2015 MIAC Women's Cross Country Championship Preview

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2015 MIAC WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS PREVIEW

ST. PAUL, Minn. -- The 2015 Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) Women's Cross Country Championships will be held Saturday at Como Golf Course in St. Paul, Minn., and once again the defending team and individual champions from Carleton College will headline the field.

The Knights enter the 2015 championship race as the favorites to claim their third-straight MIAC championship and fifth title since 2009, and senior star Ruth Steinke is back to defend her individual conference crown as well.



Last year, Carleton placed five runners in the top 15 for 42 points and a 16-point victory over cross-town rival St. Olaf, and Steinke's winning time of 21:28.4 was the second-fastest time recorded at the MIAC championships since the women switched to a 6k race in 2005.

This season, the Knights are ranked No. 1 in the Central Region and 16th in the nation and they've finished in the top four in all six of their meets, with three first-place finishes. Steinke has also won three times and finished in the top five in each of her five races. Juniors Nicole Nipper and Winona Rachel and sophomores Dorry Jaffre and Lindsay Chavez all return to give Carleton a loaded lineup in its quest for a three-peat. Carleton is trying to become the first team to win three straight since St. Thomas did it from 2006-08, and Steinke will aim to become just the sixth repeat individual champion.

Though Carleton appears to be the favorite, there are plenty of talented teams on the Knights' heels, hoping to prevent them from claiming the title again in 2015. There are two other teams receiving votes in the national polls, and five others in the Central Region rankings that all plan to contend on Saturday, led by a St. Thomas team ranked 23rd in the nation and second in the region, and St. Olaf, which is ranked fourth in the region and receiving votes in the national poll. Macalester (fifth), Saint Benedict (sixth) and Gustavus (eighth) are also ranked in the top eight in the region, to give the MIAC Championships some serious star power at the top.

The Oles were the runners-up to their cross-town rival with 58 points a year ago after placing seven runners in the top 21. St. Olaf will be led by All-MIAC returners Piper Bain and Jamie Hoornaert and All-MIAC honorable mention returner Morghen Phillippi. The Tommies were third a year ago with 93 points and intend on contending this season behind seniors Emily Gapinski and Megan Terukina and junior Bridget McGivern.

Saint Benedict scored an even 100 last year to finish fourth, and the Blazers expect to contend for another top-four finish in 2015 behind sophomore standout Brooke Rasmussen and senior leaders Kiley Green and Emma Weber. Macalester returns two-time All-American and 2014 MIAC runner-up Kimber Meyer, who should be Steinke's top challenger at the front of the pack. The Scots also bring back senior Sarah Johnathan and junior Eliza Ramsey as they look to continue their ascension after last season's fifth-place finish (139).

Gustavus was the last team not named Carleton to claim the MIAC title, and the Gusties are looking to build on 2014's sixth-place finish (175 points). A pair of seniors - Marit Sonnesyn and Lauren Shurson - will lead the way for Gustavus on Saturday. Bethel hopes to build on its seventh-place finish (221 points) under new head coach Joe Stephens. Sophomore star Annika Halverson is back after earning All-MIAC honors and a trip to nationals as a rookie, and junior Natalie Kessler and sophomore Lindsay Johnson help give the Royals a young. promising nucleus.

Augsburg was eighth a year ago with 242 points and hopes for improvement under second-year Head Coach Meghan Peyton. Junior Taybri Irving and senior Mary Cornelius are expected to lead the Auggies on Saturday. St. Catherine is also hoping for faster times in 2015 under new head coach Cami Paulson. The Wildcats, who finished ninth (260 points) in 2014, are counting on juniors Courtney Kirkeide and Shannon Strickland to lead the way at the MIAC Championships.

Hamline has a pair of talented sophomores - Meg Griffin and Mariah Gallagher - leading the way in 2015 as the Pipers try to out-perform last season's 10th-place showing (285 points). Concordia has its sights on a higher finish than last season's 11th-place showing (295 points) behind a pair of veterans - Kaya Baker and Melissa Uhrich. Saint Mary's enters Saturday's championship race with a pair of Thiels - senior Allie and first-year Erika - as the Cardinals aim to improve on a 12th-place finish (306 points) a year ago.

The women's 6k championship race will begin Saturday's meet at 2:15 p.m. and the men's 8k race will follow at 3:15 p.m. Once the results are tabulated and deemed final, a short awards ceremony will follow the conclusion of the men's race on the hillside near the clubhouse. The top 15 runners in each race will be honored as All-Conference selections, with runners finishing in places 16-to-25 receiving All-Conference Honorable Mention. The two team champions will also be honored and awarded their championship plaque.

Spectators are encouraged to attend the event and admission is free. All spectators are reminded to stay out of the runners' way on the course, and no dogs, bikes or artificial noisemakers are allowed on the course.

The MIAC has a <u>home page</u> for the event, which will be the first place to find results, recaps, photos and more online following the conclusion of the championships. The page also includes course maps for both the men's and women's races, directions to Como Golf Course and other helpful links. St. Olaf College is serving as the host institution for this year's championship and athletic training services will be provided by MIAC partner Twin Cities Orthopedic.

In addition to the preview, the MIAC also released a <u>promotional video</u> Monday to promote the big race. Fans can stay connected throughout the 2015 MIAC Cross Country Championships on social media through the MIAC's <u>Facebook</u> page, <u>Instagram</u> account or on <u>Twitter</u> using the hashtag #MIACXC.

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2015 MIAC CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS PROMO VIDEO

MIAC WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY LINKS

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TEAM-BY-TEAM PREVIEWS

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AUGSBURG | Auggies' women's cross country home page |

Head Coach

Meghan Peyton (2nd season)

A Year Ago

• 8th place | 242 points

Runners to Watch

- Taybri Irving (JR | Irving has improved her personal-best 6k time each year as an Auggie; Posted a 22:39.81 time at the UW-La Crosse Invitational on 10/17, finishing 13th overall, for a new personal-best.)
- Mary Cornelius (SR | Recorded a season-best time of 23:38.8 last year at the NCAA Division III Central Regional; Her 2015 season-best is 23:19.89 at the UW-La Crosse Invitational on 10/17)
- Rachel Frantz (SO | Recorded her personal-best time of 24:18.77 at the UW-La Crosse Invitational on 10/17)

By the Numbers

- 4: Top-30 individual finishes this season for Augsburg's top runner, Taybri Irving, including a ninth-place finish at the UW-Eau Claire Invitational on 10/2 and a 13th-place finish at the UW-La Crosse Invitational on 10/17.
- 17: Place for Augsburg at the 2014 NCAA Division III Central Regional, the Auggies' best finish in regional competition since 2004.

• 3.25: Team grade-point average for Augsburg's women's cross country team in 2014, which enabled the Auggies to earn U.S. Track and Field/Cross Country Coaches Association All-Academic Team honors.

Did You Know?

• Five Auggie runners earned Academic All-MIAC honors in 2014-15, including Mary Cornelius, who has a perfect 4.00 grade-point average.

Off the Course

• The Augsburg cross country teams are committed to civic engagement throughout the community. This past summer, each member of the team completed close to 15 hours of community service, for a total of over 300 hours. The teams participated in such events as helping the Department of Natural Resources with invasive species removal and seed collection for the restoration of native prairie grasses and flowers at the Lost Valley Prairie Scientific and Natural Area.



BETHEL | Royals' women's cross country home page |

Head coach

• Joe Stephens (1st season)

A Year Ago

• 7th place | 221 points

In the 2014 NCAA Championships

Annika Halverson finished 126th at 2014 NCAA Championships

Runners to Watch

- Annika Halverson (So. | 2014 NCAA National Championship Qualifier, MIAC All-Conference)
- Natalie Kessler (Jr. | 23:28 at UW-River Falls Invitational)
- Lindsay Johnson (So. | 24:20 at UW-Oshkosh AAE Invitational)
- Emmy Inwards (So. | 24:27 at UW-Oshkosh AAE Invitational)
- Rebecca Schulte (Fr. | 24:55 at UW-Oshkosh AAE Invitational)

By the Numbers

- 2: Annika Halverson won her second career MIAC XC Athlete-of-the-Week award after her personal best time of 21:48 at the UW-Oshkosh AAE Invitational. Halverson also claimed the award after winning her first collegiate race early in the 2014 season at the Augsburg Open.
- 4: Four of the Royals top five runners set new personal records at the last meet, the UW-Oshkosh AAE Invitational.

Did You Know?

• Annika Halverson's new personal best of 21:48 at the UW-Oshkosh AAE Invitational bested her previous career best time of 22:11 and moved her from fourth to third on the Royals All-Time Top Performances list. Halverson is now just ahead of Alex Potter's 21:56 in 2008 but just behind Nikki Umhoefer's 21:43 in 2007 and NCAA National Champion Marie Borner's 20:35 in 2009.

Off the Course

• Bethel assistant coach Missy (Buttry) Rock recently ran a personal best 2:52:34 at the Des Moines marathon on October 18th. Missy, the wife of Bethel Track & Field head coach Andrew Rock, is the most decorated cross country athlete in NCAA DIII women's history as an athlete at Wartburg College with three consecutive national championships.



CARLETON | Knights' women's cross country home page |

Head coach

• Donna Ricks (23rd season)

A Year Ago

• MIAC Champions | 42 points

In the 2014 NCAA Championships

- 1st at NCAA Central Regionals
- 14th at NCAA Championships

Runners to Watch

- Ruth Steinke (Sr. | 1st at 2014 MIAC Championships [All-MIAC]; 1st at regions [All-Region]; 4th at nationals [All-America]; MIAC Cross Country Athlete-of-the-Year 2014; in 2015 has posted top-5 finishes at all five races, including three victories)
- Nicole Nipper (Jr. | 13th at 2014 MIAC Championships [All-MIAC]; 16th at regionals [All-Region])
- Dorry Jaffre (So. | 10th at 2014 MIAC Championships [All-MIAC]; 36th at regionals)
- Lindsay Chavez (So. | 34th at 2014 MIAC Championships; 29th at regionals [All-Region])
- Winona Rachel (Jr. | 30th at 2014 MIAC Championships; 39th at regionals)

Bv the Numbers

- 6: Over the last decade, the Knights have won six MIAC team titles (2004, 2005, 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2014)
- 7: Carleton head coach Donna Ricks earned her 7th MIAC Women's Cross Country Coach-of-the-Year award in 2014.

• 16: The Knights are ranked No. 16 in the USTFCCCA's national poll and currently hold down the top spot in the central region.

Did You Know?

• The Knights have not finished outside of the top five in any meet they have run in this season, and they have won three of their six meets.

Off the Course

• For the 22nd consecutive season, the Carleton women's cross country team was recognized as an All-Academic team by the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association. The Knights posted a 3.59 cumulative grade-point average for the 2014 fall term, the 29th-best figure in the nation.



CONCORDIA | Cobbers' women's cross country home page |

Head coach

• Marv Roeske (17th season)

A Year Ago

• 11th place | 295 points

Runners to Watch

- Kaya Baker (Junior | Finished 39th in last season's MIAC meet, 12th place finish at Roy Griak)
- Melissa Uhrich (Senior | Jamestown Invitational winner, All-Region and All-MIAC in 2013)
- Sarah Kuball (Freshman | Three Top-30 finishes this season)
- Brianna Gruenberg (Freshman | Three Top-30 finishes this season including 6th at the Crown Invite)
- Sarah Curran (Sophomore | 11th place finish at the Crown Invitational)

By the Numbers

• 1: The team's top harrier, Kaya Baker, has been battling injury but will be competing this weekend in the MIAC invite. She finished in the top 40 in last year's MIAC meet. Baker is also a member of the Concordia women's hockey team.

Did You Know?

• The team finished in 5th at the prestigious Roy Griak Invitational hosted by the University of Minnesota. That mark is the best in program history.

Off the Course

• Susan Drache, Karley Peterson and Anja Smith earned MIAC Academic All-Conference honors for the Fall of 2014.



GUSTAVUS | Gusties' women's cross country home page |

Head coach

• Dale Bahr (Seventh season)

A Year Ago

• Sixth Place | 175 points

In the 2014 NCAA Championships

• Caitlin Fermoyle '15 ran a 24:23.1, good for 237th place

Runners to Watch

- Marit Sonnesyn (Sr., Plymouth, Minn.) | Led team in four of five meets this season ... ran a personal best 22:22.2 at UW-La Crosse Tori Neubauer Invite on Oct. 17 ... did not compete at 2014 MIAC Championships due to injury)
- Lauren Shurson (Sr., Chanhassen, Minn.) | Led team at UW-River Falls Invite on Sept. 11 by running a personal best 22:41.7 ... finished 31st at 2014 MIAC Championships with a time of 23:30.4)

By the Numbers

- 5: Number of Gustie women's cross country runners who earned Academic All-MIAC honors in 2014
- 84: Percent of runners on Gustavus' 19-woman roster who hail from state of Minnesota

Did You Know?

• The Gusties have had at least one representative at the NCAA National Meet in three out of four years since the 2011 season, including the seven individuals who competed in 2012 when Gustavus qualified as a team after winning the MIAC Championships.

Off the Course

• The Gustavus men's and women's cross country teams continue work on improving their favorite training venue, Seven Mile Creek County Park, a 628 acre park with 10 miles of multi-use trails located off highway 169 between St. Peter and Mankato. For the past several years, the Gusties have taken part in a community service project that will make upgrades and improvements to Seven Mile Creek, including the clearing and widening of miles of trails, the splitting of firewood, and filling sandbags to aid washout and flooding areas.

HAMLINE | Pipers' women's cross country home page |

Head coach

Paul Schmaedeke (10th season)

A Year Ago

• 10th place | 285 points

Runners to Watch

- Meg Griffin (So., top Hu finisher in last two CC races in 2015)
- Mariah Gallagher (So., finished in 61st place at last year's MIAC CC Meet)
- Brenna Kennedy (Sr., finished in 68th place at last year's MIAC CC Meet)
- Sarissa Falk (Jr., finished 73rd in last year's MIAC CC Meet)

By the Numbers

- 2: number of juniors on this year's team
- 3: number of seniors on this year's team
- 4: number of sophomores on this year's team

Did You Know?

 Although he has been involved in Hamline track & field for more than three decades, Paul Schamedeke has only been the head coach for women's cross country at Hamline for the last decade,

Off the Course

• The Women's CC team worked the finish line at the annual Victory memorial race in Minneapolis. It is the 25th consecutive year Hamline has worked this race.

MACALESTER | Scots' women's cross country home page |



Head coach

• Betsy Emerson (6th season)

• 5th place | 139 points

In the 2014 NCAA Championships

Kimber Meyer placed 7th at the NCAA Division III Championships, earning All-America honors for the second consecutive year

Runners to Watch

- Kimber Meyer (Junior | Griak Champion this season, First place finisher at St. Kate's Invite and St. Olaf Time Trial. Two-time MIAC Cross Country Athlete of the Week this season, Two-Time Cross Country All-American)
- Sarah Jonathan (Senior | Number two runner, placed fifth overall at the 2014 MIAC Championships, finished 21st at the Central Region Meet in 2014 to earn All Central Region honors)
- Eliza Ramsey (Junior | Number three runner for the Scots this season, finished 7th overall at the St. Kate's Invite, ran a 23:05 at Tori Neubauer Invite)
- Elena Torry-Schrag (Junior)
- Elena Smith (Freshman | Consistent top five finisher as a first year for the Scots this season)

By the Numbers

- 1: This season marked the first year Macalester has had a runner finish as the number ONE runner at the U of M Griak Invitational (Kimber Meyer).
- 4: The Scots broke the top four as a team at the Roy Griak this season
- 12: 12 of the 13 juniors on the Macalester cross-country team will study abroad this spring.

Did You Know?

• 19 states and two countries are represented as hometowns on the 40-person Macalester roster

Off the Course

 Junior runner Eliza Ramsey (who has had a breakout season for the Scots) was awarded the Mike Augustin Scholarship in August. The award is given to students with a passion for education or communication. Ramsey works in the sports information office at Macalester and contributes feature stories, website updates and served as the sports editor for the Mac Weekly.

SAINT BENEDICT | Blazers women's cross country home page |

Head coach

· Robin Balder-Lanoue (19th season)

A Year Ago

• 4th place | 100 points



Runners to Watch

- Brooke Rasmussen (So. | All-MIAC Honorable Mention as a first year, 20th at MIAC championships, took 15th at Tori Neubauer)
- Kiley Green (Sr. | Top-20 at Tori Neubauer, 37th at 2014 MIAC championships, one of CSB's top runners)
- Emma Weber (Sr. | 25th at MIAC Championships as junior)
- Abby Borgmeier (FY | Top-55 at Tori Neubauer; one of CSB's top runners as a first year)
- Sam Womeldorf (Sr. | 37th at MIAC Championships as a junior)

By the Numbers

- 5: CSB took 5th out of 22 teams at the Tori Neubauer Invite, which is traditionally one of the top meets in the Midwest.
- 4: Four Blazers who finished in the top 40 at last year's MIAC Championships return in 2015.

Did You Know?

• CSB head coach Robin Balder-Lanoue and her running team, Baba Yaga, took eighth overall and were the top women's team at the Ragnar Relay Northwest Passage.

Off the Course

The CSB cross country team has been awarded the USTFCCCA Team All-Academic award for 19 straight years.



ST. CATHERINE | Wildcats' women's cross country home page |

Head coach

Cami Paulson (1st season)

A Year Ago

• 9th place | 260 points

Runners to Watch

- Courtney Kirkeide (Jr. | No. 10 all-time St. Kate's, 24:01 at UW-River Falls; top Wildcat finisher at three meets this season; fourth Wildcat finisher at MIAC, 2014)
- Shannon Strickland (Jr. | Top Wildcat finisher at MIAC, 2014; No. 4 all-time at St. Kate's, 23:35, 2014)
- Marie Morrier (So. | No. 9 all-time St. Kate's, 23:58 at UW-River Falls; fifth Wildcat finisher at MIAC, 2014)
- Bryana Waage (So. | No. 24 all-time St. Kate's, 24:59 at Seven Sisters)
- Catherine Degen (Fy. | No. 25 all-time St. Kate's, 25:00 at Seven Sisters)

By the Numbers

- 8: Eight members of the Wildcat squad have recorded new personal record (PR) times so far this season.
- 11: The Wildcats had a program-best finish at the University of Minnesota Roy Griak Meet in September placing 11th.
- 4: Four runners have recorded times this fall that now rank in the top-25 all-time at St. Kate's.

Did You Know?

• The Wildcats have finished ninth with program-best finishes at the MIAC Championships in each of the last three seasons.

Off the Course

• The Wildcat cross country team earned the department's Team GPA award in 2014-15 for the third-consecutive season and sixth time in the 10-year history of the award for recording the top cumulative GPA of all the athletics programs.



SAINT MARY'S | Cardinals' women's cross country home page |

Head coach

Ward Berndt (11th season)

MIAC A Year Ago

• 12th place | 306 points

Top Performers

- Allie Thiel (5-3, Sr. | Second Cardinal runner across finish line at both the MIAC (25:20) and NCAA Central Regional (24:40) a year ago. ... Recorded collegiate-best time of 24:10 at 2013 UW-Eau Claire Invitational)
- Erika Thiel (5-3, Fr. | Has been one of the Cardinals' top three runners all season—including leading the team at both the UW-Eau Claire and Tori Neubauer Invitationals. ... Clocked career-best 24:41 6K at 2015 Tori Neubauer Invitational)
- Heidi Ledermann (5-7, Fr. | Has been first or second for the Cardinals in all four meetings this season. ... Ran a career-best 24:47 at 2015 Tori Neubauer Invitational)

By The Numbers

- :06: Erika Thiel (Burr Ridge, Ill.) and Heidi Ledermann (Mahtomedi, Minn.) finished neck-and-neck to pace Saint Mary's at the UW-La Crosse Tori Neubauer Invitational on Oct. 17, clocking 6K times of 24:41 and 24:47, respectively. Both times were collegiate bests.
- 2: Katie Stolz (Forest Lake, Minn.) earned All-Region honors for the second year in a row in 2014, placing 35th with a school-record time

of 22:51.

• 5: Allie Thiel (Burr Ridge, Ill.) placed second to Katie Stolz (Forest Lake, Minn.) in five of the six races she competed in a year ago.

Did You Know?

• For the first time since the start of the 2011 season, the Cardinals' lineup in 2015 was without graduated seniors Katie Stolz (Forest Lake, Minn.), Mary Hayes (Chicago, Ill.), Bridget Hayes (Chicago, Ill.), Ashley Bollig (Saint Croix Falls, Minn.), and Jessie Burns (Chanhassen, Minn.).

Off the Course

• The Cardinals earned U.S. Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association (USTFCCCA) All-Academic status for the 11th time in as many years, while Katie Stolz (Forest Lake, Minn.) collected her second straight individual All-Academic honor.



Head coach

• Chris Daymont (35th season)

A Year Ago

• 2nd place | 58 points

In the 2014 NCAA Championships

• 27th place

Runners to Watch

- Piper Bain (Senior | Consistently a top finisher for the Oles, All-MIAC in 2014, All-Region in 2014, member of the NCAA team in 2014, team captain. Ran a personal best of 21:55 at 2015 UW-Oshkosh AAE Invitational.)
- Morghen Philippi (Senior | Consistently a top finisher for the Oles, All-MIAC Honorable Mention in 2014, was an alternate at the NCAA Regional and NCAA meets, team captain as a junior and senior. Ran a personal best of 22:09 at 2015 UW-Oshkosh AAE Invitational.)
- Jamie Hoornaert (Junior | Consistently finishes in the Ole top three, All-MIAC in 2014, All-Region in 2014, member of the NCAA team in 2014. Ran a personal best of 22:17 at NCAA Central Region meet in 2014.)
- Josefine Brekke (Junior | Consistently finishes in the Ole top four. Ran a personal best of 23:21 at UW-Eau Claire Invitation in 2015.)
- Rebecca Walton (First Year | Consistently finishes in the Ole top seven. Ran a personal best of 23:46 at 2015 UW-Oshkosh AAE Invitational.)

By the Numbers

- 3: St. Olaf has finished in the top three at three races this year.
- 20: St. Olaf has had at least one runner finish in the top 20 at every race this season.

Did You Know?

All seven runners from St. Olaf were named to the NCAA Central Region All-Region team in 2014.



ST. THOMAS | Tommies' women's cross country home page |

Head coach

Joe Sweeney (36th season)

A Year Ago

• 3rd place | 94 points

In the 2014 NCAA Championships

• 21st of 31 teams

Runners to Watch

- Emily Gapinski (Senior) | (2014: 25th at MIAC, 37th at Regions, 198th at NCAA Champ., Academic All-MIAC; T&F NCAA runner-up outdoor 1,500, anchor NCAA indoor champ DMR Relay)
- Bridget McGivern (Junior) | 2014: 34th at MIAC, 31st at Regions, 146th at NCAA Champ., All-Region, Academic All-MIAC)
- Megan Terukina (Senior) | 2014: 41st at MIAC, Academic All-MIAC; 2013 All-MIAC)
- Kayla Janto (Junior) | 2014: 38th at MIAC, 90th at Regions, 244th at NCAAs, Academic All-MIAC)
- Alex Fossum (Junior) | 2014: 18th at MIAC, 22nd at Regions, 200th at NCAA Champ., Academic All-MIAC)

By the Numbers

- 75: Combined MIAC team championships won in CC, indoor/outdoor track and field for Coach Joe Sweeney
- 23: Latest USTFCCCA national ranking for Tommies
- 2: Toms' CC runners on March 2015 NCAA champion distance medley relay (Megan Terukina 1200, Emily Gapinski 1600)

Did You Know?

• Top 7 runners Emily Gapinski (swimming), Bridget McGivern (volleyball), and Alex Fossum (soccer) combined to run just one season of high school CC.

Off the Course

• 10 Tommies received Academic-All MIAC last year helping the team record a 3.55 team grade-point average.

MIAC Women's Cross Country Home Page