

2017 MIAC Women's Swimming and Diving Championships Preview

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2017 MIAC WOMEN'S SWIMMING AND DIVING CHAMPIONSHIPS PREVIEW

MINNEAPOLIS – There was history made and a changing of the guard a year ago at the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) Women's Swimming and Diving Championships. Now, as the 2017 edition gets set to begin, will the University of St. Thomas follow up its climb to the top with another title, will Gustavus Adolphus College re-claim the crown, or will a new contender emerge?

For six consecutive seasons, Gustavus reigned supreme in MIAC women's swimming and diving, but the Gusties' quest for a seventh-straight title was halted but the Tommies in 2016, as Head Coach Scott Blanchard's team captured their first-ever MIAC title. Now, the roles are reversed in what has developed into an exciting, dramatic rivalry between the two programs.

After UST and GAC, the two Northfield schools – St. Olaf and Carleton – and Saint Benedict and St. Catherine all form a formidable top six and are expected to be in the mix again this season. Macalester, Concordia, Saint Mary's and Augsburg also showed demonstrated improvement in 2016, and all four return for the 2017 Championships hopeful that their progress will continue in a big way.

At the 2016 MIAC Championships, St. Thomas ended Gustavus' six-year run in dramatic fashion by pulling away in the final session. UST finished with a score of 873.5, to 693 for Gustavus. St. Olaf earned a third-place finish with a total of 485.5 with cross-town rival Carleton next in fourth at 389. Saint Benedict scored 389 to edge St. Catherine's score of 326 to give the Blazers the final spot in the top five. Macalester scored 182 in seventh, Concordia moved up into eighth with 143 points, just three ahead of Hamline (140). Saint Mary's also moved up on the final day to finish with 130 points, with Augsburg's 121 points rounding out the final standings.

As all attention turns to this week's 2017 MIAC Championships, all individual talk begins with reigning NCAA Division III and MIAC Women's Swimmer-of-the-Year Emma Paulson. The St. Thomas star won a trio of national championships – 50-yard freestyle, 100-yard backstroke, and 200-yard backstroke – en route to her national honor a year ago. She also returns as the MIAC's two-time defending champion in the 50-free and 100-back, and she's also the defending champion in the 200-back. She's joined by junior Nicole Herrli, the reigning MIAC 200-yard breaststroke champ, sophomore Katelynn Strauss, the defending MIAC champ in the 500-yard freestyle and 200-yard butterfly, and another standout sophomore in Alex Howard to give the Tommies another potent lineup.

Gustavus figures to again be in the mix for the MIAC title, with plenty of talent back in St. Peter as well. Junior Kate Reilly is the two-time reigning champ in the 100-yard butterfly, and also won the 100-yard freestyle in 2016. Senior Hayley Booher is eyeing her fourth-straight 400-yard individual medley championship, and her third-straight 100-yard individual medley title. Sophomore Linnea Rizzo is also back after winning the mile in her MIAC Championships debut.

There's also a ton of talent back on the diving board, as the winners of the last three MIAC Diver-of-the-Year award are back. St. Olaf's Courtney Miller won both boards and took top diving honors a year ago, and St. Catherine's Jenna Nagy is also back after earning Diver-of-the-Year accolades in each of her first two seasons. The Oles also welcome back All-MIAC swimmer Claire Walters and a pair of breakout rookies in Caitlin Croasdell and Helen Jensen. In addition to Nagy, the Wildcats bring back Alissa Ellingson, who earned All-Conference honors in her MIAC Championship debut a year ago, and standout junior Mary Jane Voss.

Carleton also has high hopes with a pair of All-Conference swimmers back in NCAA qualifier and All-America Honorable Mention Maria Wetzel and fellow All-Conference swimmer Caroline Mather. The Knights are also excited about the addition of first-year Ada Meyer in the breaststroke events. Saint Benedict has high hopes for the continued success of sophomore Ashley Groebner in the breaststroke events, junior Katie Heller in the sprint freestyles and is happy to add rookie diver Maggie Pomeranke, who has already set the CSB school record on the 1-meter board.

Macalester brings back senior leader Smaranda Georgescu who has top-15 times in three difference vents, and she's joined by junior Kaia Lund and rookie diver Francesca Gillis. Concordia will be led by senior backstroker Libby Hardwick, and a pair of standout sophomores in Alaina Dehnke and Ciara White. Hamline has super sophomore Taylor Martinek – who holds a pair of Piper school records – back in the pool, to supplement the senior leadership of diver Kayla Hennem and swimmer Maya Rapp. Saint Mary's has strong upper-class leadership in



senior Grace VanBeest and the youthful talent of first-year swimmer Kizzy Bell and sophomore diver Allie Davidson. Augsburg has high hopes for its strong, young nucleus of sophomores Maddie Moser and Cassie Lehman on the diving boards, and fellow sophomore Mary McSharry in the butterfly.

The 2017 MIAC Swimming and Diving Championships will be held Thursday, Feb. 16, through Saturday, Feb. 18, with two sessions each day. The morning sessions will begin at 10:30 a.m. (doors at 9 p.m.) and will feature preliminary races, with the evening championship sessions starting at 6:30 p.m. (doors at 5:30 p.m.). Saturday's championship doors will open at 2:30 p.m. for preliminary heats of the 1,650-yard freestyle and diving.

Tickets are available at either a single-session rate, or all-session passes will also be available for fans who plan to attend the entire event. Single-session passes cost \$10 for adults and \$5 for students, and all-session passes are \$50 for adults and \$25 for students. Heat sheets are included in the cost of admission. Children 5 and under are admitted free, and MIAC passes will be honored for all six session. No other passes or discounts will be accepted.

As in years past, all six sessions will be [broadcast live online](#) thanks to [Webcast America](#). Fans will also be able to watch archived video of each session following the event and purchase DVDs of the broadcasts via Webcast America's site. [MIAC Media's Mike Gallagher](#) will handle play-by-play duties for four of the six sessions. 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 [2017 MIAC Swimming & Diving Championships](#). The site features the complete [event schedule](#), [psych sheet](#), [ticket information](#) and [venue information](#). The site will be constantly updated throughout the event with heat sheets, links to follow the action live, results, recaps, photos and more.

Fans can also monitor MIAC men's swimming and diving on-the-go thanks to the [MIAC mobile app](#), which is a free download for both Apple and Android devices. Also, connect to the conference on its [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#) pages and use the official event hashtag #MIACSD to interact throughout the championships.

The rest of the 2017 MIAC Men's Swimming and Diving Championships Preview contains helpful links and a championship preview for each team submitted by their sports information director.

MIAC SWIMMING & DIVING PODCAST PREVIEW

The 2017 MIAC Swimming and Diving Championships are just a few days away, and MIAC Weekly Host Mike Gallagher has a [full preview of the conference meet](#). Defending NCAA Division III Outstanding Swimmer Emma Paulson of St. Thomas joins to preview the women's meet, and Saint John's senior Kenny Bergman also joins the show to preview the men's championships.

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN!](#)

MIAC WOMEN'S SWIMMING AND DIVING LINKS

| [MIAC Women's Swimming and Diving Page](#) | [Schedule/Results](#) | [Top Times](#) | [News](#) | [Season Preview](#) | [Athletes-of-the-Week](#) | [Recordbook](#) | [Archives](#) |

TEAM-BY-TEAM PREVIEWS

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AUGSBURG | [Auggies' women's swimming and diving home page](#) |

Head Coach

- Nora Stauber (1st season)

A Year Ago

- 11th place | 121 points

Swimmers and Divers to Watch

- Maddie Moser (SO | Holds school records in 1-meter 6-dive (256.90), 1-meter 11-dive (378.80) and 3-meter 6-dive (210.60) events; 2nd in school history in 3-meter 11-dive (330.20) ... Finished 6th in 1-meter diving at 2016 MIAC Championships, highest-ever finish for an Auggie swimmer in MIAC competition; also finished 10th in 3-meter diving.)
- Cassie Lehman (SO | School record-holder in 3-meter 11-dive (345.15) competition, 2nd in school history in 1-meter 6-dive (226.10), 4th in 1-meter 11-dive (316.25), 6th in 3-meter 6-dive (173.40) ... Finished 11th in 1-meter diving and 14th in 3-meter diving at 2016 MIAC Championships.)
- Mary McSharry (SO | Seeded 20th in 100-yard butterfly with season-best time of 1:04.37.)

Did You Know?

- Nora Stauber was named as the seventh head coach in Augsburg women's swimming and diving history for the 2016-17 campaign. A

former NCAA Division II swimmer at Minnesota State-Mankato, Stauber was a sprint freestyle competitor for the Mavericks, and served as an assistant coach and graduate fellow at Augsburg in 2015-16.



CARLETON | [Knights' women's swimming and diving home page](#) |

Head coach

- Andy Clark (24th season)

A Year Ago

- 4th place | 389 points

In the 2016 Postseason

- Maria Wetzel qualified for NCAA Championships and swam the 500-yard freestyle as well as the 100- and 200-yard backstroke

Swimmers and Divers to Watch

- Maria Wetzel (Sr. | 2015 All-America Honorable Mention in 200 backstroke; 11-time All-MIAC performer, including runner-up results in the 100 and 200 backstroke as well as third place in 200 IM at 2016 conference meet; this season ranks 1st in MIAC in three events [200 IM, 400IM, and 200 backstroke], 2nd in 100 backstroke, 3rd in 500 freestyle, 6th in 100 butterfly, 7th in 200 freestyle, and 8th in 100 freestyle)
- Caroline Mather (So. | three All-MIAC awards last season, including 3rd place in the 50 and 100 yard freestyle; this season ranks 2nd in MIAC [and 8th in NCAA D-III] in the 50 freestyle, 3rd in 100 freestyle, and 4th in 200 freestyle)
- Ada Meyer (Fy. | this season she ranks 1st in the MIAC in the 100-yard breaststroke and 3rd in the 200 breaststroke)

Did You Know?

- For the 24th year in a row, the Carleton Women's Swimming and Diving team was named as an All-Academic team by the CSCAA. The Knights posted a 3.42 GPA as a team.
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CONCORDIA | [Cobbers' women's swimming and diving home page](#) |

Head coach

- Gary Fisher (1st season)

A Year Ago

- 8th place | 143 points

Swimmers and Divers to Watch

- Alaina Dehnke (So. | School record holder in the 200-yard backstroke; ranked in the Top 25 in the 200-yard backstroke and 1000-yard freestyle)
- Libby Hardwick (Sr. | Ranked in the Top 25 in the MIAC in both the 100-yard and 200-yard backstroke)
- Ciara White (So. | Ranked in the Top 16 of the MIAC in both the 100-yard and 200-yard breaststroke; qualified for the "B" finals in both events last season at the MIAC Meet.)

Did You Know?

- Concordia's service project for the year was volunteering at the Great Plains Food Bank.
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GUSTAVUS | [Gusties' women's swimming and diving home page](#) |

Head coach

- Jon Carlson (27th season)

A Year Ago

- 2nd place | 693 points

In the 2016 Postseason

- Kate Reilly, Nicole Lohman, and Maggie Webster competed in the NCAA Championships. Reilly took 15th in the 50-yard freestyle with a time of 23.64. Lohman and Webster participated in the 200, 400, and 800 freestyle relays.

Swimmers and Divers to Watch

- Kate Reilly (Jr. | CollegeSwimming.com Preseason All-American, 2016 & 2015 MIAC All-Conference)
- Hayley Booher (Sr. | Owns 5th and 6th ranked MIAC top times in the 400 and 200 individual medleys)
- Linnea Rizzo (So. | Earned first place time of 17:43.27 in 1,650 yard freestyle at 2016 MIAC Championships)

Did You Know?

- Last year, Gustavus finished second at the MIAC Championships, snapping its streak of six-straight titles.
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HAMLINE | [Pipers' women's swimming and diving home page](#) |

Head coach

- Ryan Hawke (3rd season)

A Year Ago

- 9th place | 140 points

Swimmers and Divers to Watch

- Taylor Martinek (So., Holds school records in 50 Free and 100 Back; Ranks 5th in MIAC in 100 Back)
- Kayla Hennum (Sr., posted 3rd best 1 Meter - 6 Dive score in MIAC this year - 236.80)
- Maya Rapp (Sr., 4 year regular)

Did You Know?

- The Pipers give lessons to nearby Hamline Elementary school. This continues a tradition that dates back to when the legendary Marty Knight coached at HU.



MACALESTER | [Scots' women's swimming and diving home page](#) |

Head coach

- Beth Whittle (7th season)

A Year Ago

- 7th place | 182 points

Swimmers and Divers to Watch

- Smaranda Georgescu (Sr. | Ranks in the top-15 in the MIAC in three events)
- Kaia Lund (Jr. | Has the fifth-fastest time in the MIAC in the 100-yard butterfly)
- Francesca Gillis (Fy. | Has posted top-6 scores among MIAC divers in both events)

Did You Know?

- Two Scots broke school records this season: senior Smaranda Georgescu in the 100-yard individual medley, and junior Kaia Lund in the 100-yard butterfly.



SAINT BENEDICT | [Blazers women's swimming and diving home page](#) |

Head coach

- Dan Eckberg (Fourth season)

A Year Ago

- 5th place | 326 points

Swimmers and Divers to Watch

- Ashley Groebner (So | Top-8 100 breaststroke last year, top 16 200 breaststroke)
- Katie Heller (Jr | Top 16 in 50 and 100 freestyle last year)
- Maggie Pomerence (FY| Set school record, NCAA zone qualifying mark in 11-dive, 1-meter competition this year)

Did You Know?

- Of the 19 roster spots CSB is allowed at the MIAC championships, at least 10 will be filled by first years.



ST. CATHERINE | [Wildcats' women's swimming and diving home page](#) |

Head coach

- Justin Zook (1st season)

A Year Ago

- 6th place | 296 points

Swimmers and Divers to Watch

- Jenna Nagy (Sr. | 2016 All-MIAC, 2nd place 1-meter and 3-meter boards, NCAA Regional Diving Zone qualifier; 2014 & 2015 MIAC Diver-of-the-Year; 2014 & 2015 MIAC 1-meter champion; 2015 3-meter champion; 2016 best scored 1-meter, 6 dives (382.70), 3-meter, 6 dives (448.35); 2xMIAC Athlete-of-the-Week))
- Mary Jane Voss (Jr. | 5th place 400 IM in 2016, fourth place finish in the 200 fly; fourth-fastest time in the 200 fly (2:15.36), No. 6 time in the 400 IM (4:48.76), No. 7 time in the 1650 (18:50.44); top-20 times in the 500 free (5:28.14), 100 fly (1:02.69) & 200 IM (2:18.39))
- Alissa Ellingson (So. | 2016 All-MIAC, 2nd place 200 fly, 5th place 100 fly and 100 breast; No. 9 time in the 200 fly (2:19.32), No. 10 time in the 100 breaststroke (1:10.81), top-20 times in the 500 freestyle (25.39), 200 breaststroke (2:33.45), 100 fly (1:01.62) & 200 IM (2:17.25))

Did You Know?

- The Wildcats have finished in the top six at the MIAC Championships for seven consecutive seasons.
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SAINT MARY'S | [Cardinals' women's swimming and diving home page](#) |

Head coach

- Amber Bartholomew (2nd season)

A Year Ago

- 10th place | 130 points

Swimmers and Divers to Watch

- Grace VanBeest (Senior, IM/Breaststroke) | Reached finals in the 200 Breast and the consolation finals in the 100 Breast at the 2016 MIAC Championships. ... Set 4 school records at 2016 MIAC Championships. ... Owns MIAC's 5th fastest 100 breaststroke time, 1:08.54. ... Owns MIAC's 7th fastest 200 breaststroke time, 2:31.32)
- Kizzy Bell (Freshman, IM/Breaststroke) | Heads into first MIAC Championships with the MIAC's 16th fastest time in the 100 Breast, 1:12.33, and 17th fastest time in the 200 Breast 2:37.88) ... Won the 100 Breast at the Macalester Invitational
- Ailie Davidson (Sophomore, Diving) | Finished 8th in 1-meter diving at the 2016 MIAC Championships ... Owns MIAC's 5th highest 1-meter diving score)

Did You Know?

- Grace Van Beest, who placed fourth in the 200 breaststroke and 10th in the 100 breaststroke at the 2016 MIAC Championships, had a part in five school records at last year's championships.
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ST. OLAF | [Oles' women's swimming and diving home page](#) |

Head coach

- Bob Hauck (28th season)

A Year Ago

- 3rd place | 485.5 points

Players to Watch

- Clare Walters (Sr. | Top-three MIAC times in the 50 Free, 100 Free, 200 Free, No. 2 time in 100 Fly,)
 - Caitlin Croasdell (Fr. | Top MIAC time in 1000 Free, No. 5 time in 1650)
 - Helen Jensen (Fr. | No. 2 time in 200 Fly, No. 3 times in 200 IM, 400 IM, No. 5 time in 500 Free)
-



ST. THOMAS | [Tommies' women's swimming and diving home page](#) |

Head coach

- Scott Blanchard (3rd season)

A Year Ago

- 1st place | 873.5 points

In the 2016 Postseason

- NCAA Championships, 13th place

Swimmers and Divers to Watch

- Emma Paulson (Sr., | 3-event NCAA champion in 2016 (50 free, 100-200 back); 2X MIAC Swimmer of the Year, 11 MIAC individual-relay titles in two seasons)
- Katelyn Strauss (So., | 5-event winner in individual/relays in 2016 MIAC Championships)
- Alex Howard (So., | 3 relays wins at 2016 MIACs; Seeded in top two in MIAC in 200 and 500 freestyles)

Did You Know?

- The Tommies placed second or third in the MIAC Championships six times from 2009 to 2015 before winning in 2016 -- the program's first women's S&D crown in the event's 34-year history.
-