

2012 MIAC Women's Swimming & Diving Championship Preview

Posted: Feb 14, 2012

MINNEAPOLIS -- The University of Minnesota Aquatic Center will again play host to one of the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference's most popular event as the 2012 MIAC Swimming and Diving Championships prepare to return to Minneapolis this Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Feb. 16-18.

There will be a total of six sessions over the three days, with both a morning and an evening session each day. The morning sessions - each starting at 10:30 a.m. - will feature preliminary races and diving, followed by event finals each evening beginning at 6:30 p.m. Doors will open at 9 a.m. for each morning session and at 5:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday. The doors for Saturday's final session will open at 3 p.m.

As has been the norm in recent years, the Gustavus women's team ended up pulling away from the field a year ago to claim their fourth title in five years. The Gusties racked up 792 total points to distance themselves from St. Olaf, which finished second with 668. Carleton edged St. Thomas for third place a year ago, 484 to 454.5, with St. Catherine (344) also narrowly beating out Saint Benedict (336.5) for the final spot in the top five. Concordia was a solid seventh with 237 points and Macalester (172), Saint Mary's (116), Augsburg (56) and Hamline (18) rounded out the rest of the field.

With 2011 MIAC Swimmer-of-the-Year **Kale**

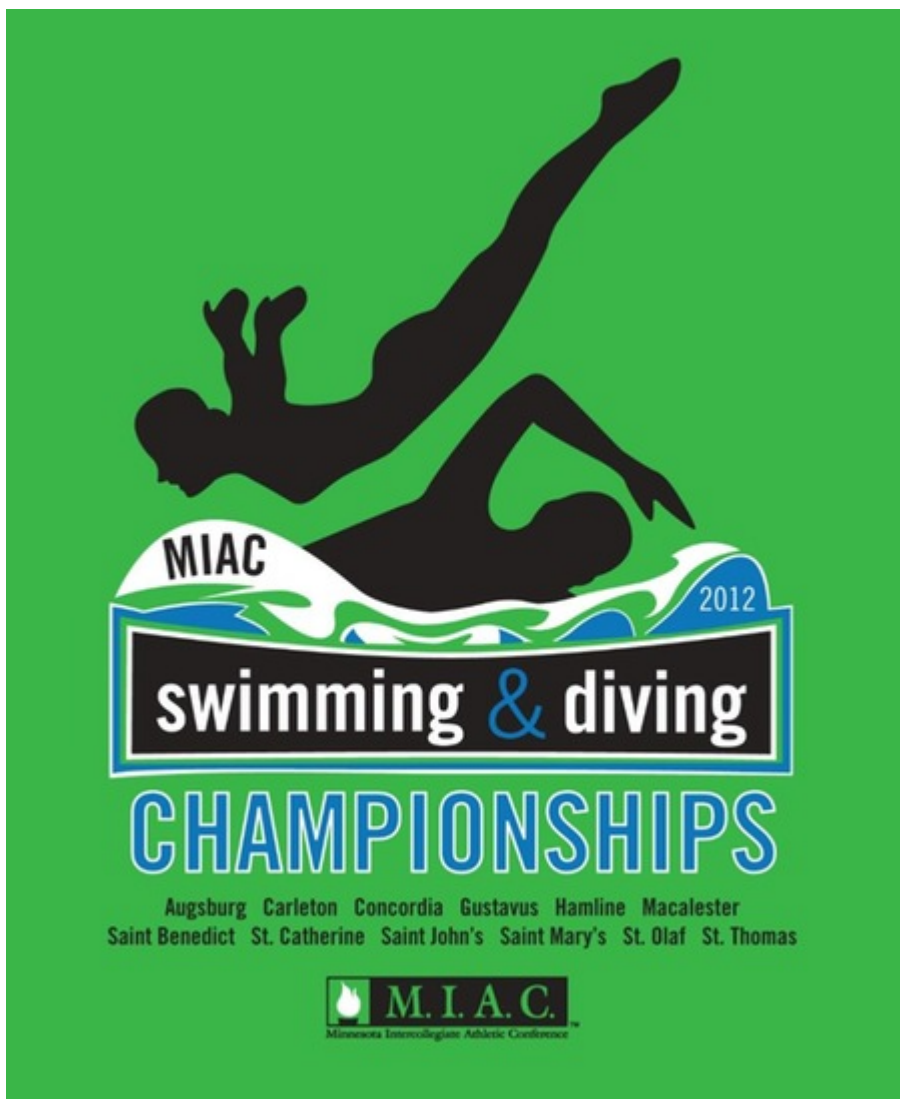
Zicafoose of Carleton graduated, the top candidates to replace her as the meet's top swimmer will likely be a trio of Gusties. **Alissa Tinklenberg** returns as the defending champion in the 1,650-yard freestyle, and she has the top time in the MIAC this season in the 500-yard freestyle as well as the 100- and 200-yard backstroke. Teammate **Steph Korba** will try to win her third-straight title in the 100-yard butterfly, and she enters the meet with the top time in the 200-yard butterfly in 2012. Meanwhile, **Kelsey Lucia** holds this season's top time in the 50- and 100-yard freestyle races, and she is the defending champ in the 50.

In addition, the Gusties have also added talented freshman **Jennifer Strom** to their loaded lineup. Strom has this season's top times in the 200-yard breaststroke and 400-yard individual medley. In addition to all its top individual entries, Gustavus has the top time in four of the five relay events heading into the MIAC Championships. If coach **Jon Carlson's** squad swims up to expectations, the Gusties will be heavy favorites to claim their third consecutive title, and fifth in six years.

The top contenders to unseat the two-time defending team champs are St. Olaf and St. Thomas. The Oles bring back decorated veterans **Meghan Weiss** - another potential Swimmer-of-the-Year candidate - and **Lindsey Lee**. Weiss is the defending champ in the 200- and 500-yard freestyle, and this year she ranks first in the 200 and second in the 500 heading into the meet. Lee is the defending 100-yard breaststroke champion, and the Oles also hold the league's best time in the 800-yard freestyle relay in 2012.

Meanwhile, St. Thomas' swimming hopes have been bolstered by a talented first-year trio. Tommie freshmen **Elise Guenther**, **Emily Punyko** and **Mariann Kukielka** have adapted swimmingly to the collegiate level, as Guenther holds the MIAC's top time in the 1,650-yard freestyle, Punyko in the 100-yard breaststroke and Kukielka in the 100-yard butterfly.

Other names to know for this week's event include Saint Benedict's **Ellen Dean** and St. Catherine's **Steffanie Jurusik**. Dean delivered one of the top highlights of the meet a year ago when she won the 200-yard butterfly with a time that broke both the MIAC overall and meet records, and Jurusik enters the championships as the No. 1 seed in the 200-yard individual medley thanks to her top time in 2012.



On the diving board, the big question will be whether or not a strong field can unseat St. Catherine's **Sarah Moody**. The Wildcats' senior dominated the diving events a year ago, sweeping the conference titles on the 1-meter and 3-meter boards en route to MIAC Diver-of-the-Year honors. However, women's diving will be a can't-miss event this week with Macalester's **Renee Jordan** and St. Thomas' **Jennifer Easton** providing Moody with top-flight competition on both boards.

A year ago, St. Catherine coaches **Shana Erickson** and **Nicole Hempler** shared the MIAC Swimming Coaches-of-the-Year honor after guiding the Wildcats to their impressive showing at the MIAC Championships, while Carleton's **Gabe Korteum** received MIAC Diving Coach-of-the-Year honors.

Augsburg College and Carleton College are serving as this year's host institutions. Commemorative T-shirts were available via presale through each participating team, and Augsburg College does have some extra shirts for sale for anyone who missed the presale. In order to reserve a T-shirt, email Augsburg Assistant Athletic Director **Kelly Anderson Diercks** at: diercks@augsborg.edu and indicate the quantity and sizes (S-XL). T-shirts are \$15 each and will be available for pick-up at the event.

Tickets are available at either a single-session rate, or all-session passes will also be available for purchase for fans who plan to attend the entire event. Single session admission is \$8 for adults and \$4 for students, while the all-session passes cost \$40 for adults and \$20 for students. This year, the price of admission includes a heat sheet at each session. MIAC sport passes will be accepted for admittance. No other passes or discounts will be honored. Due to construction at the U of M, the only working entrance to the facility will be on the University Ave. side.

As in years past, all six sessions will be broadcast live online thanks to Webcast America ([click here](#)). Fans will also be able to watched archived video of each session following the event and purchase DVDs of the broadcasts via Webcast America's site. There will also be "live" results available online with results updated shortly after the conclusion of each event for fans following the action from afar.

The MIAC has an exclusive Web site for the 2012 MIAC Swimming & Diving Championships. The site features the complete event schedule, psych sheet, ticket information, venue information and a map, as well as links to the live broadcast and stats. The site will be constantly updated throughout the event with recaps, photos and more.

Helpful links:

2012 MIAC Swimming & Diving Championships Home Page
[Webcast America's Live Broadcast](#)
MIAC Women's Swimming & Diving Home Page
[2012 MIAC Men's Swimming and Diving Championship Preview](#)

Listed below are team-by-team previews for all 11 MIAC teams competing in the 2012 MIAC Swimming & Diving Championships.

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Augsburg

Coach: Kasi Clauson Lange (2nd season)

2011 Championship Finish: 10th (56 points)

Augsburg Championship Preview

Under second-year head coach Kasi Clauson Lange, the Augsburg College women's swimming team will have a solid chance to set several team milestones at this weekend's Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Championships at the University of Minnesota Aquatic Center.

Augsburg will have 14 entries in seven events with six swimmers -- three first-years, a sophomore, junior and senior -- this weekend, to go along with fielding entries in five relays. Augsburg has a chance to improve on last year's 10th-place finish -- its best-ever team finish at the conference meet -- and possibly eclipse its conference point record total of 81, set at the 2005 championships. This is Augsburg's ninth season of its women's swimming program.

Three Auggies are entered in three events each -- Kelsey Hlavac (SO, Carlisle, Pa./Cumberland Valley HS), Elizabeth Hilgendorf (FY, Tomahawk, Wis.) and Abby Novak (JR, Aurora, Minn./Mesabi East HS).

Hlavac is ranked 21st on the pre-tournament psych sheet for the 1,650-yard freestyle, with a top time this season of 20:22.86. At last year's conference championships, she swam the second-fastest 1,650 time in school history (19:28.45). Hlavac is also entered in the 500-yard freestyle and the 200-yard freestyle.

Hilgendorf has the Auggies top times this season in the 50-yard freestyle (27.12 seconds) and 100-yard freestyle (1:00.14), and she is also swimming in the 200-yard freestyle this weekend. Novak has the team's top time in the 100-yard backstroke (1:10.34) and is also competing in the 50-yard freestyle and 100-yard freestyle.

Maggie Royce (FY, Watertown, Minn./Watertown-Mayer HS) has the team's top times this season in both the 200-yard freestyle (2:10.50) and 500-yard freestyle (5:53.16). Elianna Bier (FY, St. Paul, Minn./Highland Park HS) has the team's top time in the 200-yard backstroke (2:33.75) and is also entered in the 100-yard backstroke, and Samantha Hebzynski (SR, Maple Grove, Minn.), the team's lone senior, is entered in the 200-yard backstroke (2:34.68).

Augsburg will also compete in five relays this weekend. The Auggies 800-yard freestyle relay is ranked ninth among the conference's 11 swimming teams (9:07.96), while the 200-yard freestyle relay (1:52.22) and 400-yard freestyle relay (4:04.96) are each ranked 10th.



Carleton

Coach: Andy Clark (19th season)

2011 Championship Finish: 3rd (484 points)

Carleton Championship Preview

The Carleton College women's swimming and diving team has finished in the top three at the MIAC Championships every year since 1995. Several Knights will need to perform at a top level for that streak to continue.

Molly Spence (Jr./Tacoma, Wash./Woodrow Wilson) earned All-MIAC distinction after finishing second in the 1,650-yard freestyle last year and has the second-fastest time in the conference this season. She earned all-conference honors two years ago in the 500-yard freestyle.

Carleton will look for points from senior Annie Metcalf (Bath, Maine/Morse), who is seeded second in both the 100- and 200-yard backstroke and owns the sixth-best time in the 400-yard individual medley.

Sophie Pilhofer (Jr./Inver Grove Heights, Minn./Visitation) holds the second-fastest time in the conference this year in the 50-yard freestyle and finished just short of All-MIAC honors with a fourth-place result last year. She is ranked fourth in the 100-yard butterfly and sixth in 100-yard freestyle

With a breakout performance at the Minnesota Challenge meet, Erin McDuffie (Jr./Anchorage, Alaska/Service) holds the MIAC's third-best time in the 50-yard freestyle and is now ranked fourth in the conference for both the 100- and 200-yard freestyle races. Milana Socha (So./Chesterton, Ind./Chesterton) is now listed among the conference leaders in the three shortest freestyle races.

The team will look to score big points in the freestyle relays once again as the Knights hold this season's second-best times at the 200-, 400-, and 800-yard distances. Pilhofer, McDuffie, and Socha earned All-MIAC honors last season as part of the third-place 200 free relay. The longest relay race saw Spence, McDuffie, and Socha help Carleton to another third-place result.

This year, Maggie Alexander (Sr./Tigard, Ore./Tualatin) will round out the lineup for all three freestyle relays. She ranks among the top 10 times in five individual events: 200 and 500 free, 100 and 200 backstroke, and 100 butterfly.

Diver Austen Chase (Sr./San Antonio, Texas/International School) scored on both boards at last year's conference championship.



Concordia

Coach: Julie Lucier (13th season)

2011 Championship Finish: 7th (237 points)

Concordia Championship Preview

The question for the Concordia women's swimming and diving team at this year's MIAC Championship Meet will be, "which athlete will step out of the shadows and into the spotlight?"

Last year senior Katie Coleman used the conference meet to set four school records and become the team's star of the weekend. After another solid season of dual meets and multiple-team invitationals, there are plenty of Cobber athletes just waiting to shed the role of understudy and become the lead player in another championship meet drama.

The Cobbers will have five swimmers that will participate in three individual events at the conference meet over the course of the weekend. Adva Aharonovich (Kiryat, Israel), Kelsey Appert (So., Fergus Falls, Minn.), Jasmine Hanson (So., Albert Lea, Minn.), Alexis Phillbrick (Fr., Mundelein, Ill.) and Hannah Winge (Fr., Fargo, N.D.) will all have a trio of chances in individual events to post career-best and Concordia all-time list times.

The Concordia distance corps will once again have the best chance to shine at the MIAC Meet. Last year Coleman set the school records in the 500 and 1000-yard freestyle and this year the top times could be turned in during the distance freestyle events. Philbrick is ranked in the top 20 in the 1650-yard freestyle while Hanson and Winge and locked in the top 25 in the event.

The backstroke events could also be an area of success for the Cobbers. Advharonovich and Greta Titus (St. Cloud, Minn.) are swimming both the 100-yard and 200-yard backstroke events and have great opportunities to cut significant time off their season best marks.

As in years past, the Cobber diving crew has a chance to score big points at the meet. Molly Hansvick (Sr., Litchfield, Minn.), Allison Hall (Sr., Eagan, Minn.) and Cindy Moss (Jr., Eagan, Minn.) are all ranked in the top 15 in the 1-meter and 3-meter 11-dive scores. Hansvick, who finished fifth in the 1-meter and ninth in the 3-meter events last year, is currently ranked fifth in both the 1-meter and 3-meter events.



Gustavus

Coach: Jon Carlson (21st season)

2011 Championship Finish: 1st (792 points)

Gustavus Championship Preview

The Gustavus women's swimming and diving team will go for the three-peat at the 2012 MIAC Swimming and Diving Championships held Feb. 17-18 at the Aquatic Center on the campus of the University of Minnesota. The Gusties enter this season's conference meet winners of four of the last five MIAC Championships.

Gustavus returns to the Aquatic Center pool with 2011 All-Conference returners Serena Elthon (Sr., Faribault, Minn.), Steph Korba (Sr., Lakeville, Minn.), Kelsey Lucia (Jr., St. Cloud, Minn.), Sarah Hund (Jr., Willmar, Minn.), Alissa Tinklenberg (So., Willmar, Minn.), Laura Drake (So., Mendota Heights, Minn.), and Brogan Barr (So., Pueblo West, Colo.).

Alissa Tinklenberg, the 2011 MIAC Champion in the 1650 freestyle, ranks inside the top-six in eight different events according to the most recent top individual times in the MIAC put out on Feb. 7. Tinklenberg is the team's top competitor in the distance freestyle and backstroke races. She ranks 1st in the 500 free (5:07.29) and third in the 1650 free (18:15.92), while turning in the top time in both the 100 (58.04) and 200 backstroke (2:05.44).

Kelsey Lucia and Steph Korba are Gustavus' other two returning individual event champions from last season. Lucia will look to defend her title in the 50-free, ranking first with a time of 24.10 entering the event. She also ranks first in the 100 free with a time of 52.66. Korba, who took home gold in the 100 butterfly last year, returns as the team's top butterflyer. She ranks first in the 200 (2:11.14), second in the 100 (59.15). Korba will also look to supply points in the IM, ranking fourth in the 400 IM (4:50.12).

Other 2011 All-MIAC returners turning in top times leading up to the event include Sarah Hund in the 50 free (5th, 24.76), and Laura Drake in the 100 (4th, 1:09.05) and 200 breaststroke (6th, 2:35.54).

Rookies also expected to make a splash at their first MIAC Championships are Jennifer Strom (Rochester, Minn.) and Katie Olson (Zimmerman, Minn.). Strom enters the meet as the swimmer to beat in both the 200 breaststroke (2:24.84) and 400 IM (4:42.98). She also ranks second in the 100 breaststroke (1:06.55) and third in the 500 free (5:17.00). Olson will look to score points in the freestyle sprints, ranking second in both the 100 (52.95) and 200 (1:56.52), and fourth in the 50 (24.43). Katie also has the second fastest time in the 200 IM (2:15.03) and ranks fifth in the 100 butterfly (1:00.65).

Other freestyle swimmers looking to make an impact in the distance races include Melissa Aune (St. Peter, Minn.), Beth Larson (Detroit Lakes, Minn.), and Megan Tuttle (Minnetonka, Minn.). Anna Eames (Hopkins, Minn.) currently ranks sixth in the 200 fly (2:18.36) and eighth in the 500 free (5:20.56). Hannah Crane rounds out the top-ranked swimmers with the fifth fastest time in the 100 breaststroke (1:10.23).

Gustavus divers looking to make an impact are Heather Funai (Lincolnwood, Ill.) and Alicia Alvarado (Willmar, Minn.). Funai has the sixth-best one-meter dive, while Alvarado ranks sixth on the three-meter.



Hamline

Coach: Frank Vaccaro (3rdseason)

2011 Championship Finish: 11th (18 points)

Hamline Championship Preview

The Piper women's swimming team is hoping to make a bigger splash than last year at the MIAC Swimming and Diving Meet. If Ingrid Haugan's season-long body work on the diving board and Hannah Hawker's late-season rush is any indication, they have a good chance of doing just that.

Haugan has been diving up a storm this winter. The sophomore has already moved into the school's Top Ten All-Time list in the six and 11 dive portions of the 1-Meter and 3-Meter competitions. She has recorded the fourth best 3 Meter 11 Dive score and fifth best 3 Meter 6 Dive tally. She also qualified for the conference meet in the 100 backstroke, a rarity for a diver.

Hawker's season started late due to back problems. Once healthy, she has been, in the words of Frank Vaccaro, "a pleasant surprise." She is expected to compete in three individual events with her best chance for success being in the 100 Backstroke.

Hawker will also team up with Michelle Vargason, Erin Weslander (the team's lone senior) and Rachael Ronnander in the 200 and 400 Medley races. "We should do well there," Vaccaro said. Vargason will also compete in the 100 Breaststroke.

With twice the roster size of a year ago, Hamline is looking to move up from last year's 11th place finish. Like the men, the women's team is also young (one senior, no juniors).



Macalester

Coach: Beth Whittle (2nd season)

2011 Championship Finish: 8th (172 points)

Macalester Championship Preview

Macalester is looking to move up from last year's eighth-place finish and has a good mixture of seniors and younger performers coming into this year's championships.

Renee Jordan (So., Anchorage, Alaska / Steller Secondary School) was the conference runner-up in 1-meter diving (and fourth on the 3-meter board) and participated at the NCAA's as a first-year, placing 12th in 3-meter diving. She should challenge for high MIAC finishes on the boards after already having posted national qualifying marks this season.

Macalester's senior class has been the backbone of the program over the past four years and is prepared to go out with their best possible efforts.

Grace Fleming (Sr., Northampton, Mass.) is having a strong winter campaign and is a contender for the finals in the 200-yard, 500-yard and 1650-yard freestyle events. Clare Pillsbury (Sr., Baraboo, Wis.) will be wrapping up her collegiate career in a variety of events, including the 400 IM, 200 back and perhaps the 500 freestyle.

Karoline Hart (Sr., Rexford, N.Y. / Niskayuna) is a former MIAC breaststroke champ who has been working and not training since graduating in December, but she will be competing in the breaststroke and a sprint freestyle race.

Some of the younger Scots looking to gain points include Alese Halvorson (Fy., Maple Grove, Minn. / Wayzata) in the sprint freestyle races and 100 butterfly, and Becca Gailey (So., Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. / Mercersburg Academy (Pa.)) in the 1650 free, 400 IM and 200 back.



Saint Benedict

Coach: Kathy Walker (10th season) and Mike Ritchie (14th season)

2011 Championship Finish: 6th (336.5 points)

Saint Benedict Championship Preview

The College of Saint Benedict swimming and diving team has had a great season so far, and they hope to continue their success in the MIAC Championships.

Sophomore Ellen Dean is the returning conference champion and has high hopes to do it again this season. She grabbed three school records last season. Senior Carolyn Triggs is swimming well and is looking to be a conference champ as well. Look out for First-Year Brita Skalbeck and Sophomore Emily Roberts in the 100 and the 200 backstrokes. Kristen Beste should also score well in the 50 and 100 freestyle races. Sprinter Isabel Pennings should do well after sitting out of last year's championships due to an injury. Lauren Kessler will be taking care of the distance races, and should factor in.

Blazers Head Coach Kathy Walker says, "We have a well balanced team. We're connected like a family, and everyone is supportive of each other. It's not a wish for the girls to do well; it's a plan."



St. Catherine

Coach: Shana Erickson (2nd season)

2011 Championship Finish: 5th (344 points)

St. Catherine Championship Preview

Six senior point scorers return to anchor a Wildcat squad that posted its highest finish in 18 years in 2011. MIAC Co-Coaches of the Year Shana Erickson and Nicole Hempler look to lead their squad to another top-five finish and this is a team that has the experience to get it done. Senior diver Sarah Moody returns to defend her MIAC titles in 1-meter and 3-meter diving, having qualified for nationals on both boards again this season. Bridget Perkins, Sarah Vrudny, and Mary Walters all scored in multiple events in 2011 and will be part of a deep relay pool for the Wildcats. Reba Bisciglia and Ashley Kramka round out the deep senior class, having both scored in the fly events as juniors.

Although the team will be looking to the senior class for leadership and experience, junior Steffanie Jurusik has the chance to potentially be the biggest point scorer for the Wildcats. A returning All-Conference honoree in three events, Jurusik heads into the meet ranked first in the 200 IM and second in the 400 IM, as well as ranking in the top eight for the 200 back. She will be a factor in the relays as well. Junior Allison Witt and sophomore Kathleen VanDeVoorde are the other key returning point scorers for the Wildcats. Witt earned All-Conference honors in 2011 in both the 200 and 400 IM and VanDeVoorde will be in the mix in the backstroke events.



Saint Mary's

Coach: Eric Lindquist (13th season)

2011 Championship Finish: 9th (116 points)

Saint Mary's Championship Preview

Saint Mary's University swimming and diving coach Eric Lindquist had some pretty lofty expectations for his teams heading into the season-ending Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Championships a year ago.

Expectations that the Cardinals promptly exceeded on a daily basis during the three-day event at the University of Minnesota Aquatic Center.

And when the Cardinals take to the pool for this year's conference championships, those expectations are equally as high — if not higher.

Returning all the key components from a year ago certainly has a way of raising the bar just a bit.

"Every year, our goal is to make sure that our times at the conference championships are season-bests, and last year we did a very good job of hitting that mark," said Lindquist. "We've got a lot of talented individuals back, as well as a number of very capable freshmen, so it will be interesting to see how the (conference) championships unfold."

Leading the way for the Cardinal men will be senior Neil Heacox (San Diego, Calif.) — back after a year studying abroad — and junior's Mark Ross (Dubuque, Iowa) and Robert Doyle (Hudson, Wis.), while seniors Liz Flynn (Mahtomedi, Minn.), Nikki Farmer (Medford, Wis.) and Linda Tierney (Cloquet, Minn.) return to pace the SMU women.

"We have a number of individuals with the potential to do some really good things," said Lindquist. "Mark Ross has had two solid seasons, and traditionally, junior years are breakout seasons, so we are looking for big things from him. Neil, Robert, Brandon (Matis), Jon (Lamphere) ... they've all been through this before, so hopefully they can put it all together.

"On the women's side, Liz Flynn has been very good for the past three years — and this year has been her best yet," Lindquist added. "We've got plenty of experience, and, just like on the guys' side, it's just a matter of going out and getting the job done."

While Lindquist's rosters are dotted with upperclassmen, there are plenty of new faces as well, giving the Cardinal head coach what he feels is a perfect mix.

"Everything we've done this year leads up to those three days in February (at the conference championships)," said Lindquist. "Our upperclassmen all know what it takes and our freshmen have been able to get their feet wet during the regular season and should be ready to go.

"Hopefully we can some positive momentum into the conference championships."



St. Olaf

Coach: Dave Hauck (38th season) and Bob Hauck (23rd season)

2011 Championship Finish: 2nd (668 points)

St. Olaf Championship Preview

Junior Meghan Weiss, who has top-five times in four events, will lead the way for the St. Olaf women's swimming and diving team at this weekend's MIAC championships. Weiss won the conference title in the 200 Free and 500 Free last season and has the league's top time in the 200 Free (1:56.02), the second-best time in the 500 Free and the No. 5 spot in both the 100 Free and 200 IM. She also figures to be a part of a few of the Oles' relays.

Sophomore Carolyn Bernhardt will also take part in at least two relays for the Oles this weekend. Bernhardt, the team's backstroke specialist, has the third-best time in the league in the 200 back and the sixth-best in the 100 Back. She also ranks in the top 12 in the 50 Free, 100 Free and 200 Free.

Junior Lydia Feldman has three top four times in the MIAC this winter. Entering the MIAC's, she is third in the 100 Fly and 200 Fly and fourth in the 200 IM. Feldman also figures to be in the team's 200 and 400 Medley Relays. The team could also get points in the Fly events from Megan Laedtke, who has the No. 5 time in the 200 Fly. Laedtke has also posted solid times in the 1000 Free and 400 IM.

The team has a trio of Breaststrokers that will score this weekend -- Lindsey Lee, Maggie Boling and Annamarie Pearson. Lee has the No. 3 time in the 100 Breast, the fourth in the 200 Breast and the sixth in the 200 IM. Boling ranks fifth in the 200 Breast and sixth in the 100. Pearson comes in with the sixth-best time in the 200 and is seventh in the 100.

St. Olaf has 15 MIAC titles to its credit, the last coming in 2006. Last season, the Oles were second.



St. Thomas

Coach: Tom Hodgson (33rd season)

2011 Championship Finish: 4th (454.5 points)

St. Thomas Championship Preview

The Tommie women will look to post another top-four team finish at this week's MIAC Championships. The three-day competition starts Thursday at the University of Minnesota Aquatic Center.

Led by the since graduated Becca Ney — an 11-time MIAC champion on her career -- UST took fourth place out of 11 teams last season with 454.5, just 30 points behind Carleton. It was the third consecutive top-four team finish for a Tommie program that just six years earlier placed ninth at the conference meet.

In the 2011-12 conference season-best performance lists, the Tommies are seeded second in the 200 and 400 medley relays with Hayley Trace, Emily Punyko, Mariann Kukielka and Erin Hogan.

In all events, St. Thomas is seeded in the top eight 20 times.

Senior All-America diver Jennifer Easton is seeded first on the one-meter board, and third on the three-meter board.

A trio of Tommie freshmen is ranked first in their events -- Elise Guenther is first in the 1,650 free, second in the 1000 free, and fifth in the 500 free; Kukielka is ranked first in the 100 fly and seventh in the 200 fly; and Punyko is seeded first in the 100 breast, second in the 200 breast, and third in the 200 IM.

Trace (100 back) and Katie Bromback (200 fly) are each seeded fourth in their events.

Coach Tom Hodgson sees Gustavus as the team to beat with St. Olaf, Carleton, St. Ben's and St. Thomas also capable of high scoring. "I like our ability to score points, as we have some good relays that will be especially tough and some strong individual contenders." Hodgson said.