

2010 MIAC Women's Indoor Track & Field Championship Preview

Posted: Mar 03, 2010

St. Paul, Minn. -- The 2010 MIAC Men's and Women's Indoor Track & Field Championship will take place this Thursday through Saturday, March 4-6 at the Recreation Center at Carleton College in Northfield, Minn.



The 2010 Championships open with the men's and women's pentathlon events taking place on Thursday, March 4. Competition is set to begin at 2 p.m. on Thursday. Track & Field Championship events begin on Friday at 4:30 p.m. and on Saturday at 12 p.m.

Winner of the past 10 MIAC Women's Indoor Titles, St. Thomas enters this season's championship once again as the favorite to hoist the championship trophy on Saturday afternoon. St. Thomas (ranked 15th nationally) will receive stiff competition from Bethel (16th nationally) and last year's runner up Gustavus. Saint Benedict (3rd in 2009), Concordia (5th in 2009) and host Carleton (6th in 2009) will also challenge for strong team finishes.

Returning MIAC individual event champions from 2009 include: St. Thomas senior **Nikki Arola** (55 and 200 meter dash), Carleton sophomore **Clare Franco** (400 meter dash), Bethel senior **Marie Borner** (600 meter dash and mile run), St. Thomas senior **Erin Sprangers** (800 meter run), Carleton sophomore **Simone Childs-Walker** (3000 and 5000 meter run), Saint Benedict sophomore **Julia Renner** (Long Jump), Gustavus senior **Diana Scott** (Weight Throw), Gustavus senior **Kaelene Lundstrum** (High Jump and Pentathlon), and St. Olaf senior **Amie Fillmore** (Pole Vault).

2010 MIAC Indoor Track & Field Championships Website

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Augsburg

Coach: Dennis Barker (16th season)

2009 Championship Finish: 11th (17 points)

Augsburg Championship Preview

Augsburg will be looking to move up in the standings at the 2010 MIAC Indoor Championships. With only one senior on the roster, the Auggies will look to blend new talent with a nice mix of returners. Augsburg's goal in 2010 will be to increase its number of all-conference performers – something the Auggies feel they have the personnel to do.

The sprint events will be the Auggies' strength in 2010. Whitney Holman (SR, New Hope, Minn./Robbinsdale Armstrong HS) and Shanek Telfhia (FY, Chicago, Ill./Gage Park HS) have led the Auggies so far this season, both recording NCAA Indoor Championship provisional times in their respective events. Holman recorded her NCAA provisional time in the 55-meter dash (7.28 seconds) at last weekend's St. Olaf Qualifier and currently has the top time in the MIAC. Holman is also ranked seventh in the MIAC at the 200-meter distance (26.63). Telfhia leads the MIAC in both the 200- and 400-meter distances, with her career-best 400-meter time of 57.58 bettering the NCAA provisional mark and currently ranking her sixth nationally among Division III women. Telfhia is also ranked in the top six in the MIAC in the long jump, with a mark of 5.09 meters (16-8.5)

Hurdler Caroline Senungi (JR, Shoreview, Minn./Mounds View HS) and pole vaulter Brittany Tuberg (FY, Apple Valley, Minn.) will also look to score points for the Auggies at the conference meet. Senungi posted a season-best time of 8.86 seconds at last weekend's St. Olaf Qualifier and is currently ranked second in the conference. Tuberg set the Augsburg school record in the pole vault at the Carleton Meet of the Hearts with a jump of 3.10 meters (10-2) and is currently seeded sixth in the MIAC.

Katie Vrieze (JR, Richfield, Minn.), Amy Opsal (SO, Mankato, Minn. / St. Clair HS) and Chelsey Rice (JR, Foreston, Minn./Milaca High School) will all look to supplement the Auggies in the sprints, while Kacie Bahr (SO, Brainerd, Minn./Brainerd HS) and Jennifer Pulscher (SO, Colorado Springs, Colo./Liberty HS), will be looking to make an impact for the Auggies in the middle distances.



Bethel

Coach: Jim Timp (5th season)

2009 Championship Finish: 4th (79.3 points)

Bethel Championship Preview

Timp believes the 2010 season looks to be a good opportunity to continue with the success that was experienced last year with the women's team finishing in fourth place at the indoor conference meet.

Bethel recently earned a #16 national ranking in the latest USTFCCCA poll, thanks largely to two automatic qualifying times for Marie Borner (Sr., Cottage Grove, Minn.) in the 800-meter and mile runs. Kayla Jelen (Jr., Sioux Falls, S.D.) has been performing well as a middle distance runner, and Michaela Otto (Sr., Woodbury, Minn.) looks to be a strong competitor in the sprints and hurdles.

The coaching staff is very excited about this year's team. 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 squad seems to be poised to move up in the MIAC.



Carleton

Coach: Donna Ricks (17th season)

2009 Championship Finish: 6th (65 points)

Carleton Championship Preview

A pair of sensational sophomores will lead the Knights at this week's MIAC Championships. Simone Childs-Walker and Clare Franco will be the key point earners for the Knights to move up from last year's sixth place finish.

Childs-Walker and Franco have been dominating forces in the MIAC since the beginning of their careers for the Knights. Childs-Walker picked up three All-American awards in her rookie campaign. She finished third in both the Indoor and Outdoor 5,000 meter and eighth in the 10,000 meter at the NCAA Outdoor Championships. As a first-year runner, Franco won the 400-meter dash at the MIAC Indoor Championships. Her time qualified Franco for the NCAA Championship where she finished 12th.

The pair has not suffered a sophomore slump either. Childs-Walker won the 3000-meter race and the mile run in the first meet of the year. She was named MIAC Athlete of the Week for her performance in that meet. Childs-Walker currently has the third-fastest time in the MIAC in the mile run and the top time in both the 3,000 and 5,000-meter races. Her times in the mile and the 5000 are NCAA provisional qualifying times.

Franco also won her first event of the year in the 800-meter race at the Warren Bowlus Open. The next week, she broke her own school record in the 400-meter dash with a time of 58.23 and earned an NCAA provisional qualifying time. Franco also has top-10 times in the MIAC in the 800-meter race, 600-meter dash, and 200-meter dash.

Other Knights to keep an eye for at the MIAC Championships include: Laura Roach, Kaitlin Randolph, Alison Smyth, Kyla Walter, and Amy Elson.

Roach earned two All-MIAC honorable mention awards last year with a pair of fourth-place finishes in the mile and 1000-meter races.

Randolph and Smyth are more talented distance runners for the Knights. Randolph has the eighth-best time in the 600-meter dash and the 1000-meter race to go along with the seventh-best time in the 800-meter race. Smyth owns a pair of top-10 times in the mile and 3000-meter race.

In the field events, most attention for Carleton will be focused on Kyla Walter and Amy Elson. Walter has tied for the ninth-best high jump of the year at 1.52 meters and could easily move up at the MIAC Championship. She is just .03 meters from the fourth-best jump in the conference. After finishing ninth in the pentathlon last year, Elson could move up as she finished fourth at the Meet of the Hearts in mid-February. She is also a top-10 triple jumper for the Knights.

The Knights distance medley relay set a new school record in its final tuneup, posting a time of 12:02.79, a NCAA provisional qualifier.



Concordia

Coach: Marv Roeske (15th season)

2009 Championship Finish: 5th (77.5 points)

Concordia Championship Preview

Concordia brings another deep crew of athletes to the MIAC Indoor Track and Field Championship Meet as they try to continue their recent success at conference indoor meets. The Cobbers have posted two consecutive top five finishes and have also finished in the top three at the meet in eight of the past 12 seasons. They are also the only other school other than St. Thomas to win an indoor championship title.

Like the Cobber men's team, the CC women's squad has a few individual stars that are backed up by a group of consistent athletes that could score multiple points in an event at the MIAC Meet. The top three athletes for the Cobbers this season have been All-American Leah Kay (Sr., Dassel, Minn./Dassel-Cokato HS), sophomore field sensation Tatijana MuellerDahlberg (Fargo, N.D./Oak Grove HS) and all-around athlete Tara Ray (Sr., Darby, Mont.).

Kay has already provisionally qualified for her third consecutive NCAA National Indoor Meet. Kay's total of 3,182 points in the pentathlon is the second highest in the conference this season. Kay also has the second-best height in the high jump (5-02.50) in the MIAC and has a chance to win both events.

MuellerDahlberg has been the biggest surprise for Marv Roeske's this season. She has consistently been jumping at least 36 feet in the triple jump and currently holds the league's best mark in the event with a distance of 36-11.00. That mark, which she posted at the Cobber Open, provisionally qualified her for nationals and she will be looking to improve on that at the conference meet. MuellerDahlberg has also stepped up in the 55-meter dash where she has a season-best time of 7.53. That mark is tied for the fourth best in school history and is in the top seven of the conference this year. To round thins off for MuellerDahlberg, she has also recorded the sixth-best mark in the high jump this year.

Ray has posted quality marks in several events this season. She entered the pentathlon at the NDSU Bison Open on a whim and turned in the fourth-best score in the MIAC this season. She is also in the top 10 in the league in the high jump, long jump and 55-meter hurdles.

The Cobber field athletes will be counted on to garner the majority of the team's points at the conference meet. Joining Kay, MuellerDahlberg and Ray as potential All-Conference winners for the Cobbers will be a trio of juniors. Emily Davis (Litchfield, Minn.), Kristen Warren (Oakes, N.D.) and Alyssa Deutschmann (Hastings, Minn.) have all been consistent performers for CC this season. Davis owns the fifth-best mark in the weight throw (49-3 3/4) this year, while Warren has a chance to finish in the top seven of the shot put and Deutschmann is one of four Concordia athletes to clear the 5-foot mark in the high jump this season.



Gustavus

Coach: Dale Bahr (1st season)

2009 Championship Finish: 2nd (107.3 points)

Gustavus Championship Preview

After finishing runner up the previous two seasons, the Gustavus women's indoor track and field team looks forward to the opportunity to challenge St. Thomas for the conference crown at the 2010 MIAC Indoor Track and Field Championships hosted by Carleton College in Northfield, Minn. First year Head Coach Dale Bahr currently has 15 individuals ranked in the top 10 of the MIAC Performance lists.

Kaelene Lundstrum (Bird Island, Minn.) will look to lead the Gusties, as she is the returning champion in the pentathlon and high jump, while taking third in the 55-meter hurdles last season. Lundstrum is currently ranked first in the high jump (5'4.25") and pentathlon (3468), second in the 55-meter hurdles (8.88), third in the shot put (40' 4.25"), and fourth in the long jump (17' 3.25").

Diana Scott (Bristol, Conn.) will defend her title in the weight throw, entering the meet ranked second (51' 5.50"). Janey Helland, an all-conference performer in the long jump last season, is currently ranked first in the long jump with a leap of 17' 1". Helland also ranks third in both the high jump (5' 2.25") and pentathlon (3011). Sam Broderius (Hector, Minn.) finished third in the shot put last season and is currently ranked first in the shot put with a throw of 42' 2.25".

Abby Karl (St. Cloud, Minn.) will look to score points in the mid-distance events, as she ranks third in the 600-meter dash (1:38.70) and fourth in the 400-meter dash (60.06). Also adding depth in the mid-distance races will be Megan Lundgren (Mankato, Minn.) and Natalie Ristau (St. Paul, Minn.). Lundgren ranks eighth (1:41.77) in the 600-meter run, as Ristau sits behind her in ninth (1:41.93). Beth Hauer (Little Falls, Minn.) and Brooke Beskau (Hastings, Minn) are currently ranked ninth (18:52.66) and tenth (18:57.64), respectively, in the 5000-meter run.

Gustavus will once again be strong in the field events with contributions coming from Becca Bryson (Alden, Minn.), Sarah Baker (Roseville, Minn.), and Allyson Voss (Wausau, Wisc.). Bryson is currently ranked third in the triple jump (35' 1") and seventh in the long jump (16' 7.75"). Baker ranks fourth in the high jump (5' 1"), fifth in the triple jump (17' 1.50"), and seventh in the pentathlon (2442). Allyson Voss has the second best pole vault, clearing 10' 11.75". Also contributing in the field events will be Laura Secor (Stillwater, Minn.) in the pentathlon, Anna Bauer (Hastings, Minn.) in the weight throw, and Lauren Rothschiller in the triple jump (Chaska, Minn.).



Hamline

Coach: Shawn Johnson-Hipp (4th season)

2009 Championship Finish: 8th (54 points)

Hamline Championship Preview

Led by an All-American cross country runner and a pair of sprinters who continue to fell Hamline records, the Hamline University women's track and field team is looking to leap up the MIAC standings at the 2010 championships.

Margot Branigan (Sr., Roseville, Minn.) finished 33rd at cross country nationals this past fall and returns for her final indoor championships. Branigan finished third last year in both the 5,000 and 3,000-meter runs at the championships and looks to improve upon those runs this year.

The Pipers have added depth at the longer distances this season as Jessica Kociscak (Jr., Anoka, Minn.), Sara Holland (Jr., Dousman, Wis.), and Rachel Simmer (Sr., Champlin Park, Minn.) have all had impressive indoor performances and are looking to score points for Hamline.

Sprinter Christina Walker (Fy., Katy, Texas) enters her first conference championships after an impressive debut season in which she twice broke the Hamline school record in the 200-meter dash. The newcomer compliments the success of junior Kameron Argiannis (Jr., White Bear Lake, Minn.), who herself holds several indoor Piper records and has been dancing with breaking more this winter.

Katelyn Anderson (Jr., White Bear Lake, Minn.) put in a pair of all-conference and another two honorable mention performances in the jumps and vaults last year, and the Pipers will look to her to add to their point total again.

In the throws, a pair of Pipers in Robyn Wernberg (Jr., Bemidji, Minn.) and Brenna Coyle (So., Lindstrom, Minn.) have made tremendous improvements over the year and will look to score at the conference meet.



Macalester

Coach: Martin Peper (11th season)

2009 Championship Finish: 12th (5 points)

Macalester Championship Preview

Last year's conference meet team was reduced by several Study Abroad opportunities by some of the team's top standouts, but the Scots will be much stronger at this year's championships. Sprinter Emily Matthews (Sr., Fort Collins, Colo. / Rocky Mountain) and distance runner Erin Lowrey (Sr., Whitefish Bay) are capable of all-conference status to cap off excellent winter campaigns.

Matthews has a good chance of being a finalist and high place-finisher in the 55-meter dash and 200-meter dash, and is ranked in the top five in both. Lowrey broke and 18-year-old school record a couple weeks ago when winning the 5000-meter run at the University of Minnesota Parent's Day Open with an 18:17.10 mark. She is ranked fifth in the MIAC in the 5K.

Maddie Mette (Sr., Burnsville, Minn.) has been one of the MIAC's most consistent long jumpers this winter and looks to make the finals there. Emilie Schur (Sr., Pagosa Springs, Colo.) won the 1000-meter run at the Pre-MIAC Meeting. Kate Rochat (Fy., Portland, Ore. / Cleveland) and Richelle Johnson (Fy., Genoa, Ill. / Genoa-Kingston) are a pair of the top first-year triple jumpers. Shasta Webb (Fy., Los Gatos, Calif.) joins Matthews in the sprints for the Scots.



Saint Benedict

Coach: Robin Balder-Lanoue (11th season)

2009 Championship Finish: 3rd (97.3 points)

Saint Benedict Championship Preview

The College of Saint Benedict track and Field team will compete in the MIAC Indoor Championships, looking to capture their second top-three finish in as many years.

The Blazers will be lead by key returners: Julia Renner, Abby Neigebauer, Caroline Haik, Ali Galzki, Jillian Daleiden, Allison Eckrich, Alyx Chapman, Kaycee Knutson and Heidi Golliet. CSB will also look to top newcomers Daine Beckius, Clare Murn, Danielle Busch and Anna Williams to make an impact.

With the combination of experience and ability that the Blazers possess a top four finish is well within reach.



St. Catherine

Coach: Michael Henderson (4th season)

2009 Championship Finish: 7th (54.5 points)

St. Catherine Championship Preview

After tying the highest point total in school history at the 2009 MIAC Indoor Championships, the Wildcats track and field team hopes to make another exciting run into the record books at the 2010 championships. To do so the team will be looking to their four senior team captains, Samantha Larson, Amanda Manship, Greta Sieve and Celestine Ventura to continue the team's successful season and steady progression.

In the throwing events, Ventura and Larson now hold down the top two spots in St. Kate's history in the shot put and weight throw. They hope to utilize their experience over the past three years to take it one step further and post the best marks of the season at the championships.

On the track, Manship has played a pivotal role for the Wildcats during the past three years. She has been a part of seven school record setting relay teams in everything from the 4x200 to the Distance Medley Relay. She will use those experiences to help guide a young Wildcats sprint core that includes freshman Erin Coughlin and Kelsie Hansen and sophomore Sam Levercom.

In the distance events, during the 2010 indoor season Sieve has added three individual school records to go with the four she set during last outdoor season. Included in those runs was an NCAA Provisional Qualifying mark of 17:33 in 5k. Sieve hopes to use pass along her championship meet experience and expertise to first year distance runners Renee Crepeau, Kelsey Eder and Jessica Rogers.

Along with the senior team captains, juniors Jennifer Ampe, Kristina Popov, Kim Engel and Kayla Engel will also play pivotal roles in the Wildcats fortunes. Ampe and Popov are returning point scorers in the pole vault, and also add relay depth to the team. Meanwhile the Engel twins are some of the top competitors in the MIAC in the long sprints and mid-distance events.

The Wildcats hope this blend of veteran leadership and young energy leads to another successful MIAC Championships.



Saint Mary's

Coach: Shawn McMahon (3rd season)

2009 Championship Finish: 10th (27 points)

Saint Mary's Championship Preview

Teri Heinzen (Marshfield, Wis.) entered her senior season determined to make it her best yet.

And that's exactly what she's doing.

Heinzen has dominated the long jump and 200 competitions this season, and heads into the MIAC Indoor Championships primed to improve on last year's third-place finish in the 200 and seventh-place effort in the long jump.

"We have some pretty high expectations this season," said SMU coach Shawn McMahon. "And we have some individuals who have set some pretty lofty goals for themselves.

"We aren't as deep as we need to be to make any type of run (at a conference championship), but we've got some talented individuals who have the potential to do some real damage this season," predicted McMahon. "Sara Harstad (Chatfield, Minn.) and Teri Heinzen (Marshfield, Wis.) are two that were very close (to qualifying for nationals) a year ago and are looking strong again this year."

If the Cardinals can live up to their potential, McMahon is hoping his squads can climb up a rung or two on the conference ladder.

"Our lack of real depth hurts us in the (conference) points chase," McMahon said. "Our focus at the conference championships is to put together our best performances and, hopefully, we'll be able to pick up our share of (conference) points. To score well, it takes more than a few individuals finishing first or second, it takes a lot of fifth-, sixth- and seven-place finishes as well.

"We aren't ready to go toe-to-toe with the top teams in the conference, but we're inching closer.

"We've got a pretty young group — but a group that has been working so hard," continued McMahon. "As a coach, I know that there's going to be some fruit on the tree to pick later, but right now, we need to do a little pruning to set ourselves up for that harvest in the future."



St. Olaf

Coach: Chris Daymont (27th season)

2009 Championship Finish: 9th (35 points)

St. Olaf Championship Preview

St. Olaf will be led by senior captain Abby Smith, who will be entering the indoor MIAC conference meet in the 1000 meter run with a time of 3:00.88. She will also be entering the mile with a time that is 3 seconds below NCAA provisional qualifying time and is ranked fifth in this event.

Maren Westby will be racing the 3000 meter run, entering with a time of 10:39.82, ranked sixth in the league. Westby will also be running the 5000 meter race for St. Olaf with a time of 18:20.5 which is only .45 away from the school record.

Kathryn Thompson will be competing in the 55 M hurdle, entering with a time of 8.92 which puts her in sixth place in the conference.

St. Olaf will be represented in the triple jump by Susan Kenzie with an entering jump of 10.54m, which is fifth in the MIAC.

Amie Filmore hopes to take another title as her vault of 3.72 is the best in the conference.



St. Thomas

Coach: Joe Sweeney (30th season)
2009 Championship Finish: 1st (161 points)

St. Thomas Championship Preview

The St. Thomas women will attempt to win the program's 11th consecutive team crown at this week's MIAC Indoor Track and Field Championships in Northfield. Gustavus and host Carleton are expected to pose the biggest challenges.

Last year, the Toms held off the runner-up Gusties by a 34-point margin outdoors and by a 54-point margin indoors.

The Toms have captured 47 of the last 53 MIAC team championships contested indoors and outdoors since 1983. St. Thomas men and women have won 100 all-time MIAC team titles in indoor and outdoor track and field.

Coach Joe Sweeney's Tommies will rely on depth and a few dynamic competitors in their title chase.

St. Thomas graduated All-American middle-distance runner Katie Theisen, but has solid depth and will look to score in most of the 21 events.

Sweeney has a few elite athletes to build around:

--Senior All-American Kelly Russ is ranked nationally in the 800, mile and on the distance medley relay.

--Senior All-Americans Nikki Arola (55-200-400-relays) and Erin Sprangers (relays, middle distances) have been dominant MIAC meet performer throughout their careers;

--Junior Megan Honan (weight throw) and senior Laura Janas (55 hurdles) are seeded first in the MIAC in their events.

The Toms have five NCAA provisional or automatic qualifiers. In the MIAC season-best list, UST has 16 athletes or relays ranked in the top-four, including five that are seeded first.

The Tommies have displayed a mental toughness all season as they deal with on-campus construction, which took away their indoor facility and locker rooms and downsized the weight room and training room. Most UST athletes have had to travel to the Minneapolis Lake Street YMCA for early-morning workouts, or to Mendota Heights for throwing workouts. The distance and middle-distance runners have had to deal with icy and snowy paths outdoors for much of the winter.