

2006 MIAC Women's Tennis Tournament

Gustavus Captures 21st MIAC Title With 6-0 Win Over Carleton

ST. PETER, Minn. - As much as seeds held to form during day one of the 2006 Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Women's Tennis Tournament, the same could not be said during the second and final day of the tourney. The end result was unchanged, however, as Gustavus Adolphus captured its 21st league title in 25 years and its 15th in a row with a 6-0 win over third-seed Carleton in the final. Due to showers, the entire tournament was played indoors with the bulk of play occurring at Gustavus' Swanson Tennis Center.

The advancement of the Knights to the final was one of more than a few instances where a lower seeded team emerged over the higher seeded team. Carleton edged second-seed College of Saint Benedict in one semifinal, 5-3, gaining a measure of revenge for a 5-4 loss to the Blazers in St. Joseph during the regular season.

Saint Benedict rebounded from just their third dual loss of the season to take third place with a 5-1 win over fourth-seed St. Thomas. The Tommies had been shutout 5-0 by the Gusties in the other semifinal.

Consolation play saw a pair of relative upsets, both turned in by the College of St. Catherine. Seventh-seeded St. Kate's dropped sixth-seed Hamline 5-2 in a Saturday morning consolation semifinal before closing out the tournament with a 5-4 win over fifth-seed St. Olaf for fifth place. Hamline captured seventh place with a 5-1 win over ninth-seed Bethel while eighth-seed Saint Mary's took ninth place with a 5-2 win over tenth-seed Macalester.

Following the championship match, College of Saint Benedict head coach Janna LaFontaine was honored as 2006 MIAC Women's Tennis Coach of the Year, while Gustavus' Lyndsey Palen was honored as the 2006 recipient of the Chris Evert Sportsmanship Award, joining Erica Hanson (2000) as recent Gustie winners of the award.

April 29 - Mother Nature Sends Day Two Indoors As Well

Due to lingering showers Saturday morning in St. Peter, the final day of the 2006 Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Women's Tennis Championships has been forced indoors. Matches will now be played at the Swanson Tennis Center on the campus of Gustavus Adolphus College, with the exception of the ninth place match, which will be contested at 9 a.m. at the Mankato Athletic Tennis Center in Mankato.

April 28 - Day One Recap/Day Two Preview

Aside from a first round win by ninth-seeded Bethel over eighth-seeded Saint Mary's, the seeds held true during the first day of the 2006 MIAC Women's Tennis Championships. The only three schools to have won the title are all still alive in the championship semifinals. Former champions Gustavus Adolphus (25-4) and St. Thomas (14-3) meet in one 9 a.m. semifinal, while three-time champion Carleton (13-6) faces off with second-seeded College of Saint Benedict in the other semifinal. Saint Ben's (17-2) has never won the MIAC title. Gustavus swept St. Thomas 9-0 during the regular season while Saint Benedict edged Carleton 5-4 in St. Joseph just 17 days ago.

Hamline, which provided one of the stories of the regular season, will look to bounce back Saturday in pursuit of fifth place after falling to Carleton 5-1 in the quarters. The Pipers opened the day with a 7-0 win over Concordia (3-14). The Cobbers became the first MIAC team to have their season draw to a close when they fell 5-1 to Macalester in the backdraw semifinal.

Macalester and St. Kate's provided one of the more balanced match-ups on Friday's schedule. The Scots led the first round match 2-1 following doubles play, but St. Kate's rallied, winning two of three matches during the first round of singles to tie the match at 3-3. The Wildcats closed out the match with two more singles wins. The Scots (10-13) will now face upset victim Saint Mary's for ninth place at 9 a.m. while St. Kate's will meet Hamline in a consolation semifinal. Bethel and St. Olaf will meet in the other consolation semifinal.

April 28 - Rain Forces Day One of Championship Indoors

Due to rain Friday morning in St. Peter, the 2006 Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Women's Tennis Championships have been forced indoors. Matches will now be played at the Swanson Tennis Center on the campus of Gustavus Adolphus College, with selected matches being played at the Mankato Athletic Tennis Center in Mankato.

Tournament Preview

ST. PETER, Minn. - Gustavus Adolphus College plays host this weekend as the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference crowns its 25th champion in women's tennis. The host Gusties will be looking for their 15th consecutive league title and 21st overall.

The Gusties enter the tournament as the only MIAC team ranked by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association. Gustavus is seventh nationally after spending most of the year rated in the top five. The Gusties are also rated second in the Central Region, slipping from top spot in the most recent rankings after a 5-1 loss to DePauw University at the Midwest Invitational in Madison, Wisconsin earlier this month.

This season, the MIAC features a number of regionally ranked players in both singles and doubles. Four Gustavus singles players cracked the top-25, led by Lauren Hom and Tara Houlihan at sixth and seventh, respectively. Gusties Jaime Gaard (#13) and Lyndsey Palen (#23) also make the list, while Megan Tiegs of the College of Saint Benedict (#8) and Sarah Russell of Carleton College (#15) are also rated.

Four MIAC doubles teams are also rated in the top-15 of the Central Region. Gustavus' Tara Houlihan and Lyndsey Palen, the defending NCAA Division III Doubles Champions, head the list in second, while teammates Lauren Hom and Marla Menne are fifth. The Carleton doubles team of Sarah Russell and Eryn Koch is 12th, while Megan Tiegs and Katie Ward of the College of Saint Benedict are 14th.

Gustavus finished atop the league standings with a perfect record for the 15th consecutive season, earning the top seed in this weekend's tournament. Saint Benedict finished second with a 9-1 league mark, up from fourth a year ago, followed by Carleton (8-2), St. Thomas (7-3) and St. Olaf (6-4). Hamline was the biggest mover in the league standings from 2005 to 2006, improving four spots from tenth to sixth. The Pipers finished 4-16 overall, 1-9 in the MIAC a year ago, but doubled their overall win output to enter the 2006 MIAC Tournament with a 8-10 record overall, and a 5-5 mark in the conference. St. Kate's (4-6), Saint Mary's (3-7), Bethel (2-8), Macalester (1-9) and Concordia (0-10) round out the standings.

This year's tournament will begin at 9:00 a.m. Friday, April 28 with action at the Brown Outdoor Courts and Gibbs Courts, both on the campus of Gustavus Adolphus College. Play continues Saturday, April 29 with the championship and third-place matches slated for 1:00 p.m. In the event of rain, play will be moved to Gustavus' Swanson Tennis Center with selected matches being played in Mankato at the Mankato Athletic Tennis Center.