

# 2009 MIAC Women's Indoor Track & Field Championship Preview

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St. Paul, Minn. -- The 2009 Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) Men's and Women's Indoor Track & Field Championships will take place this Thursday-Saturday, March 5-7 at Olson Forum on the campus of Concordia College in Moorhead, Minn.



St. Thomas will enter this weekend's championships as the favorite to win the team title as the Tommies will look to win their 10th consecutive MIAC Indoor Championship. Gustavus, Bethel, and host Concordia will likely pose the biggest threat at stopping St. Thomas' run. While Saint Benedict, Carleton, St. Catherine, and Hamline all have the talent to compete for one of the top spots in the conference. St. Olaf, Macalester, Augsburg, and Saint Mary's will rely on strong individual performances to help them move upward in the team standings.

[2009 MIAC Indoor Track & Field Championships Website](#)

## **Augsburg**

**Coach:** Dennis Barker (15th season)

**2008 Championships Finish:** 11th

### **Augsburg Championships Preview**

The Auggie women will be a young team in 2009, with just six juniors and seniors on the roster. The key to success for the Auggies this season will be continued improvement from its eight first-years and a goal of scoring more points at conference for its returners.

Augsburg's top performer in 2008 returns to anchor the Auggies in the sprints. Whitney Holman (JR, New Hope, Minn./Robbinsdale Armstrong HS) finished second in the 55 meters and fifth in the 200 meters at the 2008 MIAC Indoor championships, earning all-conference and honorable-mention all-conference honors. Holman was named MIAC Track Athlete of the Week, for the second time in her career in early February and will look to have a strong season again in 2009.

Also returning for the Auggies will be Gaby Hamerlinck (JR, St. Paul, Minn./Highland Park HS) in the jumps and Sadie Dietrich (SR, Luverne, Minn.) in the middle distances. Hamerlinck is currently ranked top eight in the high jump on the MIAC performance list with a height of 1.52 meters and will be looking to score points for the Auggies at conference. Dietrich was the Auggies No. 2 runner in cross country this fall and will be looking to qualify for conference in the middle distances.

Newcomer Caroline Senungi (FY, Shoreview, Minn./Mounds View HS) will be looking to score points for the Auggies in the hurdles this season. Senungi finished fifth in the 55 meter hurdles in her collegiate debut with a time of 9.06 at the St. Olaf invitational. Kacie Bahr (FY, Brainerd, Minn.) and Kristin Bunge (FY, Preston, Minn./Fillmore Central HS), also newcomers for the Auggies, will be looking to make an impact in the middle distances.

## **Bethel**

**Coach:** Jim Timp (4th season)

**2008 Championships Finish:** 3rd

### **Bethel Championships Preview**

Head Coach Jim Timp believes the 2009 season looks to be a good opportunity to continue with the success that was experienced last year with the women's team finishing in third place at the indoor conference meet - just half a point out of second.

The women's squad is led by four captains: Marie Borner (Sr., Cottage Grove, Minn.), who is the defending national champion in the indoor mile run and has earned an automatic qualifying time in the 800 meter run as well; Vanessa Moore (Sr., Grantsburg, Wis.), who is on her way back to the NCAA Championship meet in the high jump; Heather Jelen (Sr., Sioux Falls, S.D.), who is an All-MIAC and NCAA All-Region cross country runner; and Michaela Otto (Jr., Cottage Grove, Minn.). Huldah Omesa (So., Brooklyn Park, Minn.) has been performing well in recent competitions, and could be a factor in a couple of different events.

The coaching staff is very excited about this year's teams. Depth has been the problem over the past couple of years which has prevented the Royals from being one of the top teams. The talent has been there and now the depth seems to be there as well. With this kind of talent and depth and the leadership and commitment that exist, the squads seems to be poised to move up once again in the MIAC.

**Carleton**

**Coach:** Donna Ricks (16th season)

**2008 Championships Finish:** 6th

Carleton Championships Preview

Carleton's championship drive at the upcoming MIAC finals will be spearheaded by freshmen Simone Childs-Walker and Clare Franco.

Simone Childs-Walker has established herself as a commanding force in only her first year of collegiate competition. Childs-Walker made her MIAC track debut in convincing fashion, winning both the mile and 3000-meter events at the St. Olaf Triangular, meriting the honor of MIAC Women's Indoor Track Athlete of the Week for January 26. Her performance in that race still stands as the fastest 3000-meter run in the MIAC.

However impressive, Childs-Walker's success has come as little surprise to those who followed the Knights' 2008 cross country campaign. Childs-Walker was the team's top runner and placed third overall in the fall's MIAC cross country championships. She once garnered recognition as MIAC women's cross country athlete of the week, receiving the distinction on October 20.

Other accolades reaped by Childs-Walker include turning in Carleton's second best 5000 meter time and best since 2003, spanning the distance in 17:49.49 on February 6<sup>th</sup> against St. Benedict. That time is tops in the MIAC this year, by over 18 seconds.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of February at the Parent's Day Open she ran the 3000 meter race in 10:01.63, the best time in the conference this year.

Alongside Childs-Walker will be the Knights' other freshman phenom, Clare Franco, who, in her first two collegiate meets, has set school records in the 400 and 600 meter dashes. At the Carleton Women's Dual meet on February 6, Franco covered the 400-meter dash in a blistering 58.73 seconds, missing a provisional qualifying time by only 0.03 seconds. It is also the second fastest time run in the MIAC this year. Her sprint into Carleton's record books also includes running the 600 meter race in 1:38.32.

Carleton's hopes of success in mid-distance races will also hinge on the performances of Laura Roach and Taylor Ffitch. Roach was victorious at the Meet of the Hearts, where she earned the conference's third best 1000 meter time of the year. A week later at the Parent's Day Open, Roach recorded the MIAC's fourth fastest mile time of the season, with a time of 5:09.38.

Taylor Ffitch has collected multiple wins in her stellar rookie campaign. Most notably, Ffitch has prevailed in the mile at the Meet of Hearts with a time of 5:18.60. Ffitch also won the 3000 meter race against St. Benedict with a time of 10:39.42, the third fastest in the MIAC.

**Concordia**

**Coach:** Marv Roeske (14th season)

**2008 Championships Finish:** 4th

Concordia Championships Preview

Concordia will try and continue their recent trend of top tier finishes at the MIAC Indoor Championship Meet when they host the meet on Mar. 6-7. The Cobbers finished fourth at last year's conference meet but have posted eight top three finishes in the past 11 years and are the only other school other than St. Thomas to win an indoor championship title.

Once again the Cobbers will have a stellar middle distance and distance crew as well as a deep field team. The only national provisional qualifier so far for the Cobbers is multi-event athlete Leah Kay. She posted a provisional score of 3,314 in the pentathlon and is currently fourth in the country. Kay is also ranked eighth in the long jump and third in the high jump where she has also posted a national provisional mark. The other top Cobber in the MIAC so far this season is Alexa Kleingartner. She is ranked first in the 55-meter hurdles in a time of 8.81.

Concordia athletes that are in the top 10 in the conference include Kristina Bruns in the long jump and triple jump. Tatijana Mueller-Dahlberg in the triple jump as well Kristen Warren in the shot put and Emily Davis in the weight throw. Alyssa Deutschmann in the high jump and Tessa Comstock in the pole vault round out the top 10 field athletes. Kristin Slette is in the top 10 in the 400 meters and Hailey Brenden in the 3000 and 5000 meters.

## **Gustavus**

**Coach:** Tom Thorkelson (10th season)

**2008 Championships Finish:** 2nd

### **Gustavus Championships Preview**

The Gustavus women's indoor track and field team looks to finish near the top of the team standings at the 2009 MIAC Indoor Track and Field Championship title after earning second place at the 2008 Championships.

The Gusties will be led by junior Kaelene Lundstrum (Bird Island, Minn.), the reigning conference champion in the high jump and the pentathlon. One of the top all-around athletes in the MIAC, she is currently ranked in the top five of three events including second in the shot put (42-4 3/4), fourth in the 55-meter hurdles (9.05), and fourth in the high jump at 5-3 1/4.

Gustavus hopes to utilize its depth in the field events to grab several points for the team standings. The Gusties hold three of the top five marks in the league in the shot put as all-conference athlete senior Lisa Brown (Lake Crystal, Minn.) is first at 43-1 followed by Lundstrum in second and sophomore Sam Broderius (Hector, Minn.) in fifth at 39-8 1/2. Two Gusties are also currently seeded in the top five of the weight throw as juniors Anna Bauer (Hastings, Minn.) and Diana Scott (Bristol, Conn.) are second (49-11) and fifth (46-8), respectively. In the long jump, sophomore Janey Helland (Mapleton, Minn.) is currently seeded second with a distance of 16-11 1/2.

Other athletes ranked in the top eight on the MIAC Performance list are returning all-conference pole vaulter junior Meredith Halling (Rochester, Minn.), who is ranked sixth at a height of 10 feet, sophomore Megan Lundgren (Mankato, Minn.), who is sixth in the 600 meters (1:39.96), and junior Becca Bryson (Alden, Minn.) is eighth in the long jump (16-3 3/4).

Gustavus will enter a pair of strong relay teams to the conference meet as the 4x200 relay team of Dani Serbus (So., Franklin, Minn.), Julia Thompson (So., Cannon Falls, Minn.), Sam Frings (Fy., Coleraine, Minn.), and Megan Lundgren is seeded second at 1:50.73, while the 4x400 relay team is seeded fourth at 4:10.27. This group consists of Frings, Abby Karl (So., St. Cloud, Minn.), Janey Helland, and Lundgren.

## **Hamline**

**Coach:** Shawn Johnson-Hipp (3rd season)

## **2008 Championships Finish: 8th**

### **Hamline Championships Preview**

A talented corps of runners lead the 2009 Piper women into the MIAC indoor championships as they look to improve upon their eighth-place finish from 2008.

Distance runner Margot Branigan (Jr., Roseville, Minn.) and sprinter Kameron Argiannis (So., Eden Prairie, Minn.) have led the Pipers with impressive finishes throughout the winter. Branigan most recently won the 5,000 meter race at the University of Minnesota, besting her next closest competitor by nearly ten seconds with a finish of 18:07.68. In the fall, she qualified for cross country nationals, finishing 53<sup>rd</sup>.

Joining Branigan in the distance events will be Freya Fitzer (Sr., North Oaks, Minn.), Jessica Kociscak (So., Anoka, Minn.) and Katie Drinane (Sr., Roseville, Minn.), who have been taking successful fall cross country campaigns and turning them into event wins throughout the indoor season.

Argiannis will lead the sprinters after taking over at the top of the Hamline record books in both the 200-meter dash (27.27) and 600-meter dash (1:37.52) following a break-out winter. In just her first-year on the track in 2008, she won the outdoor MIAC 400-meter hurdles championship while running an NCAA provisional time (63.82).

Veteran Nicole Brohmer (Sr., La Crosse, Wis.) and newcomer Katelyn Frenchick (Fy., Paynesville, Minn.) will also look to add points to improve the Pipers' standing in sprint events.

An athlete with diverse talents, Katelyn Anderson (So., White Bear Lake, Minn.), will make an impact for the Pipers both as a sprinter and in the field events. Anderson holds the Hamline school record in the pole vault, and has been impressive in the long and triple jumps, as well as making her presence felt this winter in the 200-meter dash.

## **Macalester**

**Coach:** Martin Peper (10th season)

## **2008 Championships Finish: 10th**

### **Macalester Championships Preview**

Macalester's lineup has been reduced by study abroad commitments from some top performers, but the Scots are looking for some good performances from several individuals.

Sprinter Emily Matthews (Jr., Fort Collins, Colo.) was fourth last winter in the 55-meter dash and is looking to move up into All-MIAC range in Moorhead. Matthews is joined in the sprints by Maddie Mette (Jr., Burnsville, Minn.) and Mari Mejia (So., Golden Valley, Minn. / St. Louis Park). Mette and Mejia will also help out in the jumps.

The Scots are looking for points in the middle and long-distance races from Tara McCoy (So., Menomonie, Wis.), Libby Tollefson (So., Billings, Mont.) and Emma Swinford (Fy., Columbus, Ohio / Grandview Heights).

## **Saint Benedict**

**Coach:** Robin Balder-Lanoue (10th season)

## **2008 Championships Finish: 5th**

### **Saint Benedict Championships Preview**

The College of Saint Benedict Indoor Track and Field Team is geared up for the MIAC Championship held on March sixth and seventh in Moorhead, MN.

After taking fifth in last year's championship, the Blazers look to crack the top four in the conference with an experienced group of athletes. Notable competitors for the Blazers include senior jumper and co-captain Mary Schletty, who set an NCAA Provisional mark and new school record in the triple jump earlier this season with a jump of 11.69 meters, and junior Alyx Chapman, who also set a new school record in the mile with a time of 5:20.05. Other athletes looking to make a mark in the championship include sophomore sprinters Abby Neigebauer and Jillian Daleiden, sophomore mid-distance runner Ashley Irons, junior jumper Ali Galzki and junior thrower Heidi Golliet.

Overall, Saint Benedict has a very balanced squad that can contribute points in many areas. After already competing with tough competition within the conference earlier in the season, the Blazers feel prepared to make a large impact. And with confidence stemming from a young but experienced team, Saint Benedict is prepared to have successful efforts come through at the MIAC Championships.

## **St. Catherine**

**Coach:** Michael Henderson (3rd season)

**2008 Championships Finish:** 7th

### **St. Catherine Championships Preview**

With a team that has tripled in size since third year coach Mike Henderson took over, the College of St. Catherine track and field team is hoping that a balanced team, with potential point scorers in a variety of event areas, will allow the 2009 Wildcats track and field team to build on the 13 school records they set during the 2008 track season.

The Wildcats will be looking for returning school record holders and MIAC point scorers Sarah Meissner (sprints/hurdles), Greta Sieve (distance), Celest Ventura (throws), Kim and Kayla Engel (Sprints), Amanda Manship (mid-distance) and Sami Larson (throws) to lead a talented group of first year athletes that includes Katie Lawler (sprints), Sam Levercom (sprints), Sydney Malanaphy (hurdles), Cassie Rooney (jumps), and Heidi Sande (mid-distance) to new heights at the MIAC Championships.

## **Saint Mary's**

**Coach:** Shawn McMahon (2nd season)

**2008 Championships Finish:** 12th

### **Saint Mary's Championships Preview**

On the women's side, Teri Heinzen (Marshfield, Wis.), Sara Harstad (Chatfield, Minn.) and Brittany Kuehn (Sauk Rapids, Minn.) were the Cardinals' top point scorers a year ago at the conference championships, and from what head coach Shawn McMahon has seen thus far this season, the trio is primed to pick up where they left off.

"The women will rely heavily on Teri, Sara and Brittany as the main point-scorers," said McMahon, noting that Heinzen was seventh in last year's 200 at the indoor conference meet, and has been virtually unstoppable during this year's indoor season, while Kuehn took 10th in the 800 in the same meet. "The experience that Sara picked up as a freshman (last season) should push her into the top of the MIAC in both the shot and the (20-pound) weight."

"We'll be looking to our young distance and sprint groups to also capitalize on a lot of race experience from a year ago."

## **St. Olaf**

**Coach:** Chris Daymont (26th season)

**2008 Championships Finish:** 9th

### **St. Olaf Championships Preview**

The St. Olaf women's track and field team will compete in the MIAC Indoor Track and Field Championships, held in Moorhead this weekend.

Pole-vaulter, Amie Fillmore, took first in her event in four different meets throughout the season and tied for sixth in the Parents Day Open meet, hosted by the University of Minnesota. Her performances during the Bethel open and the UW-River Fall's Coca Cola Classic earned her provisional qualifications for the NCAA championship meet. After earning her first qualification at the Bethel Open, she was named MIAC's women's field athlete of the week.

Also in the field, triple jumper, Susan Kenzie finished first place as well as sixth in her event in the St. Olaf Invitational and in the Parents Day Open meet respectively.

Sprinters Abby Smith, Callie Knaeble, and Jaime Mosel preformed well throughout the season. Smith won the 800 meter run during two different meets. Knaeble finished third in the 55 meter dash and second in the 200 meter dash in two different races during the Bethel Open. Mosel took a first place in the 400 meter run.

Distance runners Annie Knutson, Jenna Carlson and Katie Duwell, attained respectable achievements. Knutson raced well enough to gain second and third place in the mile and 3000 meter run during the season. She also took second in a 5000 meter run. Duwell took third in one of her 1000 meter races.

## **St. Thomas**

**Coach:** Joe Sweeney (29th season)

**2008 Championships Finish:** 1st

### **St. Thomas Championships Preview**

Coach Joe Sweeney and his team are looking to capture St. Thomas' 10th consecutive MIAC women's indoor track and field championship at this weekend's 12-team competition in Moorhead.

In the 2008 indoor meet in Collegeville, sophomore Nikki Arola had a hand in five victories to lead St. Thomas to a runaway victory. The Tommies set records for points scored (233) and margin of victory (134.5) as they won 12 events and scored in all 18 events they entered.

Sweeney's Tommies also won the 2008 outdoor track and meet, aided by four Arola victories, and won a narrow team victory at last fall's MIAC cross country meet. The Tommies now have won 61 of a possible 79 conference team titles in CC and track in Sweeney's era, including nine in a row since March 2006.

Arola is a threat from the 55 meters to the 400 and on the sprint relay. The Tommies expect big points from thje 600 to the 3,000 races with senior All-American Katie Theisen, junior All-American Erin Sprangers, junior Kelly Russ, and sophomores Raynee DeGrio and Allie Metzler leading the charge.

On the national Division III charts, St. Thomas is seeded fifth in the distance medley relay and eighth in the 4x400, and Theisen (mile) and Arola (400) have strong NCAA provisional times.

In the MIAC indoor season lists, St. Thomas is seeded first in seven events, seeded second in five events, rank third in three events, and rank fourth in nine events.