

2009 MIAC Women's Outdoor Track & Field Championship Preview

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St. Paul, Minn. -- The 2009 Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) Men's and Women's Outdoor Track & Field Championships will take place this Friday and Saturday, May 8-9 at Laird Stadium on the campus of Carleton College in Northfield, 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 fifth consecutive MIAC Outdoor Championship. Gustavus, Concordia, and Hamline will likely pose the biggest threat at stopping St. Thomas' run. While Saint Benedict, Bethel, St. Olaf, and Carleton all have the talent to compete for one of the top spots in the conference. St. Catherine, Saint Mary's, Augsburg, and Macalester will rely on strong individual performances to help them move upward in the team standings.

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

Augsburg

Coach: Dennis Barker (15th season)

2008 Championships Finish: 11th

Augsburg Championships Preview

The Augsburg College women's track and field team looks to move up the point standings at the 2009 MIAC Outdoor Track and Field Championship after earning 11th place at the 2008 Championships.

The Auggies will be led by newcomer Caroline Senungi (FY, Shoreview, Minn. / Mounds View HS), who earned all-conference honorable mention honors in the 55 meter hurdles at the indoor conference meet and is currently seeded third in the 100 meter hurdles with a time of 15.69 seconds. There is only 0.07 separating the top three competitors in this event, so look for Senungi to challenge for the title.

Whitney Holman (JR, New Hope, Minn. / Robbinsdale Armstrong HS) will lead the Auggies in the sprints. At the indoor conference meet in March, Holman earned all-conference and all-conference honorable-mention honors in the 55 and 200 meters. She is currently ranked sixth and ninth in the 100 and 200 meters respectively and will be looking to score points in both events.

Katie Vrieze (SO, Richfield, Minn. / Richfield HS), Kacie Bahr (FY, Brainerd, Minn. / Brainerd HS) and Sadie Dietrich (SR, Luverne, Minn. / Luverne HS) will all look to compete for the Auggies in the 200 and 400 meter races, while teammate Amy Jo Opsal (FY, Mankato, Minn. / St. Clair HS) will be looking to run a solid race in the 400 meter hurdles.

In the field events, Gaby Hamerlinck (JR, St. Paul, Minn. / Highland Park HS) and Erin Leyden (SO, Glen Ellyn, Ill. / Glenbard South HS) will look represent the Auggies in the high jump and hammer throw respectively. The 4x400 meter relay team of Bahr, Opsal, Dietrich and Vrieze will also look to run well and score points for the Auggies.

Bethel

Coach: Jim Timp (4th season)

2008 Championships Finish: 6th

Bethel Championships Preview

Head Coach Jim Timp believes the 2009 season looks to be a good opportunity to improve on last year's sixth place at the outdoor conference meet. The women's squad is led by four captains: Marie Borner (Sr., Cottage Grove, Minn.), who finished third at the outdoor national meet in the 1500 meter run and has earned an automatic qualifying time in the 800 meter and 1500 meter runs this year 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 has been knocking on the door of an NCAA provisional time in the 800 meter and the 1500 meter; and Michaela Otto (Jr., Cottage Grove, Minn.). Amy Neubauer (So., Rogers, Minn.) and Kelly Frost (So., Bemidji, Minn.) are athletes to watch in field 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 in the MIAC.

Carleton

Coach: Donna Ricks (16th season)

2008 Championships Finish: 8th

Carleton Championships Preview

Carleton's runners will provide the majority of points for the Knights this season. The team has at least one runner with a top-ten time in the MIAC in nearly every race. Simone Childs-Walker (Fy./Seattle, Wash./Lakeside) leads an impressive group of Knight distance runners. She third at the NCAA Indoor Championships in the 5000-meter run, earning All-America Honors. She owns the top-MIAC mark this season by over a minute in the 10000-meter run and the second-best time in the 5000-meter run. Both times are NCAA provisional qualifying standards. Fellow Knight Karen Campbell (Sr./Rochester, N.Y./Brighton) has the next-best time in the 10000-meter run.

In her first season competing in the steeplechase, Laura Roach (Jr./Lakeville, Minn./Lakeville North) posted the second-best time in the conference and has a pair of victories this spring. She also possesses the sixth-best time in the 1500-meter run and the fourth-best 5000-meter time in the MIAC. Taylor Ffitch (Fy./Portland, Ore./St. Mary's Academy) is also in the top-ten in both the 5000 and 10000-meter runs.

Like Childs-Walker, first-year runner Clare Franco (Brunswick, Maine) has built on the success she had during the indoor track season. She finished 12th in the 400-meter dash at the NCAA Indoor Championships and has top-four times in the 200-meter dash, 400-meter dash and 400-meter hurdles. Her 400-meter dash time of 57.49 seconds is also a NCAA provisional time.

Jill Merkle (Fy./Wayzata, Minn./Hopkins) owns the fifth-best time in the 100-meter hurdles and is just .29 seconds behind the best runner.

Kelly Lovett (So./Portland, Ore./Lincoln) should be the Knights top point contributor in the field events. She broke the school record while recording a NCAA provisional mark in the javelin. Lovett has won the event twice this season.

Concordia

Coach: Marv Roeske (14th season)

2008 Championships Finish: 3rd

Concordia Championships Preview

In order to stay in the top five the Cobbers will need big performances from several sophomores and a quality from the entire meet.

Concordia enters the conference meet on the heels of two stellar performances at the MIAC heptathlon last weekend. All-American Leah Kay (Jr., Dassel, Minn./Dassel-Cokato HS) finished second at the heptathlon and provisionally qualified for the national meet in the process. Fellow junior Tara Ray (Darby, Mont.) placed fifth in the event and gave the Cobbers valuable team points.

The Cobbers' points at the conference meet will come from a mixture of track events and field events. Concordia's field athletes will once again have the prospect of producing the most national-level marks. Besides the heptathlon, Kay is currently ranked in the top eight in the high jump, javelin and 100-meter hurdles. Her throw of 130-02 in the javelin at the Drake Relays provisionally qualified Kay for the national meet in her second event.

The javelin once again appears to be the best event for Concordia as they have five athletes listed in the top 10. Besides Kay, the sophomore trio Kristen Warren (Oakes, N.D.), Katherine Brott (Deer Lodge, Mont./Powell County HS) and Sarah Peterson (Moorhead, Minn.) and freshman Erica Holo (Fargo, N.D./Fargo South HS) all could score team points for CC. Warren is also ranked seventh in the shot put.

Another second-year athlete, Emily Davis (Litchfield, Minn.), has the chance to provisionally qualify for nationals in a pair of events. She is ranked second in the hammer throw, and her mark of 151-09.00 is only eight inches shy of the national provisional mark. In the discus she is seeded fourth and has a season best of 133-11 which is just under 5.5 feet away from the provisional mark.

Senior Kristina Bruns (Eagan, Minn.) leads the jump crew. She is currently second in the triple jump and ninth in the long jump. Alyssa Deutschmann (So., Hastings, Minn.) gives the Cobbers a second threat in the high jump she has already cleared 5-01.75 this season and is seeded fifth.

On the running side of things, sophomore Hailey Brenden (Rothsay, Minn.) and senior Brittney Christianson (Glenburn, N.D.) hold the best chance for a Cobber event win. Brenden finished second in the 10,000 meters last season and, in the process, shattered the school record. This year she is ranked fourth in the event entering the meet. Christianson has had a terrific senior season and is seeded seventh in the 3000-meter steeplechase and 11th in the 800 meters.

The Cobbers will also be looking to score points in both hurdle races. The CC heptathlete duo of Kay and Ray are both ranked in the top nine of the 100-meter and 400-meter hurdles. Alexa Kleingartner (So., West Fargo, N.D.) is also ranked ninth in the 100-meter hurdles.

Concordia head coach Marv Roeske will be hoping all his sophomores and team depth can extend CC's string of top five finishes.

Concordia's women's track and field team enters the MIAC Championship Meet projected to finish fifth which, if the projection holds out, would make it 20 straight seasons the Cobbers have finished in the top five at the conference outdoor meet.

Gustavus

Coach: Tom Thorkelson (10th season)

2008 Championships Finish: 2nd

Gustavus Championships Preview

The Gustavus Adolphus women's outdoor track and field team is poised to challenge for the 2009 MIAC Outdoor Track and Field Championship title with one of the strongest contingents fielded by Coach Tom Thorkelson. The question is whether its depth in field events paired with key results in track events will be enough to overtake St. Thomas.

Senior Lisa Brown (Lake Crystal, Minn.) will lead the Gusties as the two-time NCAA javelin champion looks to finish her career as a four-time conference champion in the event. Brown, who ranks second in Division III in the javelin (161-0), has emerged as one of the premier all-around throwers in the conference as she is seeded second in the shot put (43-4 ½) and fifth in the discus (125-10). Junior Kaelene Lundstrum (Bird Island, Minn.) will travel to Northfield to defend her title in the high jump, an event in which she is seeded first at 5-6 1/2. Lundstrum is also expected to challenge for championships in several other events, including the heptathlon, the 100 hurdles, and the shot put, all of which she ranks in the top five in the conference. Sophomore Sam Broderius (Hector, Minn.), who has improved her marks each week, is a threat to win three throwing events as she is seeded first in the shot put (45-3 ¾) and the discus (144-8) and fourth in the hammer throw (144-3). Juniors Diana Scott (Bristol, Conn.) and Anna Bauer (Hastings, Minn.) provide additional depth in the throwing events as they are seeded third (145-11) and seventh (142-6), respectively, in the hammer throw.

Gustavus will also contend for event titles in three other field events and one track event. Sophomore Janey Helland (Mapleton, Minn.) has recorded the top conference mark in the long jump with a distance of 17-9 and is also seeded seventh in the 400 hurdles (68.13). Returning all-conference hurdler senior Aryn Bell (Eden Prairie, Minn.) is ranked first in the 100 hurdles with a time of 15.62. Junior pole vaulter Meredith Halling (Rochester, Minn.) and senior triple jumper Laura Lynch will vie for championships are seeded second (10-8) and third (35-9 1/4), respectively.

Other athletes ranked in the top eight on the MIAC Performance list are sophomore Brooke Beskau (Hastings, Minn.), who is fifth in the 10,000 meters (38:54.94), senior Elizabeth Pringle (Northfield, Minn.), who is fifth in the 400 meters (59.29), sophomore Megan Lundgren (Mankato, Minn.), who is fifth in the long jump (16-11 1/4) and sophomore Laura Secor (Stillwater, Minn.), who is sixth in the 400 hurdles (67.26).

Hamline

Coach: Shawn Johnson-Hipp (3rd season)

2008 Championships Finish: 4th

Hamline Championships Preview

The Piper women's track and field team heads into the outdoor championships with talented corps of runners lead the team, much as they did during the indoor season.

2008 cross country nationals competitor, distance runner Margot Branigan (Jr., Roseville, Minn.), has continued to lead the team, racing to an NCAA provisional qualifying time in the 10,000-meter run. She is also just shy of the provisional time at both the 1500-meter and 5,000-meter distances by slightly more than a second in each event.

Sophomore sprinter Kameron Argiannis (So., Eden Prairie, Minn.) returns to defend her 2008 championship in the 400-meter hurdles, which she won while running an NCAA provisional time. She holds the fastest time in the conference in that event thus far this spring.

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 run MIAC top-fifteen times on the track this season.

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. They are joined by Marreya Bailey (Jr., Maple Grove, Minn.), who joins the team for the outdoor season after spending her winter in the pool for the Pipers.

Another two-sport athlete who missed the indoor season is Lynn Robohm (Fy., Rosemount, Minn.). The sprinter competed for the Piper gymnastics team over the winter, but has posted the sixth-fastest time in the conference in the 100-meter hurdles this spring.

Katelyn Anderson (So., White Bear Lake, Minn.) has continued to 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 in the 200-meter dash.

Last year the Pipers improved upon their previous season's outdoor results by two places with their fourth-place finish. With the addition of talented two-sport athletes to the spring roster, and the return of several decorated leaders on the track, a young Piper team will look to continue that streak of improvement at the 2009 championships.

Macalester

Coach: Martin Peper (10th season)

2008 Championships Finish: 12th

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.

One Scot with a good chance of scoring team points in the long jump and triple jump is Maddie Mette (Jr., Burnsville, Minn.). Mette won the long jump at the Macalester Invitational and is currently ranked eighth in the conference.

She's also 11th on the triple jump performance list.

Emily Matthews (Jr., Fort Collins, Colo.) is an All-MIAC sprinter and could be heard from in the 200-meter and 400-meter dash events. Audrey Mills (Fy., Marine, Minn. / Forest Lake) has potential to score in the high jump.

Macalester is well-represented in the middle distance races by Tara McCoy (So., Menomonie, Wis.) in the 800 and Emma Swinford (Fy., Columbus, Ohio / Grandview Heights) in the 1500.

Saint Benedict

Coach: Robin Balder-Lanoué (10th season)

2008 Championships Finish: 5th

Saint Benedict Championships Preview

The College of Saint Benedict outdoor track and field team looks to build on a fifth place finish from last year's championships and crack the top three. The Blazers are very balanced, with top competitors in the jumps, sprints, distance and relays.

Senior Mary Schletty and first-year Julia Renner have had impressive seasons competing in the long, triple, and high jumps.

Sophomore Abby Neigebauer has led the way for the Blazers sprinters, consistently placing high in the 100 and 200 meter dashes. Sophomore Jillian Daleiden has also made a splash by faring well in the 400 meter dash.

Senior Maggie Donahue has been one of the top performers in the conference in the 3000 meter steeplechase, junior Alyx Chapman has competed well in the 5000 meter run, and first-year Kaycee Knutson is towards the top of the conference in the 10,000 meter run.

The relays have also been strong for the Blazers, placing well in the 4x100, 4x400 and 4x800 meter relays.

Overall, the Blazers present a strong team that can score points in a variety of ways. A top three finish is quite feasible as the Blazers hope to stir things up at the championships.

St. Catherine

Coach: Michael Henderson (3rd season)

2008 Championships Finish: 9th

St. Catherine Championships Preview

So far this season the Wildcats track and field team has set ten St. Kate's school records, including four in the past three weeks. That, coupled with the fact that during the past indoor season the team matched the highest point total in the history of the program, there is reason to believe that the 2009 MIAC Outdoor Track and Field Championships could once again be a successful one for Coach Henderson's young squad.

Among those expected to contribute to the team's success will be the team's only two seniors, Sarah Meissner (sprints) and Kristie Bronson (distance). Both are four year conference meet competitors whose contributions to the team extend well beyond the times they post on the track, and they will be hoping to make their last MIAC meet their most memorable one.

Joining Bronson and Meissner and helping to take the program to new heights will be a core group of underclassman in a variety of event areas. Juniors Sami Larson (throws), Amanda Manship (mid-distance), Greta Sieve (distance), and Celest Ventura (throws) will team up with sophomores Jennifer Ampe (pole vault/sprints), Kayla Engel (mid-distance), Kim Engel (Sprints), Katie Lawler (sprints), Kristina Popov (pole vault) and first year student-athletes Sam Levercom (sprints), Sydney Malanaphy (hurdles), and Heidi Sande (mid-distance) in trying to continue to rewrite the Wildcats record books.

Saint Mary's

Coach: Shawn McMahon (2nd season)

2008 Championships Finish: 10th

Saint Mary's Championships Preview

Teri Heinzen (Marshfield, Wis.) has been making plenty of waves during the outdoor season, and Saint Mary's University track and field coach Shawn McMahon doesn't expect that to change when Heinzen hits the track for the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Outdoor Championships.

"Teri's been have a great season," understated McMahon of his multi-talented junior, who has been a force to reckon with in the sprints, as well as the long and triple jump. "She had a really solid indoor season and has just picked up right where she left off."

Heinzen placed third in the 200, fourth in the 55 and seventh in the long jump in the MIAC Indoor Championships and has been sharp all spring.

And Heinzen hasn't been alone in the SMU spotlight.

Sara Harstad (Chatfield, Minn.) has also had a solid spring in the shot put and hammer throw, while Emily Dee (Racine, Minn.) has seen her 1,500 time continue to drop in preparation for the conference championships.

"I'd love to see us jump up a place or two (in the conference standings)," McMahon said. "And if we perform the way we are capable, that's a very realistic possibility."

St. Olaf

Coach: Chris Daymont (26th season)

2008 Championships Finish: 7th

St. Olaf Championships Preview

Behind pole vaulter Amie Fillmore and a group of distance runners, the Oles enter this weekend's MIAC championships in search of a solid performance.

Fillmore has multiple wins in the vault, including a spring-best 3.70 meter effort at the St. Olaf Invitational in mid April, a vault that ranked third in Division III at the time.

The team will also look to steeplechase runner Maren Westby and the senior distance duo of Annie Knutson and Jenna Carlson. Abby Smith, who has a strong resume of 1500 finishes, could score as well.

The Oles could also get points from Kathryn Thompson, who was third at the Manitou Classic in the 400 hurdles.

In field events, the Oles will lean on jumper Susan Kenzie and thrower Yevette Willaert.

St. Thomas

Coach: Joe Sweeney (29th season)

2008 Championships Finish: 1st

St. Thomas Championships Preview

Coach Joe Sweeney and his Tommies are looking to capture the MIAC women's outdoor track and field championship for the 23rd time in 25 seasons at this weekend's 12-team competition in Northfield.

On the conference season-best list, the Toms came into May ranked first in nine events, second in seven, and third in eight events. They expect a good battle at the top from Gustavus, which boasts a strong field-event crew. In fact, Gustavus takes an 18-point lead on UST into the meet after the heptathlon.

In the 2008 outdoor meet at Hamline, Sweeney's Tommies used 14 victories, including four by All-American Nikki Arola, to post a 106-point victory over second-place Gustavus.

St. Thomas is looking to sweep the MIAC cross country, indoor track and outdoor track team titles for the third year in a row. The Tommies now have won 62 of a possible 80 conference team titles in CC and track in Sweeney's era, including 10 in a row since March 2006.

Arola is a threat from the 100 meters to the 400 and on the sprint relays. The Tommies expect big points from the 800 to the 3,000 races with senior All-American Katie Theisen, junior All-American Erin Sprangers, junior All-American Kelly Russ, and sophomores Raynee DeGrio and Allie Metzler leading the charge. UST will look to score big relay points as favorites in the 4x800, 4x100 and 4x400.

On the national Division III charts, St. Thomas has one automatic qualifier and 13 provisional qualifiers. Theisen is ranked first in the steeplechase and fifth in the 1,500 meters; Arola (400), Sprangers and Russ (800) have strong NCAA provisional times.

UST won the distance medley at the Drake Relays – the conference's first relays win at Drake in 77 years. They also took second in Drake's 4x800.