

2008 MIAC Women's Tennis Season Preview

3/20/2008 4:20:34 PM

St. Paul, Minn. -- The 2008 MIAC Women's Tennis season will once again feature an intense battle for the top six spots and a right to play in the end of the season MIAC Playoffs. Gustavus will be the heavy favorite to claim the conference crown again in 2008, but St. Thomas, Carleton, and Saint Benedict will bring talented line-ups to challenge for first.

The 2008 MIAC Women's Tennis Playoffs will take place April 25-26 on the campus of Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minn.



MIAC Women's Tennis Preseason Coaches' Poll

1. Gustavus (10)
2. St. Thomas
3. Carleton
4. Saint Benedict (1)
5. St. Olaf
6. Macalester
7. St. Catherine
8. Saint Mary's
9. Bethel
10. Hamline
11. Concordia

Bethel

Coach: Dan Morton (9th season)

2007 Finish: 10th (3-12, 2-8 MIAC)

Bethel Athletes to Watch

Andrea Beegle (Sr., Edina, Minn.)

LeRoyce Chapman (Jr., Elk River, Minn.)

Allison Kishaba (So., Eau Claire, Minn.)

Kristin Kishaba (Jr., Eau Claire, Minn.)

Bethel Season Preview

Bethel finished the 2007 season at 3-12 overall and 2-8 in the MIAC, which placed them second to last in the competitive conference. This season, the team will have several new faces with four returners. First singles player and All-MIAC selection Andrea Beegle (Sr., Edina, Minn.) is back for her senior year and is looking forward to competing at the top of her game. Also returning are LeRoyce Chapman (Jr., Elk River, Minn.), who will team with Beegle at doubles, Heather Blair (So., Glenwood, Minn.), Ashley Dohlen (So., Morris, Minn.), and Sarah LeVahn (So., Alexandria, Minn.). The Royals bolstered their lineup with the addition of women's soccer sisters Kristin and Allison Kishaba (Eau Claire, Wis.) who will fill the #3 and #4 singles roles, respectively. A handful of freshmen will round out the Royals roster as they compete to finish in the upper echelon of the conference.

Carleton

Coach: Luciano Battaglini (1st season)

2007 Finish: 2nd (15-8, 9-1 MIAC)

Carleton Athletes to Watch

Frances Leung (So., Oakland, Calif./Bishop O’Dowd)
Lisa Ottum (Sr., Green Bay, Wis./Southwest)
Hannah Clemons (So., Prairie Village, Kan./Pembroke Hill)
Hannah Goldberg (So., North Oaks, Minn./Mounds View)
Sarah Wehrly (Sr., College Station, Texas/A&M Consolidated)

Carleton Season Preview
<p>The Knights finished second in the conference last year, with the lone loss coming to Gustavus. While Carleton did lose three seniors from last year’s squad, the Knights do return four All-MIAC performers. Sophomores Hannah Clemons and Frances Leung both earned All-MIAC honors for their rookie seasons, while senior Lisa Ottum and sophomore Hannah Goldberg were both All-MIAC in doubles. Leung received all-conference honors for her play in doubles as well.</p> <p>This year the Knights will rely heavily on a strong sophomore class. Leung posted an extremely strong 16-7 record playing in the second position as a first-year. Clemons was Carleton’s number three as a rookie and looks to improve on her 10-12 record. Goldberg split her time between fourth, fifth and sixth position on her way to a 13-10 record.</p> <p>Ottum will be needed more often this season after only competing in nine singles matches. She must also continue her strong doubles play after going 7-3 in the MIAC last season.</p> <p>The Knights should have an interesting battle for the fifth and sixth singles spots this season. It should come down to seniors Katie Bates and Sarah Wehrly against junior Emily Ho and newcomer Devin Daugherty.</p>

Concordia
Coach: Troy Hanestad (3rd season)
2007 Finish: Tied 11th (1-15, 0-10 MIAC)

Concordia Athletes to Watch
Amy Freeman (So., Staples, Minn./Staples-Motley)
Ashley Leister (Jr., Thief River Falls, Minn./Lincoln)
Kelsey Schendel (Sr., Willmar, Minn.)
Concordia Season Preview

Concordia enters the 2008 season with an upward swing of confidence due to a solid core of returning players and a group of six freshmen that will help infuse the team with more energy and passion for the game. That will serve the Cobbers well as they try and snap a 32-match conference losing skid as they begin the new year. The last time Concordia won an MIAC match was on Apr. 16, 2004.

The good news for Troy Hanestad's crew is that they return five of their top singles players from last season and two of their top three doubles teams. Junior Ashley Leister (Thief River Falls, Minn./Lincoln HS) returns in the No.1 singles spot. Last year she posted wins against No.1 singles players from two of the six conference playoff teams. A pair of newcomers should occupy the No.2 and No. 3 singles spots. Junior Mollie Miller (Litchfield, Minn.) and freshman Lyndsi Tufte (Peachtree City, GA./McIntosh HS) will be put into the middle of the lineup. The next two singles slots will all be held by returning players. Amy Freeman (So., Staples, Minn./Staples-Motley HS) led the team in wins last year and will play in the No.4 singles spot. Kelsey Schendel (Sr., Willmar, Minn.) is a three-year starter for the Cobbers and was tied with Freeman for the team lead in singles wins last season. The No.6 singles position will be held by another freshman. First-year player Melanie Gail (Madison, Minn./Lac Qui Parle Valley HS) was a four-time all-conference player at Lac Qui Parle Valley HS and has a chance to be one of the top players on Concordia in 2008.

In doubles play, the double "L" team of Leister and Lyndsi Tufte will start the year as the squad's No.1 doubles team. From there, a mixture of players will all see time as Hanestad tries to find a winning formula.

The 2008 season should be a year where the Cobbers continue to improve throughout the season. If CC can find the right amount of youthful exuberance and experience then the conference losing streak will be a thing of the past and Concordia could be in the hunt for a playoff spot.

Gustavus

Coach: Heidi Carlson (1st season)

2007 Finish: 1st (26-6, 10-0 MIAC)

Gustavus Athletes to Watch

Sam Frank (Fy., Mahtomedi, Minn.)

Sierra Krebsbach (So., North Oaks, Minn.)

Ali O'Neal (So., Stevens Point, Wis.)

Jenni White (Sr., Cedar Rapids, Iowa)

Gustavus Season Preview

The Gustavus Adolphus women's tennis team looks to repeat as the MIAC Regular Season and Playoff Champions in 2008 for its 17th straight conference title. First-year Head Coach Heidi Carlson will take over the helm of the program from her husband, Jon, with Gustavus ranked 11th nationally.

The Golden Gusties will rely on the experience of Jenni White and Sierra Krebsbach to help Gustavus continue its title streak. White, who primarily played in the #3 position last year, won the Midwest ITA Regional Tennis Tournament this fall and finished sixth at the ITA Small College Championships. Krebsbach, an All-American doubles player, competed at the #4 spot last year will compete with White for the #1 position this spring as both players are ranked in the top five regionally as singles players. White and Krebsbach are also the #1-ranked doubles team in the Central Region.

Coach Carlson has several newcomers in the lineup as the Gusties graduated four players who each amassed over 50 wins in their collegiate careers, including five-time All-American Lauren Hom. Transfer student Ali O'Neal joins the squad from Division I UW-Milwaukee where she set a school record for singles wins in a season while playing at the #3 position in 2007. A tandem of talented first-year players, Sam Frank and Marianne Barau, will compete for spots in the lineup.

This year's team will have added motivation to reach the NCAA Quarterfinals for the 12th consecutive season as Gustavus will host the 2008 NCAA Division III Women's Tennis National Championships on May 13-18 in St. Peter.

Hamline

Coach: Jon Henning (1st season)

2007 Finish: Tied 7th (7-10, 3-7 MIAC)

Hamline Athletes to Watch
N/A

Hamline Season Preview
N/A

Macalester

Coach: Jason Muhl (3rd season)

2007 Finish: Tied 7th (6-12, 3-7 MIAC)

Macalester Athletes to Watch
<p>Stephanie Lee (So., Camarillo, Calif.)</p> <p>Amanda Wenzel (So., Green Bay, Wis. / Southwest)</p> <p>Anna Peschel (Sr., St. Paul, Minn. / Central)</p> <p>Becky Nieber (Jr., Madison, Wis. / East)</p>

Macalester Season Preview
<p>Macalester had made outstanding progress over the last two years, picking up three conference wins in '07 while losing a couple more conference matches by narrow margins. The year, the Scots are looking to continue their climb up the MIAC ladder under third-year head coach Jason Muhl.</p> <p>The Scots lost Megan Walsh at the top of the singles lineup but replace her with Mount Holyoke (Mass.) transfer Angie Horner (So., Bismarck, N.D. / Century), a highly-ranked player from the New England region a year ago. Horner has a chance to be Mac's most highly-accomplished women's tennis players in years.</p> <p>Macalester enjoys a great deal of experience throughout the rest of the lineup. Horner's No. 1 doubles partner Stephanie Lee (So., Camarillo, Calif. / Oaks Christian) should play in the top part of the singles lineup after going 5-11 last year at No. 2. Amanda Wenzel (So., Green Bay, Wis. / Southwest) led the team with 11 wins last year, going 11-7 overall and 4-6 in the MIAC at No. 3 singles. Anna Peschel (Sr., St. Paul, Minn. / Central), Becky Nieber (Jr., Madison, Wis. / East), Becky Schneider (Jr., Larchmont, N.Y. / Mamaroneck) and Jenna Harris (Sr., Cincinnati, Ohio / Seven Hills) also return as regulars to the singles lineup.</p>

Saint Benedict

Coach: Scott Larsen (2nd season)

2007 Finish: 3rd (15-7, 8-2 MIAC)

Saint Benedict Athletes to Watch

<p>- Megan Wrobel (Sr., Willmar, Minn./Willmar)</p> <p>Melissa Kampa (Sr., St. Cloud, Minn./Cathedral)</p> <p>Christine Long (So., North Oaks, Minn./Mounds View)</p>
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<p>Saint Benedict Season Preview</p> <p>The College of Saint Benedict tennis team, coming off an 8-2 conference and 14-6 overall season in 2007, is gearing up for another successful campaign this year. With five new faces on the roster this year there is plenty of excitement and energy around the team as the season begins.</p> <p>Providing leadership for this years team are senior captains Megan Wrobel (Willmar, Minn./Willmar) and Melissa Kampa(St. Cloud, Minn./Cathedral). Three other senior players will help provide leadership for the five first-year players and two sophomores that round out our team.</p> <p>Wrobel is expected to play first singles and doubles this season. An All-MIAC player and National ITA Scholar Athlete from last year, Wrobel has developed into one of the top players in the conference. Having put in a great summer of work, Wrobel is ready for the challenge of playing every opponent’s top player this season.</p> <p>Kampa is returning to the Blazer team this year after taking her junior season off to participate in a study abroad program in Spain. Kampa, an All-MIAC athlete and National ITA Scholar Athlete has also worked hard to get back into match condition and is poised to make her senior season her best season yet as a Blazer.</p> <p>CSB’s sophomore class includes Christine Long (North Oaks, Minn./ Mounds View) and Amanda Forstrom (Clara City, Minn./ MACCRAY). Long gained valuable experience as a top-six player in both the singles line-up and doubles line-up last year and is expected to provide depth and skill for this season’s squad. Forstrom was voted last season’s most improved player. She played a limited role on last season’s varsity team but is expected to be much more involved this season.</p> <p>“We have great energy and excitement on our team with the addition of five first-year players,” said Head Coach Scott Larsen. “I am confident that we will have great leadership and competitiveness this year and am excited to be working with this group of Blazer athletes.”</p>
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St. Catherine
Coach: Eric Stacey (8th season)

2007 Finish: Tied 5th (11-10, 5-5 MIAC)

<p>St. Catherine Athletes to Watch</p> <p>- Jenna Olson (So., Pine City, Minn.)</p> <p>Suzie Hallquist (Jr., Coon Rapids, Minn.)</p> <p>Jamie Weber (Sr., Benson, Minn.)</p> <p>Megan Dean (Fy., Pamona, Calif.)</p>
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<p>St. Catherine Season Preview</p>
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The College of St. Catherine tennis team enters their 2008 season with former head coach Eric Stacey once again taking the reigns of a program looking to battle for a spot in the MIAC playoffs. Last season the Wildcats finished MIAC play with a 5-5 record, good enough to secure of spot in the MIAC playoffs where they lost in the first round to the University of St. Thomas.

Coach Stacey will look to a trio of veterans to lead his team in '08. Senior Jamie Weber (Benson, Minn.) has been a consistent player throughout her time at St. Kate's and will be looked to by Stacey to help guide this young team.

In addition to Weber, Junior Suzie Hallquist (Coon Rapids, Minn.) and Sophomore Jenna Olson (Pine City, Minn.) will play a big role in any Wildcat success this season. Both players are expected to contribute both in singles and doubles play.

Eight of the 12 members of the '08 Wildcat tennis team are first year or sophomore players and one of the young Wildcats looking to make an impact in her first year is Megan Dean (Pamona, Calif.). Dean, also on the Wildcat soccer team where she started 12 of 18 games and had a very good first year will be looked at by Stacey to contribute to the Wildcats' playoff push.

"We have a very young team and we will be looking to improve throughout the season with the hopes of being in the middle of the playoff mix at the end of the season," stated Wildcat head coach Eric Stacey.

Saint Mary's

Coach: Jeff Halberg (10th season)

2007 Finish: Tied 7th (10-9, 3-7 MIAC)

Saint Mary's Athletes to Watch

Val Meschke (Jr., Pequot Lakes, Minn.)

Aubrey Hirsch (Sr., Topeka, Kan.)

Saint Mary's Season Preview

The Saint Mary's University women's tennis team found itself on the outside looking in when Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Tournament invitations were handed out a year ago.

Cardinal coach Jeff Halberg is hoping his team will be on the MIAC's invite list this time around.

"We've got a good balance this year — very solid returning players and some excellent newcomers," said Halberg. "And if we are going to be successful this year, it's going to take a total team effort."

And a little luck along the way.

The Cardinals finished 3-7 in conference play, finishing seventh — and just missing the six-team conference post-season tournament by one place finish.

"We had our chances last year," said Halberg. "We lost a couple of (5-4) heartbreakers to St. Catherine and Macalester, not to mention 6-3 losses to St. Olaf and Hamline. "We get the ball to bounce our way a couple of times and we could have finished as high as 7-3 — and in the playoffs.

"I think top-to-bottom, we are as talented — if not more talented — that a year ago," said Halberg, whose squad will be led by senior Aubrey Hirsch (Topeka, Kan.) and junior Val Meschke (Pequot Lakes, Minn.) — who posted a team-best 16-2 record en route to her first-ever All-MIAC honor. "But one or two people aren't going to be able to carry us through.

"Every match is going to have to be a team effort," added Halberg, whose team kicks off its season Saturday, Feb. 2, playing host to Carleton in an MIAC match at 10 a.m., before taking on NCAA Division II Winona State in a nonconference match at 5 p.m. "If we can get everyone playing up to their potential, and catch a few breaks along the way, we could be in for a very successful season."

St. Olaf

Coach: Scott Nesbit (18th season)

2007 Finish: Tied 5th (8-9, 5-5 MIAC)

St. Olaf Athletes to Watch
Ellen Goerss (Jr.)
Kristina Poplavska (Jr.)
Sarah Carlson (So.)
Aimee Ny (So.)

St. Olaf Season Preview
The 2008 women's tennis team will have to build around their four returners in the upcoming season. Six first-years join the squad this year, with many opportunities to compete under head coach Scott Nesbit, now in his 19th season.
Returning for the Oles are juniors Ellen Goerss and Kristina Poplavska. Sophomores Sarah Carlson and Aimee Ny round out the returners.
Joining the coaching staff is Jacie Haldorson, a recent Luther graduate and tennis player for the Norse. Carrie Carroll, a former Ole, will also be assisting Nesbit this season.
St. Olaf lost their first match of the season against Macalester, 6-3, on February 15. The Oles will travel to Rochester next to play Luther College on February 23.

St. Thomas

Coach: Terry Peck (13th season)

2007 Finish: 4th (17-5, 7-3 MIAC)

St. Thomas Athletes to Watch
Dana Vilar (Sr., Brookfield, Wis./East)
Brittany Bachman (Sr., Litchfield, Minn.)
Ali Bruflodt (So., Eden Prairie, Minn.)
Hadley Syverud (So., Mounds View, Minn.)
Alexandra Frank (Fy., Mahtomedi, Minn.)

St. Thomas Season Preview
13th-year women's coach Terry Peck will coach his 500th match with the Tommies in 2008. He comes into 2008 with a combined men's and women's dual record of 369-126 (.756 win%).
The Tommie women have built a 145-38 dual record over the last nine seasons, including a 31-10 record since 2006.
The Toms return six of their top eight players from a 17-5 team of 2007. The record included two 5-0 losses to Gustavus and three 5-4 defeats to St. Cloud State, Carleton and St. Ben's. Last season, Dana Vilar finished 13-0 in singles play and 19-3 in doubles play, and Alison Bruflodt was 16-4 in singles and 15-5 in doubles in her freshman season.
At least two of the five freshmen will play extensively in 2008 -- Alexandra Frank and Catherine Branflick.