

2011 MIAC Women's Tennis Coaches' Poll and Preview

3/3/2011

ST. PAUL, Minn. – The Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) has been dominated by Gustavus Adolphus College since 1992. In that span the Gusties have won every conference title and head coach **Jon Carlson** has a 200-1 career conference record. However, if the 2011 MIAC Women's Tennis Preseason Coaches' Poll is any indication, the gap is closing between Gustavus and the rest of the league.

The Gusties were once again tabbed as the favorite to win the league crown, but the conference coaches clearly think Carleton is now in Gustavus' league by the voting totals. The defending champs received six first-place votes and 96 total points to finish atop the poll, but Carleton was a close second with five first-place votes and 95 points. St. Olaf was picked third with 81, St. Thomas was slotted fourth with 72.5 and Saint Benedict rounded out the top five at 62.5.



Saint Mary's was picked to finish sixth in 2011 with 48 points in the poll. St. Catherine came in seventh with 40. Bethel and Concordia were separated by a single point for eighth and ninth, with the Royals getting 37 and Concordia getting 36, and Macalester (22) and Hamline (15) finished out the polls.

Gustavus loses a few key contributors from last year's squad – including Chris Evert award winner **Sierra Kresbach** – but Carlson has three All-Conference singles players back to lead another quest for a conference title. **Sam Frank**, **Marianne Barau** and **Megan Gaard** are all back for the Gusties, and all are coming off stellar fall seasons. Frank will be the No. 1 singles player, with Barau and Gaard filling out the top three, and Barau and Gaard will look to continue their great run as doubles teammates. With a few other key returners and new faces in the lineup, Gustavus will try to continue its MIAC excellence.

However, the Knights sincerely hope there's a changing of the guard. Two-time All-American **Kathryn Schmidt** bolsters Carleton's title hopes, along with two other returning All-Conference selections and a heralded recruiting class. **Bridget Doyle** and **Erin Gudul** both compliment the Knights' singles line-up, and all three are also potent doubles players. If the new crop of Carleton recruits can live up to expectations, this year's conference race could be a fight to the finish.

St. Olaf is predicted to remain in the top three this season after last year's 12-5 overall record and 8-2 conference finish. The Oles bring back their top three singles players – **Abigail Ho**, **Caitlin Harper** and **Christine Muller** – and have upperclassmen back to round out the rest of their lineup. The Oles are another deep, experienced team that could go along way with a few standout contributions from some new faces.

St. Thomas starts its first spring in its new indoor facility, and it hopes to also challenge for a spot near the top of the MIAC standings after going 7-3 in conference play last spring. Senior **Alex Frank** was an All-MIAC selection in both singles and doubles, and headlines the Tommies' returners. **Madeline Gail** – an All-Conference doubles pick – and **Katherine Branflick** gives UST a talented crop of seniors, and sophomore **Mary Allen** is another familiar face back for the Tommies.

The next Saint Benedict, Saint Mary's and St. Catherine are all aiming for a playoff spot in 2011. The Blazers bring back a number of talented upperclassmen, led by senior All-MIAC pick **Kylie Huether**. Saint Mary's coach **Jeff Halberg** shared Coach-of-the-Year honors with Carlson last season, and this year All-MIAC returnees **Bailey Edwards** and **Rebecca Snyder** will lead the Cardinals. St. Catherine brings back four players – **Kasie Rust**, **Lauren Beadnell**, **Michaela Burroughs** and **Danielle Munsterman** – with plenty of collegiate experience to help the Wildcats.

Bethel is expected to be better than its 0-10 conference finish a year ago. Top doubles team **Lisa Scheevel** and **Steph Brown** will be back to lead the Royals. Concordia has higher hopes after getting No. 1 singles player **Andrea Rognlien** back after an injury cost her the entire 2010 season. Macalester is happy to have veterans **Paige Schaeffer** and **Abby Citrin** back in its lineup this year, and Hamline will build around co-captains **Kristen Kiemele** and **Kelsey Eatherton** in 2011.

The MIAC regular season is already under way with each team playing a 10-match season between now and late April. The top six teams in the regular season standings will advance to the 2011 MIAC Women's Tennis Playoffs, which will be held May 6-7 at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minn.

Complete results from the 2011 MIAC Women's Tennis Preseason Coaches' Poll are listed below, as well as team-by-team previews for all 11 conference schools.

2011 MIAC Women's Tennis Preseason Coaches' Poll

Coaches voted for every team in the conference except their own team. Points were assigned for each vote (10 for first, nine for second, etc.) Teams are ranked in order of highest point total to lowest with vote totals listed and first-place votes shown in parentheses.

2011 MIAC Women's Tennis Preseason Coaches' Poll		
Rank	Institution	Total
1	Gustavus (6)	96
2	Carleton (5)	95
3	St. Olaf	81
4	St. Thomas	72.5
5	Saint Benedict	62.5
6	Saint Mary's	48
7	St. Catherine	40
8	Bethel	37
9	Concordia	36
10	Macalester	22
11	Hamline	15

2011 MIAC Playoffs: Top Six Teams, May 6-7, Gustavus Adolphus College - St. Peter, Minn.

| [2011 MIAC Schedule](#) | [2010 MIAC Statistics](#) | [MIAC Recordbook](#) | [MIAC Archives](#)

Bethel

Coach: Dan Morton (11 seasons)

2010 Finish: 11th (0-10 MIAC, 3-15 overall)

Bethel Season Preview
<p>The Royals had a rough go in 2010 finishing the year with a 0-10 mark in conference play. The loss of top performer Ashley Watts will be significant, as she finished last season with an 11-7 singles record.</p> <p>In the #1 doubles slot this year for the Royals will once again be Lisa Scheevel (So., St. Cloud, Minn.) and Steph Brown (So., Lake City, Minn.). The two collected a 4-13 mark last year for Bethel in doubles play and look to build upon their experience playing together this year. Scheevel also competed as the #1 singles player last year for the Royals and will be the #2 singles player this year behind teammate Abby Edin (So., Staples, Minn.) who will be stepping into the #1 singles role. Along with her #1 singles play, Edin will also be teaming up with Mary Beck (Jr., Woodbury, Minn.) in #2 doubles play for the Royals.</p>

Carleton

Coach: Luciano Battaglini (3 seasons)

2010 Finish: 2nd (9-1 MIAC, 13-6 overall)

Carleton Season Preview

Carleton, ranked in the top 30 nationally to end the 2010 campaign, will again be among the MIAC's elite in 2011.

Led by two-time All-American Kathryn Schmidt, the Knights have opened the 2011 season ranked 27th in the country. Schmidt, who was abroad during the abbreviated fall season, is supported by an incoming recruiting class that ranked in the top 20 nationally by TennisRecruiting.net. Heading up the class is Anne Lombardi, who enters the spring season ranked 10th in the ITA central region rankings, after helping Hinsdale Central (Ill.) High School capture its third consecutive Illinois state team title. She is listed among the top 20 graduating seniors in Illinois and the top 300 players nationally.

Also joining the Knights this fall are Felicity Flesher from Oxford (Miss.) High School; Katherine Greenberg, the number one singles player for four years at Clayton High School in St. Louis, Mo.; and Molly Hemes from Green Bay (Wis.) Preble High School.

The duo of Lombardi and Bridget Doyle opens as the No. 5 ranked doubles tandem in the central region after advancing to the semifinals in the ITA Midwest Regional. Doyle also finished 2010 ranked as the No. 23 singles player in the region and earned All-MIAC distinction.

Along with Doyle, the Knights return two other All-MIAC selections from the 2010 squad. Schmidthas qualified for the NCAA tournament as an individual in her first two years and finished 2010 as the No. 12 ranked singles player in the nation. Schmidt's doubles partner and All-MIAC selection, Erin Gudul, who also missed this fall on a study abroad experience, returns to bolster the team's lineup. The tandem finished 2010 as the No. 5 doubles team in the central region.

Concordia

Coach: Troy Hanestad (5 seasons)

2010 Finish: Tied 8th (3-7 MIAC, 7-10 overall)

Concordia Season Preview

Concordia-Moorhead suffered through a tough-luck season in 2010. A year after qualifying for the MIAC playoffs, the Cobbers lost their No.1 singles player to an injury and was never able to recover as the lineup had to be shifted and the team was never able to recover.

Head Coach Troy Hanestad should have less headaches in 2011 as No.1 singles player Andrea Rognlien (Jr., Fargo, N.D./Oak Grove HS) returns from an injury that sidelined her for the entire season in 2010. Rognlien earned All-Conference honors as a freshman in 2009. She will once again be put at the top of the lineup and will be hoping to regain her freshman form where she won 12 matches.

The Cobbers also return their No.2 singles player from last season. Junior Katie Edin (Staples, Minn./Staples-Motley HS) had to take over the No.1 singles spot last year after Rognlien went down with the injury and she did well enough to post six wins on the year. Edin had 10 wins as a freshman at the No.2 spot and will benefit from once again returning to her more natural position.

Melanie Gail (Sr., Madison, Minn./Lac Qui Parle Valley HS) will jump one spot and should fit into the No.3 singles spot for CC in 2011. She was 8-8 last year at No.4 singles and has 27 career wins under her belt.

The key for the Cobbers will come from the No.4, 5 and 6 singles spot. In the first part of the season look for several players to get the chance to earn a spot in the top 6. Leading the way will be junior Kelly Kalvoda (Bismarck, N.D./Bismarck Century HS) and sophomores Chelsie McGraw (Litchfield, Minn.) and Julie Olson (Minot, N.D.). Kalvoda has the most experience of the three as she went 6-8 last year as primarily the team's No.6 singles player. Olson was the team's No.5 singles player last year and McGraw played in five matches in 2010.

Look for lineup newcomers Anna Rasmussen (So., Hutchinson, Minn.) and Lauren Gravelle (So., Forest Lake, Minn.) to also get looks in the early part of the season and on the team's trip to Florida at the end of February.

Rognlien and Edin will be reunited as the team's No.1 doubles tandem. The pair went 10-10 in 2009 and should be back in form by the time CC opens conference play on Mar. 5. The No.2 and No.3 doubles teams will take awhile to sort out and Hanestad will be hoping by the time the meat of the season rolls around in April, the Cobbers will have three consistent doubles teams.

Concordia will once again be bolstered by a southern trip over spring break to prepare for MIAC competition. The Cobbers head back to the Orlando area where they will play five matches before returning home to face Carleton in the conference opener on Mar. 5.

Gustavus

Coach: Jon Carlson (20 seasons)

2010 Finish: 1st (10-0 MIAC, 33-11 overall)

Gustavus Season Preview

The Gustavus women's tennis team is set to defend its 2010 MIAC title with a new look in the singles competition due to the graduation of number-one and five singles players Sierrra Krebsbach and Ali O'Neal. The Gusties return three All-Conference performers from last season's squad in seniors Sam Frank (Mahtomedi, Minn.) and Marianne Barau (Glencoe, Minn.), and junior Megan Gaard (Edina, Minn.). The Gusties fell 5-0 to Williams in the quarterfinals of the NCAA Championships last season, finishing the season 33-10 overall and 10-0 in the MIAC.

Sam Frank will likely move up one spot to take over the #1 singles responsibilities. Last season Frank was 16-16 overall with a 9-1 record against MIAC opponents. Frank, a two-time All-Conference performer in singles, is coming off the best fall season of her career. Frank won the singles title at the USTA/ITA Midwest Regional and advanced to the ITA Small College Championships. Frank finished runner-up at the tournament, earning ITA All-America honors and becoming the first Gustavus women's tennis player to advance to the championship match of the ITA Small College Championships.

Marianne Barau and Megan Gaard will be expected to fill in the remaining top-three spots. Barau finished the 2010 season 26-7 in singles, while Gaard went 23-5. Barau and Gaard will also look to pick up where they left off in the doubles competition, finishing the season with a 26-5 record last year. The duo also enters the 2011 season with some momentum after winning doubles title in the USTA/ITA Midwest Regional this fall.

Junior Alex Erickson will look to fill the #4 singles spot as the other top returner in the top-six from a year ago. Erickson was 22-4 last season and played primarily at #6 singles. Maria Bryan, who partnered up with Ali O'Neal in doubles for the majority of last season, will be called upon to step into a role in singles play as well. Mary Roop, Julie Bardenwerper, and Megan Born are the other top competitors battling for the sixth and final spot in the lineup.

Hamline

Coach: Jon Henning (3 seasons)

2010 Finish: 10th (1-9 MIAC, 5-13 overall)

Hamline Season Preview

The Hamline women's tennis team has dedicated itself to principles that will lead towards improvement in 2011. The focus of 2011 is supporting and encouraging teammates, having a positive attitude, and a strong work ethic. These areas of strength will help the Pipers gain new heights for the upcoming season.

The women's tennis team is built around intelligent and hard working individuals. Co-captains this year are Kristen Kiemele (Sr., Eagan, Minn.) and Kelsey Eatherton (Sr., Spring Lake Park, Minn.). They both are exceptional leaders and student-athletes who had invaluable experience playing the top spots in the lineup. Nicole Krier (Jr., Woodbury, Minn.), and Anna Yarbrough (Jr., Minneapolis, Minn.) are motivated to improve their games mentally and physically and are poised to make some noise in the conference. Nora McGraw (Sr., Hutchinson, Minn.) showed that she can compete with the top doubles teams in the conference last year and Elizabeth Allen (So., Menasha, Wis.) made tremendous strides in the off-season to build off of a nice 1st season.

Two new first-year student-athletes that are looking to contribute are Carissa Wallerich (Fy., West Salem, Wisc.) and Leeanna Manthe (Fy., Elko, Minn.). Carissa and Leeanna are great athletes who are hoping to carry previous success from high school into the college ranks.

With the return of all but one from the 2010 lineup, the Hamline women's tennis team in 2011 has the experience and leadership to be an extremely competitive group.

Macalester

Coach: Jason Muhl (4 seasons)

2010 Finish: Tied 8th (3-7 MIAC, 11-8 overall)

Macalester Season Preview

The Scots are seeking their fourth straight winning season under Coach Jason Muhl. Macalester lost its top two players to graduation, but moving up to the top two spots in the singles lineup are veterans Paige Schaeffer (So., Madison, Wis.) and Abby Citrin (Sr., Rye Brook, N.Y. / Blind Brook). Schaeffer will move up from No. 3 to the top position in the lineup after going 14-7 last spring. Citrin posted a team-best 15-4 record, including a 6-4 conference mark.

Lauren Dutkiewicz (Sr., St. Charles, Ill. / North) missed last season while studying abroad, but returns to the middle of the singles lineup after going 4-4 in MIAC matches as a sophomore. Dutkiewicz and Louise Dickson (Sr., North Oaks, Minn. / Mounds View) provide experience in the middle of the singles roster. Maddie Vargo (So., California, Pa.) also returns to the singles lineup. Lucy Miner (Jr., Seattle, Wash. / Ballard) also returns after going 7-9 last year in singles play and 8-9 in doubles competition.

Several newcomers will be asked to step in and play key roles right away, including Sarah Couser (Fy., Middleton, Wis.), Courtney Olson (Fy., Red Wing, Minn.) and Carmen Whitehead (Fy., Greeley, Colo. / West).

Saint Benedict

Coach: Scott Larsen (4 seasons)

2010 Finish: 5th (6-4 MIAC, 12-7 overall)

Saint Benedict Season Preview

With a team composed of mainly upperclassman the Blazers look to qualify for the conference tournament again and finish in the top four. Saint Benedict returns two seniors and five juniors with lots of experience. The Blazers depth in singles will be key to being successful this season with three all new doubles combinations.

St. Catherine

Coach: Ben Hageseth (2 seasons)

2010 Finish: Tied 6th (4-6 MIAC, 7-11 overall)

St. Catherine Season Preview

The Wildcat tennis program is looking forward to another positive season within the MIAC. The team had a very successful year in 2010 and is looking to improve upon its accomplishments with the return of four veterans and the addition of a few new faces. Leading the team for the 2011 season will be four players that have competed extremely well in the conference during their time at St. Kate's: Kasie Rust (Sr.; Glenwood, MN), Lauren Beadnell (Jr.; Watertown, SD), Michaela Burroughs (So.; Waterloo, NE), and Danielle Munsterman (So.; St. James, MN). In addition to the solid play of these individuals, St. Kate's has acquired 3 new players that will make a big impact on the program and fill in the gaps perfectly this season. McKenzie Weber (So.; Benson, MN), Skye Coughlin (Fr.; Staples, MN), Megan Buysse (Fr.; Redwood Valley, MN) all bring a lot of great experience from playing at a high level in high school or previous college competition. "There is a lot of good chemistry on the team and they really enjoy practicing and competing together. Everyone has improved dramatically, even since the fall season, so I expect that we will compete very well this year in the conference," said Coach Ben Hageseth. This should be another very good and productive season for the Wildcat tennis team.

Saint Mary's

Coach: Jeff Halberg (12 seasons)

2010 Finish: Tied 6th (4-6 MIAC, 12-8 overall)

Saint Mary's Season Preview

Saint Mary's University women's tennis coach Jeff Halberg knows that this year's team may be the deepest and most talented team he has had in in his 13 years as coach.

What he doesn't know is what that will translate to on the court and in the standings. But boy is he ready to find out.

"Our depth is the best it's been in years, but with the strength of this conference, it is the effort we put in day in and day out that will decide our fate," said Halberg, last year's co-MIAC Coach of the Year. "We'll have to make our own luck."

The Cardinals will be looking to improve on an impressive 2010 season — a season that culminated with a trip to the MIAC tournament.

Bailey Edwards (Fond du Lac, Wis.) and Rebecca Snyder (Eden Prairie, Minn.) are returning all-conference performers, but Halberg once again stresses the importance of the entire team if improvement is to be made.

"Our ladies made the conference tournament last year, and they would like to repeat that feat and hopefully make a little more noise when they arrive," Halberg said. "They are certainly capable of it, but the entire team needs to contribute if we want to reach our goals."

Grace Zachman (Elk River, Minn.) and Rachel Luetmer (Loretto, Minn.) add to what is already a deep women's side.

While the wins and losses are nice, Halberg really wants his Cardinals to enjoy the time they have playing. If they do that, everything else will fall into place.

"Goals are necessary and useful, but what I wish more than anything is for my teams to enjoy the battle or the 'journey' as you might say," Halberg said. "Varsity Athletics is one of those unique areas where we put ourselves into stressful situations on purpose.

"Hopefully we embrace that challenge and find out what we're made of."

St. Olaf

Coach: Scott Nesbit (20 seasons)

2010 Finish: 3rd (8-2 MIAC, 12-5 overall)

St. Olaf Season Preview

The St. Olaf women's tennis team looks to build on last year's third place (12-5, 8-2 MIAC) finish this spring. The Ole's return eight players from last year's team including their top three singles players. Returning are Abigail Ho (Sr.), Caitlin Harper (Sr.), Christine Muller (Jr.), Claire Carlson (Jr.), Julia Ellis (So.), Sarah Magnuson (Sr.), and Anna Klenke (Sr.). Ho will play first singles again after posting an 8-2 conference record last spring. Harper and Muller will play the second and third spots and are both coming off successful seasons at those spots last year. Carlson, Ellis and Magnuson will likely round out the singles line-up.

For doubles, Ho and Muller will team-up at first doubles, coming off an 11-6 mark there last spring. Carlson and Harper and Ellis and Magnuson will likely play at the second and third spots. New additions to the team are first-years Lizzie Carlson, Lizzy Eggert, Caitlin Owsley, and Carrie Wight.

St. Thomas

Coach: Terry Peck (15 seasons)

2010 Finish: 4th (7-3 MIAC, 11-6 overall)

St. Thomas Season Preview

The Tommie women's tennis team, 1-0 last fall, comes into March with a 4-0 record thus far in 2011. Its 9-0 win over Southwest Minnesota State on Feb. 6 marked UST's first on-campus tennis competition in 23 months and were the inaugural tennis matches contested in the Anderson Athletic and Recreation Complex. St. Thomas played all 35 matches in 2010 off campus as its new facility was under construction.

Terry Peck is starting his 21st season directing the UST men and 16th as women's head coach. Peck had his 600th college match last spring and is closing in on 450 wins. He also was a UST assistant coach for five seasons from 1985-1990. Add in his 13 seasons as a high school coach at Wayzata and St. Louis Park, and he's approaching 600 coaching victories.

Peck's women finished 11-6 last season in dual meets, including a 2-3 record in matches decided by a 5-4 score. The Toms graduated three standouts in Ali Bruflodt (3X All-MIAC; Career: 54-20 singles, 48-29 doubles); Hadley Syverud, (Career: 41-13 in singles, 56-16 in doubles); and Suzanne Brophy (Career: 31-7 singles, 24-11 doubles).

The 2011 Toms return four of their top seven players. The 14-player roster also includes seven freshmen. Senior Alex Frank made all-conference in both singles and doubles last season. Senior Madeline Gail repeated as All-MIAC honorees in doubles. Frank comes into 2011 with a career record of 39-17 in doubles and 28-27 in singles. In the same span, Gail is 34-13 in singles and 36-9 in doubles.

A third senior back is Katherine Branflick (Career: 4-4 doubles, 1-2 singles). Sophomores Mary Allen also returns. Allen was 7-3 in singles and 12-5 in doubles last season.

Players expected to contribute immediately include sophomore Lauren Shultz, who played ice hockey last season for the Tommies; and freshmen twins Anna and Rachel Wright from Dubuque, Iowa. Their brother, Peter, is a junior on the Tommie men's team after transferring from Gustavus. Four other freshmen are expected to contribute in the near future -- Brianna Odegard (Forest Lake), Lauren Bachmeier (Edina), Maureen Carberry (Bloomington Kennedy) and St. Ben's transfer Briggs La Savage (Duluth East).