5)

Augsburg

Coach: Jill Pohtilla

Career Record: 160-122-23 (13th season)

2006-07 Finish: 7th (5-9-4 MIAC, 8-12-5 overall)

Augsburg Players to Watch
Tiffany Magnuson (F, Jr., Green Bay, Wis./Notre Dame Academy HS) Two-time All-MIAC First Team
Toni Menth (G, So., Buffalo, Minn.) All-MIAC honorable-mention in 2006-07.
Jackie Keller (D, Sr., Traverse City, Mich./Traverse City West HS) All-MIAC honorable-mention in 2006-07
Whitney Restemayer (D, So., Bemidji, Minn.)
Kaitlan Dickson (F, Fr., Bemidji, Minn.)

Augsburg Season Preview

For the Augsburg College women's hockey team, the 2007-08 season will be one where familiar faces will be combined with young talent.

Ten letterwinners return from last season's team, which went 8-12-5 overall, 5-9-4 in Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference play. And the Auggies welcome one of the largest recruiting classes in the 13-year history of the program – 11 newcomers.

Forward Tiffany Magnuson (Jr., Green Bay, Wis./Notre Dame Academy HS), one of the top scorers in the nation the last two seasons, returns for her junior campaign. In 2006-07, Magnuson led the MIAC with 23 goals, a total third in the nation in NCAA Division III women's hockey, and earned All-MIAC first-team honors for the second year in a row. She enters this season with 44 career goals, already the third-most in school history.

Goalie Toni Menth (So., Buffalo, Minn.) started all but one of Augsburg's 25 contests last year, finishing with a 3.20 goals-against-average and .906 save percentage. She earned All-MIAC honorable-mention honors last season.

Seniors Jackie Keller (Sr., Traverse City, Mich./Traverse City West HS), Katie Medd (Sr., Mankato, Minn./East HS) and Katie Johnson (Sr., Montrose, Minn./Wayzata HS) return to provide key leadership for the Auggies. Keller, a defender, earned All-MIAC honorable-mention honors last season with 11 points (one goal, 10 assists). Medd had a goal and eight assists last season, while Johnson had three goals and five assists.

Other returners to the Augsburg lineup include forwards Jess Olson (So., Hamel, Minn./Wayzata HS), Sara Toft (So., Alexandria, Minn./Jefferson HS) and Andrea Toft (So., Alexandria, Minn./Jefferson HS); and defenders Whitney Restemayer (So., Bemidji, Minn.) and Emily Merhar (Jr., Eden Prairie, Minn.).

Several talented newcomers join the Auggie roster, including forward Jenna Knudtson (Fr., Austin, Minn.), an all-state honorable-mention selection in 2007 and two-time all-conference pick; forward Kaitlan Dickson (Fr., Bemidji, Minn.), also a two-time all-conference selection; forward Elise Hedlund (Fr., Robbinsdale, Minn./Cooper HS), an honorable-mention all-conference selection.

Other newcomers include goalies Sarah Hammann (Fr., Grand Rapids, Minn.) and Amanda Mears (Fr., Ludington, Mich.); forwards Carly Facchini (Fr., Livonia, Mich./Stevenson HS), Erin Leyden (Fr., Glen Ellyn, Ill./Glenbard South HS). Hillary Volkman (Fr., Robbinsdale, Minn./Cooper HS) and Jennifer Statz (Fr., Spooner, Wis.), and defenders Whitney Pratt (Fr., Mitchell, S.D.), an all-state selection in South Dakota in 2006, and Tara Sampson (Fr., Richfield, Minn.).

Bethel

Coach: Charlie Burggraf

Career Record: 6-14-3 (2nd season)

2006-07 Finish: 8th (5-10-3 MIAC, 6-14-3 overall)

Bethel Players to Watch

Bethany Murphy-Aultman (Jr., F, Grand Rapids, Minn.)

Sandra Felten (Jr., F, Cashton, Wis.)

Beth Spurrier (Jr., G, Plymouth, Minn.)

Kassie Sullivan (Fr., F, Roseville, Minn.)

Kelsea Martalock (Fr., D, Tomah, Wis.)

Whitney Ischi (Fr., D, Kenai, Alaska)

Bethel Season Preview

The Bethel University women's hockey team is excited to play their ninth season in the ever increasingly competitive MIAC. Five seniors will be completing their careers at Bethel this season: Two-year captain: Amy Beitzel (Apple Valley, MN), first-year captain Hannah Carlson (Copper Center, AK), Sarah Worch (Delray Beach, FL), Julien "Rocky" Olson (Minneapolis, MN) and Caitlyn Belcher (Eagle River, WI). These seniors provide a strong foundation for the team in work ethic as well as off-ice leadership.

The talented Junior class consists of All-Conference goaltender Beth Spurrier (two-time All-MIAC), forward Bethany Murphy-Aultman (Grand Rapids, MN), and forward Sandra Felten (Cashton, WI). The class also has the high energy play of Canadian Miriam Paas (Toronto, ON) and Anna Baumgarten (Elmhurst, IL).

Sophomores Alyssum Roe (Copper Center, AK), Mary Foster (St. Paul, MN) and Caroline Belcher (Eagle River, WI) continue to improve and will make positive contributions on the ice this year.

The incoming freshmen have already made an impression in practice with their speed, skill, and playmaking. Kassie Sullivan and Stephanie Van Guilder come from a great hockey program in Roseville, MN, and have already made an impact. Defensemen Whitney Ischi (Kenai, AK) and Kelsey Martalock (Tomah, WI) will provide strength, speed and playmaking at the blue line. Misty Pirus (Elmhurst, IL) is a strong forward with a 'heavy' shot. Other freshmen who have been developing nicely include: Olya Meunier (Anchorage, AK), Kelley Newell (Sauk Centre, MN) and goaltender Molly Rader (Winona, MN).

We look forward to a year of tough competition that will challenge us to grow as individuals and as a team.

Concordia

Coach: Ace Gregg

Career Record: 9-11-2 (2nd season)

2006-07 Finish: 6th (8-9-1 MIAC, 9-11-2 overall)

Concordia Players to Watch

Ceara Bergsrud (Sr., D, Devils, Lake, N.D.) 2006-07 All-MIAC, 2005-06 All-MIAC Honorable Mention

Alyssa Dahl (Jr., F, Willmar, Minn.) 2006-07 MIAC All-Conference Honorable Mention

Mandi Samuelson (Jr., F, Willmar, Minn.) 2006-07 MIAC All-Conference Honorable Mention

Concordia Season Preview

The 2007-08 Concordia women's hockey team will be hoping to pick up right where they left off in 2006-07 when they won their last three games of the season and five of their final seven games. The late-season kick pushed the Cobbers up to sixth place in the MIAC standings, narrowly missing a berth in the five-team MIAC playoffs. CC finished with an 8-9-1 record in the conference last year and will be looking to improve on that mark as they make a push for their first postseason berth since the 2002-03 season when they finished in second place in the league standings.

The tall task for second-year head coach Ace Gregg will be dependent on finding a more explosive offense. Last year the Cobbers finished in goals in conference games. In the first 11 games of the conference in 2006-07, CC scored over two goals on only two occasions. In their sprint to the finish in the final seven games, the team scored at least two goals in five games.

Individually, the top point getters for the team in 2006-07, Alyssa Dahl (Jr., Willmar, Minn.) and Mandi Samuelson (So., Willmar, Minn.), finished in a tie for 38th place on the conference scoring chart. The pair were the only players to net over 10 points in the team's 18 league games. They will be counted on to up their point total in 2007-08 and lead a young Cobber offensive attack. Of the team's 13 offensive players on the roster, seven are either freshmen or sophomores. Besides Dahl and Samuelson, the top returning scorers from last year are Bri Bian (Jr., Cedarburg, Wis.) and Kayla Thorson (So., Rugby, N.D.). Both players had only six points in the MIAC last year.

On defense, Concordia will return only two of their defensemen from a year ago. The tandem of Ceara Bergsrud (Sr., Devils Lake, N.D.) and Brit Vander Kooy (Jr., Redlands, Calif.) prove that quality is better than quantity. Bergsrud was the team's lone representative on the MIAC All-Conference Team in 2006-07 and has earned MIAC postseason honors in consecutive seasons. Vander Kooy will join Bergsrud as the No.1 defensive unit for Concordia. They will be called upon to mentor a group of first-year defensemen that have the potential but not the experience.

One of the traditionally strong parts of the Cobber women's hockey team is goaltending. This year's group will be no exception. Gregg will be able to call upon both of his top goalies from last year and will have a freshman that is ready to be thrown into the mix should anything happen to the returners. Maddie Haroldson (So., Sartell, Minn.) and Amber Malcolm (Jr., North Vancouver, B.C.) practically split the minutes in half from last year. Haroldson led the team in goals against average and save percentage. Her 2.30 GAA and .922 save percentage were among the league leaders. In conference play she was fourth in the MIAC with a 1.78 GAA and second in save percentage (.935). Malcolm finished the year with a 3.20 GAA and an .885 save percentage. Freshman Julie York (Bismarck, N.D.) will be the third goalie competing for playing time in 2007-08.

Concordia will open the season with a pair of games at Adrian (Mich.) followed by a single game at Buffalo State (N.Y.). After the trip out east, CC will host their home opener against UW-Superior on Nov. 9 and 10 before opening the conference against St. Kate's the following weekend.

If the Cobbers can forget about the eight-month layoff from last season and pretend they are just continuing on from last year's successful finish, then the team might wind up playing in the MIAC playoffs for the first time in five seasons.

Gustavus

Coach: Mike Carroll

Career Record: 172-48-11 (9th season)

2006-07 Finish: 1st (17-1-0 MIAC, 25-3-0 overall)

Gustavus Players to Watch

Margaret Dorer (Sr., D, St. Paul, Minn.)
Molly Doyle (Sr., F, Eagan, Minn)
Melissa Mackley (So., F, Burnsville, Minn.)
Mari Gunderson (Jr., F, Shoreview, Minn.)
Jenny Pusch (Jr., F, Minneapolis, Minn.)
Stefanie Ubl (Sr., F, Blaine, Minn.)

Gustavus Season Preview
<p>The Gustavus Adolphus women’s hockey team enters the 2007-08 season with 13 letterwinners return from a squad that claimed its third consecutive MIAC Regular Season title and fourth consecutive MIAC Playoff Championship title last season. Coach Mike Carroll will look to All-Americans Margaret Dorer and Molly Doyle as well as all-conference forward Jenny Pusch to lead a squad that is looking to move up to the next level of national competition.</p> <p>First-team All-American and two-time captain Margaret Dorer helped anchor a defense that ranked second in Division III allowing only 38 goals in 28 games last season. She is a defender who can create match-up problems for defenses as she scored 32 points (9 goals, 23 assists) a year ago. Dorer will be joined on the blue line by two-time senior captain Laura Vannelli, who had a +20 rating last season. Breanna Scavo emerged last season as a solid goaltender after making the adjustment to the college-level and will start the season between the pipes for Gustavus.</p> <p>Senior Molly Doyle, a 2006 All-American and three-time All-MIAC performer, will lead a veteran group of forwards that includes junior Jenny Pusch, sophomore Melissa Mackley, junior Mari Gunderson, and junior Jessie Doig. Coach Carroll feels one of the keys of success for the season will be fueled by the improvement of the sophomore class including Laura Hillman, Claire Opsahl, Alyssa Saunders, Lynn Hillen, and Jenna Johnson.</p> <p>A major question mark for this year’s squad is who will step up to fill the holes created by the graduation of four-time MIAC Player of the Year Andrea Peterson (11 goals, 26 assists) and All-USCHO West Region performer Kelly Crandall (17 goals, 17 assists). However, Coach Carroll is confident that the abilities of the returning players and the influx of new players will help provide the Golden Gusties with the scoring needed to stay at the top of the MIAC.</p> <p>Gustavus will be tested early in the season, as the squad will face UW-Stevens Point in its opener on November 3 in St. Peter. The Pointers knocked the Gusties out of the NCAA Tournament with a first round win in St. Peter last March. The rest of the early season schedule will include challenging non-conference games against UW-River Falls, UW-Superior, and Lake Forest. The Gusties will also play conference rivals Hamline, Saint Mary’s and St. Olaf before Christmas.</p>

Hamline

Coach: Garnet Asmundson
Career Record: 26-65-9 (5th season)
2006-07 Finish: 4th (10-6-2 MIAC, 15-9-3 overall)

Hamline Players to Watch

Marie Gross (Sr., D, 5-3, West St. Paul, Minn./Henry Sibley)

Sara Mickelson (Sr., F, 5-10, West St. Paul, Minn./Cretin-Derham Hall)

Emily Dusold (Sr., F, 5-6, Shoreview, Minn./Irondale)

Amanda Finstad (So., D, 5-4, Waupun, Wis./Waupun)

Melanie Leveille (So., F, 5-3, Appleton, Wis./Appleton North)

Sophie Davidson (So., F, 5-8, St. Paul, Minn./Johnson)

Hamline Season Preview

Following a record-setting 2006-07 season, head coach Garnet Asmundson looks to build upon that success with this year's edition of Piper women's hockey and provide six seniors with a final season that they will remember.

2006-07 marked the best season in Hamline's history as the Pipers improved from a ninth place conference finish in 2005-06 with a 4-16-5 (3-12-3 MIAC) record to last season's fourth place finish and a 15-9-3 (10-6-2 MIAC) regular season finish. The team set numerous school records as individuals and as a team. Asmundson plans to see a continuation of that development. "This season I hope to see both our players and the program continue to take positive strides as we did over the previous season," said Asmundson.

Asmundson didn't lose any players from last year's team to graduation and returns seven players that received all-conference post-season recognition. He expects all of them to continue to impress on the ice. Four of the players received first team honors for their efforts last year.

Offensively, the Pipers return senior Sara Mickelson (West St. Paul, Minn.), who set a school record in 2006-07 with 20 goals in a season and had 12 goals and five assists in MIAC play. She also had ten power-play goals, good enough to garner recognition as the NCAA Division III statistical champion in that category.

Sophomore forward Sophie Davidson (Saint Paul, Minn.) led the Pipers in scoring in MIAC contests in her first year with six goals and 12 assists, and had 11 goals and 17 assists overall. Her classmate Melanie Leveille (forward, Appleton, Wis.) had eight goals and nine assists in 2006-07, including the only hat trick that the Pipers produced in conference play (against Gustavus). Davidson and Leveille also received MIAC All-Rookie team honors.

Also returning to the team with All-MIAC honors from last season is senior forward Emily Dusold (Shoreview, Minn.). Receiving honorable mention recognition from the conference last season, she tallied eight goals, six of which were on the power play.

Asmundson is looking forward to seeing several new first-year student-athletes step up and get ice time early in the season. Forward Alli Miller (Fairbault, Minn.) has tasted success, having scored 49 goals in her senior year of high school, and should make an impact early in the Piper offense. She will be joined by another strong forward who knows how to succeed on a big stage, Heather Ahlers (Stillwater, Minn.). Ahlers was a member of the Stillwater Ponies team that won the 2007 MSHSL Class AA state title at the Xcel Energy Center. She's not the only first-year player for the Pipers who competed at Xcel Energy Center in her senior year, forward Kesia Madryga (Burnsville, Minn.) also played in the MSHSL Class AA tournament last February.

With such firepower on Asmundson's offense, he is looking to strengthen his defense in 2007-08 to allow his forwards' goals the chance to hold up on the scoreboard. "We are aiming to strengthen our defense this season," said Asmundson. "We need to allow fewer shots and goals." Last season, Hamline gave up 82 goals in 172 shots. Helping

to meet this objective will be incoming first-years Megan Olson (Coon Rapids, Minn.) and Jenny Novakovich (Shakopee, Minn.). Asmundson expects Olson to be in the top four defenders, and looks to see Novakovich make an impression on that side of the puck, although she may also get some time on the ice at the forward position.

Asmundson will have strong leadership returning to his defense to guide the newcomers. Senior Marie Gross (West St. Paul, Minn.) earned All-MIAC first team honors for the second time in her career following a season in which she produced two goals and nine assists as a defender. Sophomore defender Amanda Finstad (Waupun, Wis.) received honorable mention recognition with two goals and 15 assists last year.

Two additional solid defenders return for the Pipers. Sophomore Mallory Steele (Rochester Hills, Mich.) is back following a solid first year performance that included appearances in 25 of the Pipers 27 games and three assists on the season. Senior Emily Toenes (Eagle River, Alaska) played in 24 games and tallied two assists. Asmundson expects both players to step up and continue to be important factors in supporting the defensive goals of the program this season.

Junior goalie Crystal Testolin (Richardson, Texas) was the final team member to receive honorable mention all-conference status during the 2006-07 season, and went 12-6-2 with a 2.68 goals against average in the net for the Pipers. She also had two shut-outs during the season.

Joining Testolin in goal once again is sophomore Andria Pinkerton (Minot, N.D.) who played in nine games for Hamline last season with a 3.70 goals against average and a 3-3-1 record. First-years Alicia Dressel (Cedar, Minn.) and Suzanne Kellogg (Crystal, Minn.) will also compete for time in net.

With Asmundson having a full senior class with significant playing experience for the first time in his tenure at Hamline, the Pipers look to have a more mature and effective presence on the ice, as their defense steps up to match the offensive production this season.

Saint Benedict

Coach: Patrick Michaud
Career Record: 2-17-5 (2nd season)
2006-07 Finish: 9th (2-11-5 MIAC, 2-17-5 overall)

Saint Benedict Players to Watch
Stephanie Kendrick (F, Jr., 5-5)
Ashley Davenport (F, Sr., 5-8)
Abbie Helminen (G, Fy., 5-2)
Holly Reinking (F, Fy., 5-5)
Maggie Kinney (D, Sr., 5-4)

Saint Benedict Season Preview

The 2006-2007 season for the College of Saint Benedict started slow for the Blazers dropping the first five contests, but CSB picked up their first win of the season as well as Pat Michaud's first victory as head coach with a 3-2 nail biting victory over MIAC foe Saint Mary's. Two weeks after tying Bethel twice, CSB blew past St. Catherine 4-1 and tied the Wildcats the next night.

The Blazer will be seeking improvement as they look ahead and prepare to take the ice for their 2007-2008 campaign. In order for this improvement to occur, the team has planned to play hockey with an attitude of "No Holding Back", which they feel will launch them forward into a great season.

This year, there is much excitement and new attitudes around the team. The Blazers will be welcoming another talented group of first-year players that they hope will add depth to the team and show a strong work ethic on the ice.

Saint Benedict's sophomores all are coming off their outstanding first years where they all learned what it takes to play in the heavily competitive collegiate ranks.

Juniors Stephanie Kendrick, Patty King, Andrea Selby, Abby Milton, and Sarah Zweber are primed to make the transition from outstanding sophomores to astounding juniors.

The senior class is full of experienced, talented players who are prepared to propel CSB to the top. They are coming off impressive years in which they gained new skills and improved their offensive output.

For Saint Benedict, the objective is simple: "No Holding Back", and through that philosophy, success, improvement and determination will follow.

St. Catherine

Coach: Brad Marshall

Career Record: 1-43-3 (3rd season)

2006-07 Finish: 10th (0-16-2 MIAC, 0-22-2 overall)

St. Catherine Players to Watch
Kaytlyn Mount (Jr., F, Bloomington, Minn.)
Aryn Ball (So., F, Bemidji, Minn.)
Katie Hopkins (Jr., D, Middleton, Wis.)
Michaela Michaelson (Fy., F, Inver Grove Heights, Minn.)
Suzie Kuehnast (Fy., F, Willmar, Minn.)
Mel Gerten (Fy., G, Inver Grove Heights, Minn.)

St. Catherine Season Preview

This year’s edition of the Wildcat hockey team is going to look to get production out of a group of core returners to go along with a very strong first year class as they look to make the climb up the MIAC ladder. Head coach Brad Marshall enters his third season at the helm of the Wildcats and is excited about the group he has this season. “I think we have a nice combination of veterans to go along with some very talented first year players who will bring some great athleticism and I am excited for what lies ahead with our program,” stated Marshall.

Looking to lead the way for the Wildcats this season will be junior Kaytlyn Mount. Mount was a leader on the ice last season and paced the Wildcats in all aspects. Kaytlyn is a smooth skater and has a knack for finding the back of the net and will be looked at the lead the offensive push in ’07.

The Wildcats made two key additions to last year’s team with a pair of all-state honorable mention goalies suiting up this season. First year players Mel Gerten and Amy Snyder are both very talented and will be counted on to be a big part of the Wildcat defense.

“There is some very good hockey played in the MIAC and I think we are beginning to put the pieces in place to be very competitive in conference play, I am looking forward to seeing how this team meshes as the season progresses,” added Marshall.

Saint Mary's

Coach: Terry Mannor
Career Record: 20-26-6 (3rd season)
2006-07 Finish: 5th (9-7-2 MIAC, 9-14-3 overall)

Saint Mary's Players to Watch
Val Rodriguez (Sr., D, 5-0, Woodbury, Minn.) Honorable-mention All-MIAC
Jill Rhody (Jr., F, 5-5, St. Paul, Minn.)
Angie Kryzer (So., F, 5-8, Inver Grove Heights, Minn.)

Saint Mary's Season Preview

As Saint Mary’s University women’s hockey coach Terry Mannor began preparations for the 2007-08 season, he had plenty of holes to fill.

On offense. On defense. And in goal.

That’s what happens when you graduate 10 players - significant players.

How significant?

On offense, SMU returns to just nine of its 55 goals from last season. On defense, the Cardinals will be without veteran blueliners Rebecca Jelenc and Jenna Roland. And in goal, the Cardinals return a grand total of zero minutes played in a varsity game.

Yet, despite all the gaping holes, Mannor’s cupboard is far from bare.

“When you look at what we lost, it seemed pretty daunting - it still seems pretty daunting,” admitted Mannor, whose Cardinals placed fifth in the MIAC a year ago with a 9-7-2 mark, earning its seventh straight conference tournament appearance. “There’s no way to replace what we lost. And it’s not just the numbers, that group of seniors understood the importance of team over the individual, and the sacrifices required for this belief. Pride in what the program accomplished far overshadowed any individual accomplishments”

“In many ways, it’s almost like starting over.”

But with a great big head-start.

“It’s tough to lose that many players in one year, but the players we’ve got returning along with the freshmen we’ve brought in, make for a pretty talented group and we’re very happy with what we’ve seen so far,” said Mannor. “There’s going to be a little bit of a learning curve. We are going to have to take a little more time teaching our systems and philosophies as a result of having so many new players.”

“But, from what I have seen to this point, I am confident that this group will represent Saint Mary’s University in a very positive manner.”

St. Olaf

Coach: John Bazzachini
Career Record: 27-24-1 (3rd season)
2006-07 Finish: 2nd (12-5-1 MIAC, 15-10-1 overall)

St. Olaf Players to Watch
Laura Wild (F, Sr.)
Katie Bennett (F, Sr.)
Janae Fabini (F, Sr.)
Jess Magnuson (D, Jr.)
Sarah Mills (G, Soph.)

St. Olaf Season Preview

The 2007-08 St. Olaf College women's hockey team has much to build on after its best regular season finish in school history – a second place spot in the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference standings under the league's Coach of the Year, John Bazzachini.

DEFENSEMEN

The Oles, who were 15-10-1 and 12-5-1 in conference play in 2006-07, return a strong defensive unit led by All-MIAC defender Jess Magnuson (Rochdale, Mass./Pomfret). Magnuson tallied three goals and 11 assists last season.

Also returning is All-First Year Team member and All-MIAC honorable mention selection Kari McClintock (Chaska, Minn./Chaska), who had three goals and 16 assists in her first year.

Sophomore Taylor David (White Bear Lake, Minn.) and juniors Anna Messerly (Vadnais Heights, Minn./ Mounds View) and Melissa Sailor (Ramsey, Minn./Irondale) will also add support to the defensive zone.

FORWARDS

Up front St. Olaf will have to replace one of the most potent one-two punches in the nation, Lindsey Boeser and Susannah Brokl. The duo combined for 77 points last year. Boeser, a three-time All-MIAC pick and second team All-America selection last season, had 109 career points in three seasons. Brokl was an All-America pick too. She had 108 career points and was a three-time all-league selection as well.

Thankfully, St. Olaf has plenty of experience to lean on. The Oles return a trio of seniors - Katie Bennett (Edina, Minn./Edina), Janae Fabini (Duluth, Minn./Warroad) and Laura Wild (Sr., Mendota Heights, Minn./Cretin-Derham Hall) – that have each have at least 42 career points. Bennett was third on the club in points last year with 27, while Wild had 22 on nine goals and 13 assists. Fabini, a two-time All-MIAC honorable mention selection, is healthy after missing eight games last season with an injury.

St. Olaf could have a breakout year from Junior Tessa Christensen (Albert Lea, Minn./Albert Lea), who had 24 points last winter.

Kim McClintick (Soph., Chaska, Minn.) had seven goals and eight assists and Kayla Hill (Soph., White Bear Lake, Minn.) had five and six their first seasons and could each pick up more of the scoring duties this season.

GOALTENDERS

One area that St. Olaf should be particularly strong in is its goaltending. Sophomore Sarah Mills returns after posting a .918 save percentage with a goals against average of 2.28 in 16 games.

Joining Mills are first years Corbin Ruiz (Edina, Minn./Northfield Mount Vernon School, Mass.), an All-State and All-Region goaltender; and Erin McNamara (Farmington, Minn./Farmington), a Pioneer Press All-State honorable mention goaltender.

St. Thomas

Coach: Tom Palkowski

Career Record: 0-0-0 (1st season)

2006-07 Finish: 3rd (12-6-0 MIAC, 15-12-0 overall)

St. Thomas Players to Watch

Lauren Bradel (SO, GK) All-MIAC, MIAC All-Rookie

Jackie Carroll (SO, F) All-MIAC, All-Region

Jill Kobow (SO, F) All-MIAC, MIAC All-Rookie

Ashley Reinhardt (SR, F) HM All-MIAC

Jenny Schnaible (SO, D) All-MIAC MIAC All-Rookie

Courtney Sekevitch (SR, F)

St. Thomas Season Preview

St. Thomas had a change at the top this summer. Kevin Gorg, the only head coach in the nine-year history of the varsity program, resigned. But interim coach Tom Palkowski was Gorg's assistant all nine years, thus the transition should be smooth.

Palkowski, a former Tommie men's hockey star, has 20 years experience as a hockey assistant coach. The Columbia Heights native previously served 11 seasons in the boys' programs at Columbia Heights, Totino-Grace and Mounds View high schools.

Under Gorg, the Tommie women broke through to win back-to-back MIAC titles from 2002-04 and became a consistent top-15 Division III program over the last five seasons. In 100 games vs. conference foes since 2002, the UST women are 79-16-5.

With more than a dozen newcomers and only three seniors, the 2006-07 Tommies finished 15-12, reached the MIAC playoff finals for the fifth season in a row, and placed third in the conference standings. The Toms ended Gustavus' 33-game MIAC win streak with a 1-0 win in St. Peter.

The Toms graduated three four-year players -- starting defenseman Maggie Toft (108 games); forward Allison Turgeon (28g-50a/78 career points); and goalie Katie Jetland (37-13, 1.82 GAA, .924 save%).

But Lauren Bradel emerged as one of the MIAC's best goalies last year as a freshman and should ease the loss of Jetland.

In their first four seasons on home ice at Saint Thomas Ice Arena in Mendota Heights, the Tommie women are 37-9-2.

"We're also pleased to have somebody in Tom Palkowski who's also been with the program from the beginning and has that experience in coaching and recruiting," said Steve Fritz, UST's athletics director.

"I'm excited to try to carry on what Kevin and I started," Palkowski said. "We have a pretty good nucleus of players coming back, so it should be a pretty good year. A lot of the Xs and Os will stay the same, so it should be a smooth transition for the players. I know this was a hard decision for Kevin because he enjoys coaching and has a bond with his players. I think he feels good that he's passing the torch this direction and leaves the program in great shape."

Palkowski played one season at Division I Illinois-Chicago, then competed in his final three seasons at St. Thomas. He helped the Toms post a 50-13-1 record in his first two seasons with a pair of MIAC championships and two NCAA playoff berths. Despite playing just 93 games in three seasons, he still ranks seventh on the UST career scoring list with 168 points (71 goals, 97 assists). (Five of the six players listed ahead of Palkowski played four seasons).