





2004 MIAC WOMEN'S TENNIS PREVIEW

2004 marks the 23th Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Women's Tennis season. Teams will be attempting to challenge Gustavus Adolphus College for the top spot in the MIAC. Gustavus was perfect in the 2003 MIAC regular season, finishing 10-0, the Gusties have won eighteen of the twenty-two previous MIAC championships including the past twelve. Carleton, St. Thomas, St. Olaf, Saint Benedict and St. Catherine's finished close behind Gustavus and have young, but talented returning student-athletes looking to try and improve on their 2003 finishes. Bethel, Macalester, Concordia , Hamline and Saint Mary's all will look to improve and reach the upper half of the conference standings this year.


The MIAC Championships are scheduled for April 23 and 24 in Northfield, Minn, hosted by St. Olaf and Carleton.


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Bethel College		
Head Coach:	Dan Morton (5th season)	
2003:	9th in MIAC Regular Season	
Key Returners:	Jodi Gustafson, senior Tasha Reitenour, sophomore	
Season Preview:	Bethel has matched their win total of 2003 with a 5-5 record heading into the 2004 spring break. A young team with only one senior, Jody Gustafson (Maynard, Minn.), the Royals have notched impressive early season wins over MIAC foes Macalester, Saint Mary's, and St. Olaf.	


<u>Carleton College</u>		
Head Coach:	Sarah Hurst (7th season)	
2003:	3rd (tie) in MIAC Regular Season	
Key Returners:	Genevieve Philp, Jr., Norman, Okla., 2003 All-MIAC, 18-5 overall Diane Danforth, Jr., Pittsburgh, 13-9 overall Eryn Koch, So. Bellingham, Wash., 7-3 MIAC	


Season Preview:	<p>With five of six starters returning and a group of talented and accomplished newcomers entering the program, Carleton figures to continue its climb as one of the elite programs in the conference and region.</p> <p>The Knights ranked fifth in the Central Region/Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) fall rankings, were 14-9 overall and 7-3 in the MIAC a year ago, finished the 2003 season ranked 34th in the nation and 12th in the Central Region.</p> <p>.</p> <p>Rising sophomore Sarah Russell posted a 16-7 mark as a rookie at the top spot but will miss the spring season due to injury after earning All-America honors in the fall. The Knights will lean on junior Genevieve Philp, who is 36-9 over the last two years, along with fellow junior and team co-captain Diane Danforth, who returns to the team after missing winter term studying abroad. Danforth and Philp are regionally ranked as a double duo. Rookie Abby Beggs and sophomore Eryn Koch will lend solid depth in the middle of the line-up. Newcomers Christina Walker and Golnaz Vayghan will likely hold down the fifth and sixth slots in the line-up. Sarah Hurst, last year's MIAC coach of the year, coaches the Knights.</p>
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Concordia College		
Head Coach:	Bob Nick (8th season)	
Associate Coach:	Paul Thibedeau	
2003:	7th in MIAC Regular Season	
Key Returners:	<p>- Erica Tollefson, Sr., Madison, Minn., Lac Qui Parle Valley HS, Has played at the number one singles position since her first year. During that time she has compiled a 17-12 singles record and a 22-7 mark as part of the team's number one doubles tandem.</p> <p>- Beth Meier, So., Crookston, Minn., Played at the number two singles spot last year. She finished her first year of college tennis with a 5-9 record; teamed with Tollefson to record a 10-3 record at the number one doubles position.</p>	
Season Preview:	<p>If bigger is better, then the 2004 Cobber women's tennis team will have all the earmarks for the best team in school history. The Concordia women's tennis team has the most players on their roster in school history. The Cobbers have a group of 15 players on the squad. Of those 15, nine are first-year players.</p> <p>The "baby" Cobbers will have a guiding light in number one singles player Erica Tollefson. Tollefson has played at the top spot in the lineup since she first stepped on the court at Concordia. She has posted a 17-12 mark in singles, and has helped the team's number one doubles team post a 22-7 record over her first three seasons. Joining Tollefson as the team's top returning player will be Beth Meier. Meier completed her first season of college tennis by posting five wins. More importantly, she teamed with Tollefson to give Concordia a force at the number one doubles spot. The tandem of Tollefson and Meier went 10-3 last year and should be back to once again give Concordia a go-to option to get team points.</p> <p>If associate head coach Paul Thibideau can harness the enthusiasm of the all the new players and mix in the talent of the upperclassmen, then Concordia will have a chance to break into the top five at the conference tournament.</p> <p><u>For complete Cobber women's tennis coverage</u></p>	


Gustavus Adolphus College		
Head Coach:	Jon Carlson (15th season)	


2003:	1st in MIAC Regular Season	
Key Returners:	N/A	
Season Preview:	N/A	

Hamline University		
Head Coach:	Dan Haertl (18th season)	
2003:	11th in MIAC Regular Season	
Key Returners:	<p>Hilary Wilson, Jr., Elk River, Minn. – 4-14 in No. 2 singles last season</p> <p>Kathie Winter, Jr. Spring Lake Park, Minn. – 3-12 in No. 4 singles last season</p>	
Season Preview:	<p>There is a buzz of excitement as the Piper women's tennis team begins their 2004 campaign under head coach Dan Haertl. This excitement comes from the team's improvement over the course of last season in addition to the team's hard work over the summer and in the offseason.</p> <p>Last season, the women's team did not win an MIAC dual match during the regular season, including a 5-4 loss to Macalester. But the Pipers were much more competitive by the MIAC Championships, beating the Scots 8-1 in the consolation round. The Pipers went on to finish in 10th place after losing to Bethel 5-4 in a hard-fought battle.</p> <p>The Pipers return three of their top six singles players from a year ago in captains Hilary Wilson (So, Elk River, Minn.) and Lauri Munoz (Jr, Kansas City, Mo.) as well as Kathie Winter (Jr, Spring Lake Park, Minn.) The team also brings back doubles player Jenna McManus (So, Forest Lake, Minn.).</p> <p>Hamline lost three players to graduation last year including four-year No. 1 singles player Becca Richards, Leah Mennis and Rophine Mushonga, but Haertl is excited about his four newcomers. The team will look to Kristen Bothan (Fy, La Crosse, Wis), Jena Maki (Fy, Hibbing, Minn.), Lacy Schumann (Fy, Kiester, Minn), and Trina Ellis (Fy, Buffalo, Minn.) to make an immediate impact and match the work ethic of the upperclassmen.</p>	


Macalester College		
Head Coach:	Lynn Anderson (3rd season)	
2003:	10th in MIAC Regular Season	
Key Returners:	<p>Sarah Crangle (Sr., Piedmont, Calif.)</p> <p>Erin Case (Jr., Ann Arbor, Mich.)</p>	

Season Preview:	<p>Macalester is coming off a 4-14 season and 1-9 MIAC campaign, and will rely on several newcomers to help the program move up a notch or two in the conference. The Scots must replace three regulars from the lineup, including four-year standout Melissa Lavasani, who went 9-9 at the No. 1 position in the order.</p> <p>Three solid regulars return, though, and the Scots could prove to be a stronger team in 2004. Sarah Crangle (Sr., Piedmont, CA) went 6-9 last season at No. 2 singles and will move up to the top spot to replace Lavasani. Erin Case (Jr., Ann Arbor, MI / Pioneer) played No. 3 last year, going 4-14 on the campaign, and Sakoko Nakamura (So., Osaka, Japan / Osaka International) is back as well. Mac will count on newcomers Christy Hagstrum (So., North Oaks, MN / Mounds View), Chelsea Stinson (Fr. Maple Plain, MN / Orono), Alexis Gerber (Fr., San Francisco, CA / International), Claire Deason (So., Northfield, MN) and Brigid Dunn (Fr., Hudson, NY / Croten-on-Hudson).</p>
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College of Saint Benedict		
Head Coach:	Janna LaFontaine (4th season)	
2003:	5th (tie) in MIAC Regular Season	
Key Returners:	Christin Tieges, JR, Rochester Beth Welle, JR, Sauk Centre	
Season Preview:	<p>The Blazer Tennis teams enters the 2003-2004 season with an optimistic look on everything. A core of players will return to the line-up and some new faces to add to the mix.</p> <p>Junior Christin Tiegs transferred from St. Catherines in the summer and will be vying for a top spot not only in the MIAC, but in the Nation. Once the team is able to find the strongest lineup with many players taking on a new role, things will be looking bright for St. Bens'. The potential of No. 1 singles player Tiegs offers great motivation for the Blazers.</p> <p>Tiegs advanced to the Small College National Championships in the fall where she placed fifth. She begins the season as the No. 1-ranked player in the region. Beginning the spring season, the Blazers are searching to find the right combination behind Tiegs to fulfill the teams potential.</p> <p>"Our strength is our solid No. 1, but we also have a lot of depth and people pushing each other," junior Beth Welle said. Gustavus, which has won 12 consecutive MIAC titles, heads the conference race.</p> <p>"Gustavus is the team to beat, but Tiegs had to beat three Gustavus girls to get to Nationals in the fall, so they are not invincible," head coach Janna LaFontaine said.</p> <p>Gustavus may be the frontrunner, but St. Catherine's and Carleton are also contenders, with the Blazers looking to sneak into that top third along with them.</p> <p>As always, the Blazers are looking to compete hard and win, but they also have a good time doing it. LaFontaine commented how much she enjoyed working with the team.</p> <p>"They have so much excitement, passion, energy and support for each other," LaFontaine said.</p> <p>Welle also noted the great atmosphere on the team. "We always have fun," Welle said. "It is just a great atmosphere."</p>	

College of St. Catherine	
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Head Coach:	Eric Stacey (7th season)	
2003:	3rd (tie) in MIAC Regular Season	
Key Returners:	Deidre Lindstrom, JR, Academic All-American, All-MIAC Briggs Rolfsrud, JR, All-MIAC Amy Willhite, JR, All-MIAC Linsey Miller, SO, All-MIAC	
Season Preview:	<p>The Wildcats return four All-MIAC athletes from a team that finished the season ranked 28th in the nation. Juniors Deidre Lindstrom, Briggs Rolfsrud, and Amy Willhite will lead St. Kate's in the top three singles spots this season. Sophomore Linsey Miller will return in the fourth position. First years Shelly Bebler and Jessica Jones will step in to fill out the line up.</p> <p>The Wildcats have a tough non-conference schedule as they play six teams ranked in their respective regions. The team hopes to once again get an invitation to the Midwest Invitational in Madison for the top twelve teams in the region.</p>	

Saint Mary's University		
Head Coach:	Jeff Halberg (6th season)	
2003:	8th in MIAC Regular Season	
Key Returners:	Joni Peterson (Jr., New London, Minn., 7-8 at 1-2-3 singles, 4-12 at 1-2 doubles) Liz Hilke (Jr., Baraboo, Wis.; 5-1 at 3-5-6 singles	

Season Preview:	<p>Saint Mary's University tennis coach Jeff Halberg could hardly wait for the season to get underway. In fact, February 7, 2004, had probably been circled on his calendar for quite some time now.</p> <p>For Halberg and the Cardinal men's tennis team, Feb. 7 — and their season-opening match against Macalester — was the start of what they are hoping is SMU's steady climb up the conference ladder.</p> <p>The Cardinals are tired of being the understudy — it's time for them to take their turn in the spotlight.</p> <p>"They've done all the (preseason) preparation — they have worked harder (in the off season) than any team I've had," said Halberg, whose teams opened with a pair of wins vs. the Scots in that season-opener. "They are ready to make that next step."</p> <p>Are the Cardinals going to be battling perennial Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference powerhouse Gustavus for the conference crown? Probably not. But don't be surprised to see the Cardinals right in that group of teams in the middle-to-upper half of the MIAC.</p> <p>"Right now (the men's team's) goal is to move into that top half of the conference," said Halberg, whose men's squad managed only a pair of conference wins a year ago — but did close out the season with a 6-2 victory over Bethel at the MIAC Tournament, and do return all but one starter off last year's squad. "It's going to be a battle, no question about that, but I really think that if we can get a few breaks, and win the close matches, we're definitely have the potential to make an impact this year."</p> <p>Halberg isn't quite as optimistic on the women's side, although he does foresee a repeat of a year ago, when the SMU women went 9-13, including conference wins over Macalester, Hamline and Bethel (twice).</p> <p>"We're not as deep, and we don't have quite as much experience on the women's side as we do on the men's," admitted Halberg, who not only graduated two regulars from a year ago, but also lost three underclassmen who are studying overseas this semester. "I've honestly been pleasantly surprised with how far along we are."</p> <p>"It's nice that we do return some experience, but we are also going to be putting some of our freshmen to the test right away," continued Halberg. "Right now, I think that skill-wise, we are every bit as good as we were a year ago — if not maybe even a little better. But we aren't as experienced, and that will be the key.</p> <p>"If we can put together a repeat of last year, I'd say that was a successful season."</p> <p>Complete Saint Mary's preview</p>
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St. Olaf College		
Head Coach:	Scott Nesbit (16th season)	
2003:	5th (tie) in MIAC Regular Season	
Key Returners:	N/A	

Season Preview:	<p>The St. Olaf women's tennis team is looking to build this year following a strong performance last year. The Oles will be returning with the bulk of their squad from last year including players Jamie Brau (Arlington, Minn.)(captain), Liz Klein(Scottsdale, Ariz.), Beth Erie(Rochester, Minn.), Kristen Buchta(Neenah, Wis.), Lauren Benson(Neenah, Wis.), Libby Douglas(Hutchinson, Minn.), and Emily Eggert(Appleton, Wis.). In addition, the Oles have added three other talented new players, Misaki Kodama(Japan), Jorie Steffen(Lake Geneva, Wis.), and Sarah Pray(Madison, Wis.). The coaching staff includes Scott Nesbit, in his fifteenth season at St. Olaf and Kristi Carlson Stets, a former St. Olaf tennis player.</p> <p>The Oles play in the very competitive MIAC conference. Last year, the St. Olaf women's team finished a strong fifth place in the conference. The Oles will hope to improve on last year's good finish. In addition to playing the conference opponents, the Oles will also play Luther College. The conference tournament which is in it's second season as a dual match tournament will be played in Northfield and hosted by St. Olaf on the last weekend in April. The season will conclude with it's annual alumni match on Saturday, May 8th.</p>
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University of St. Thomas		
Head Coach:	Terry Peck (10th season)	
2003:	2nd in MIAC Regular Season	
Key Returners:	Jodi Dmohoski, JR Katie Miettunen, SO	
Season Preview:	<p>The Tommies return four players, including junior Jodi Dmohoski and soph Katie Miettunen, from a 19-4 team that reached the second round of the NCAA Division III playoffs and placed second in the MIAC for the third year in a row.</p> <p>Over the last four seasons, St. Thomas is 67-18 in duals (35-5 MIAC). Five of their eight losses over the last two seasons have come against Gustavus.</p> <p>Coach Terry Peck graduated four seniors who were key contributors in recent seasons -- Sarah Lee, who beat Gustavus at first singles in the MIAC finals last season for the Toms' lone win in an 8-1 defeat; Becky Bell, Tiffany Weaver; and Julie Wieden.</p> <p>The 2004 Tommies started the season 11-0 and 7-0 in the MIAC, including three 5-4 wins in conference action. They still have MIAC matches left vs. Gustavus, Carleton and Concordia.</p>	