

2018 MIAC Women's Tennis Preview & Preseason Coaches' Poll

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BLOOMINGTON, Minn. – With a pair of teams already in the national spotlight and several more eyeing the opportunity, the 2018 Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) women's tennis season promises to be an exciting one.

After going undefeated in Conference play last year, the Carleton Knights earned the top spot in the annual MIAC Women's Tennis Coaches' Preseason Poll, securing six first-place votes and 93 total points. Carleton will also open the season ranked No. 39 in the nation in the [Oracle/ITA Division III National Poll](#). Sophomore **Zoe Park** – who earned All-Conference honors in her first season of competition last year – figures to lead the Knights' attack in 2018.

St. Thomas and Gustavus tied for second-place in this year's Coaches' Poll, with the Tommies receiving an edge from one additional first-place vote. UST head coach Terry Peck will enter his 25th season at the helm with a pair of seniors – **Caitlin Bakke** and **Jenna Zimmerman** – leading the way for an otherwise youthful lineup.

Champions of the 2017 MIAC Women's Tennis Playoffs, the No. 29-ranked Gusties will look to reclaim the MIAC crown with help from junior **Briana Hartmann**, who ranks fifth nationally and second regionally in the Oracle/ITA Division III National Singles and Doubles Rankings. Hartmann took fifth-place at the ITA Oracle Cup in October.

Coming in at No. 4 in the Preseason Poll is Bethel, a team entering the year with excellent balance on the court. All-Conference selections **Mattie Kidder** and **Sami Hindt** are back to provide senior leadership to a talented group of relative newcomers, including exciting freshman competitor **Maggie Riermann**, who reached the semifinals of the ITA Midwest Regional Championships back in September.

The Wildcats of St. Catherine received 57 points in the coaches' preseason balloting to take the No. 5 spot in the Coaches' Poll. Now in her third season at the helm, head coach Megan Gaard's and her staff have helped establish St. Kate's as a perennial contender in the MIAC. With a trio of All-Conference honorees in **Julia Sporer**, **Alisha Wiedmeier** and **Bri Dorr** back in action this spring, SCU figures to make a run at an eighth consecutive postseason berth.

Complete 2018 Preseason Coaches' Poll

Coaches voted for every team in the conference except their own team. Points were assigned for each vote (10 for first, 9 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.

2018 MIAC Women's Tennis Preseason Coaches' Poll

Rank	Institution (First-Place Votes)	Total
1.	Carleton (6)	93
T2.	St. Thomas (3)	89
T2.	Gustavus (2)	89
4.	Bethel	73
5.	St. Catherine	57
6.	Saint Benedict	46
7.	St. Olaf	45
8.	Saint Mary's	40
9.	Macalester	39
10.	Hamline	22



*Zoe Park was an All-Conference selection in her first year at Carleton last season.
(Photo: Geoffrey Mo)*

Around the MIAC

- St. Olaf senior **Margaret Zimmermann** has gone 24-5 over the last two seasons as a singles competitor, including a 12-2 run from the No. 1 spot in 2017.
- Saint Mary's junior **Laura Sondag** has played 38 straight singles matches at No. 1 for the Cardinals.
- Macalester senior **Lily Stein** spent the majority of her 2017 season playing from the 3 and 4 spots, going 6-1 on the year in No. 3 singles.

2018 MIAC Men's Tennis Playoffs

The 2018 MIAC Women's Tennis Playoffs will include the top six teams in the Conference standings, squaring off in a single-elimination tournament. Teams seeded No. 3 through No. 6 will square off on May 1 in the quarterfinals, with the winners meeting the top two seeds in the semifinals on May 3. The championship match will be held May 5 on the home court of the top remaining seed. The winner will receive the MIAC's automatic bid to the 2018 NCAA Division III Women's Tennis Tournament.

Odds and Ends

- Saint Benedict competed at the ITA Regional Tournament for the first time in several years last September. CSB's roster for the event featured one senior, one junior, two sophomores and a pair of first-years.
- Hamline – which ended the 2017 campaign on a high note by topping Wis.-River Falls, 8-1 – graduated four competitors from last season's squad, creating a huge opportunity for new faces in 2018.
- Concordia did not have a single senior on the roster last year, with first-year competitors making up five of the team's eight roster spots.