

2016 MIAC Women's Cross Country Championship Preview

Posted: Oct 26, 2016

Jump to: | [Video](#) | [Links](#) | [Team Previews](#) |

2016 MIAC WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS PREVIEW

ST. PAUL, Minn. – It's already been an exciting fall for women's cross country in the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC), with three teams appearing in the national polls and five of the top 10 in the Central Region, and it's only going to get better as they all come together Saturday at 11 a.m. at Como Golf Course in St. Paul, Minn., to determine the 2016 MIAC women's cross country champion.

The latest edition of the MIAC Championships features Carleton College aiming for a fourth-straight conference championship. Head Coach Donna Ricks' squad has not only won three conference championships in a row, they've been the champ in five of the last seven seasons, with only St. Olaf (2010) and Gustavus (2012) interrupting the Knights' streak.

A year ago, women's race saw the Knights (61) complete their three-peat with a nine-point win over St. Thomas (72). St. Olaf (97) was third, Saint Benedict (107) finished fourth, and Macalester (129) grabbed the final spot in the top five. Gustavus (150) was sixth, Concordia (192) took seventh, and Bethel (244), Augsburg (261) and Hamline (273) completed the top 10. St. Catherine (275) and Saint Mary's (365) occupied the final two spots in the women's 2015 MIAC standings.

This year, the Knights again have high hopes of hoisting the MIAC championship trophy, evidenced by their No. 25 national ranking and top spot in the Central Region poll. St. Thomas – which edged Carleton for the NCAA Region title a year ago – checks in at No. 29 nationally and No. 3 in the region, and St. Olaf is tied for No. 34 in the national poll and tied for fourth in the Central Region. Macalester (No. 7) and St. Catherine (No. 9) give the MIAC five of the top nine in the Central Region rankings, and Saint Benedict has also been regionally ranked this fall.

Individually, Macalester's Kimber Meyer returns to defend her MIAC title and complete an impressive career. The All-American has finished in the top four in each of her first three seasons, finishing fourth in her first year, second as a sophomore and first in 2015, with All-Conference honors in all three seasons. The Scots' star leads a talented returning group of eight All-Conference and six HM runners back on the women's side.

Defending MIAC champ Carleton brings back All-MIAC runners Emily Kaegi and Sam Schnirring and senior Claire Trujillo has been the team's No. 2 runner all fall. St. Thomas hopes to repeat its region success behind the return of All-Conference runner Bridget McGivern and HM honorees Alex Fossum and Kayla Janto. St. Olaf has Jamie Hoornaert (All-MIAC) back, received a boost from transfer Mary Naas and are also led by senior Josefine Brekke.

Saint Benedict returns All-MIAC Honorable Mention runner Mattia Hendrickson alongside senior Allison Kosobud and newcomer Taylor Loth. Concordia has a pair of decorated runners back as Kaya Baker earned All-MIAC honors and Brianna Gruenberg was an Honorable Mention performer, and junior Sarah Curran has also had a strong fall. Augsburg will again be led by Taybri Irving, who earned All-MIAC honors in 2015, and junior Rachel Frantz and first-year runner Malena Larsen also join the Auggies' top three.

Sadie Novak-Klug returns to lead Gustavus after the Gusties graduated their top two runners, and she's joined atop the lineup by Lotus Schifsky and Olivia Rosenow. Bethel's Annika Halverson, second last year, is studying abroad, but the Royals' young core is led by sophomore Madeline Cramer, junior Emmy Inwards and first-year Abigail Burr.

Hamline has sophomores Madeline Dopp and Meg Griffin atop its lineup, along with junior Alyssa Nash. St. Catherine has everyone back, including top MIAC finisher Courtney Kirkeide, along with senior Rachel Hall and first-year Leighlin Ahlstrom. Saint Mary's has high hopes for its extremely young nucleus, led by rookies Alyssa Thiel and Danielle Franke, and sophomore Erika Thiel.

The 2016 MIAC Cross Country Championships will start earlier than in past years. The women's 6k championship race will begin Saturday's meet at 11 a.m. and the men's 8k race will follow at 12 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 [home page](#) 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. Macalester 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 [promotional video](#) Wednesday to promote the big race. Fans can stay connected throughout the 2015 MIAC Cross Country Championships on social media through the MIAC's [Facebook](#) page, [Instagram](#) account or on [Twitter](#) using the hashtag #MIACXC.

| [2016 MIAC Cross Country Championships Home Page](#) |

2016 MIAC CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS PROMO VIDEO

MIAC WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY LINKS

| [Website](#) | [Schedule/Results](#) | [News](#) | [Athletes-of-the-Week](#) | [Season Preview](#) | [Recordbook](#) | [Archives](#) | [Team Pages](#) |

TEAM-BY-TEAM PREVIEWS

Jump to: | [AUG](#) | [BU](#) | [CAR](#) | [CON](#) | [GAC](#) | [HU](#) | [MAC](#) | [CSB](#) | [SCU](#) | [SMU](#) | [STO](#) | [UST](#) |



AUGSBURG | [Auggies' women's cross country home page](#) |

Head Coach

- Meghan Peyton (3rd season)

A Year Ago

- 9th place | 261 points

In the 2015 Postseason

- 21st/30 at NCAA Central Regional (551); Taybri Irving 25th to earn All-Region honors.

Players to Watch

- Taybri Irving (SR | Augsburg's top runner over the last two seasons; Two meet victories this season; 2nd at UW-River Falls 6K in 23:15.60 on Sept. 9; 11th at Carleton 6K in 23:37.1 on Oct. 1; Career-best 6K time of 22:39.81; All-MIAC (7th) and All-Central Region (25th) in 2015; 10 top-10 individual finishes in her career.)

- Malena Larsen (FY | Augsburg's No. 2 runner this season; 32nd at UW-River Falls 6K in 25:33.80 on Sept. 9; 61st in 24:58.2 at Carleton 6K on Oct. 1.)
- Rachel Frantz (JR | Augsburg's No. 3 runner this season; 33rd at UW-River Falls 8K in 25:35.10 on Sept. 9; 62nd in 24:58.8 at Carleton 6K on Oct. 1; Career-best 6K time is 24:18.77)

Did You Know?

- Taybri Irving has earned MIAC Cross Country Athlete of the Week honors twice this season, after finishing second at the UW-River Falls Invitational on Sept. 9, and after winning the St. Catherine Invitational on Oct. 8.



BETHEL | [Royals' women's cross country home page](#) |

Head coach

- Joe Stephens (2nd season)

A Year Ago

- 8th place | 160 points

In the 2015 Postseason

- Annika Halverson, 32nd place, NCAA DIII Championships (Studying abroad this semester)

Players to Watch

- Madeline Cramer (Soph. | Has posted the team's fastest time this season)
- Emmy Inwards (Jr. | Team's top returner)
- Abigail Burr (Fresh.)

Did You Know?

- The Royals have a very young team, with only one senior on the roster.



CARLETON | [Knights' women's cross country home page](#) |

Head coach

- Donna Ricks (24th season)

A Year Ago

- MIAC Champions | 61 points

In the 2015 Postseason

- 2nd at NCAA Central Region Championships
- 17th at NCAA Championships

Players to Watch

- Emily Kaegi (Jr. | All-MIAC in 2015 [8th place]; was Carleton's second-fastest runner at the 2015 NCAA Championships; three-time MIAC athlete-of-the-week in 2016 and was team's top finisher in all five meets this fall)
- Sam Shnirring (So. | All-MIAC in 2015 [12th place]; All-Region in 2015 [31st place]; scored for the Knights at the 2015 NCAA Championships)
- Claire Trujillo (Sr. | Knights' second-fastest runner at each of the last four meets this season)

Did You Know?

- In addition to winning the last three MIAC team titles and 4-of the last-5 conference crowns, the Knights have advanced to the NCAA Championships in 10-of the last-12 years.



CONCORDIA | [Cobbers' women's cross country home page](#) |

Head coach

- Marv Roeske (18th season)

A Year Ago

- 7th place | 192 points

In the 2015 Postseason

- Finished 14th at the NCAA Central Region Meet and Kaya Baker earned All-Region honors.

Players to Watch

- Kaya Baker (Sr. | 2015 MIAC All-Conference & All-Central Region; has been in the Top 3 of the team in four of the five meets she raced in 2016)
- Sarah Curran (Jr. | Finished second at the Cobber Invite; led the team in three of the six meets in 2016)
- Brianna Gruenberg (So. | 2015 MIAC All-Conference Honorable Mention; won the Crown Invite in 2016; has been in the Top 3 of the team

in all six meets this year)

Did You Know?

- Concordia has two sets of sisters on this year's team.
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GUSTAVUS | [Gusties' women's cross country home page](#) |

Head coach

- Dale Bahr (eighth season)

A Year Ago

- 6th place | 150 points

In the 2015 Postseason

- NCAA postseason results – 11th of 30 at NCAA Central Regional Meet

Players to Watch

- Sadie Novak-Klug (Jr. | top-10 Crown College Invite, 2nd place Gustie Alumni Meet)
- Lotus Schifsky (So. | 5th place finish at Crown College Invite)
- Olivia Rosenow (Jr. | top-10 Gustie Alumni Meet)

Did You Know?

- Over half of the Gustie women's roster is compiled of underclassmen. Seven first-years and six sophomores.
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HAMLIN | [Pipers' women's cross country home page](#) |

Head coach

- Devin Monson (1st season)

A Year Ago

- 10th place | 293 points

Players to Watch

- Madeline Dopp, Sophomore -- top finisher for HU in every race they ran this fall
- Meg Griffin, Sophomore -- was 49th (top HU finisher) in last year's MIAC race -- has been in top three every race this year so far
- Alyssa Nash, Junior -- 22nd in first race of year at Wis-River Falls -- also consistent runner

Did You Know?

- Hamline jumped 10 places at this year's Wis-La Crosse Meet. Each scoring runner had a PR as the Pipers bested five MIAC schools.
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MACALESTER | [Scots' women's cross country home page](#) |



Head coach

- Betsy Emerson (7th season)

A Year Ago

- 5th place | 129 points

In the 2015 Postseason

- 7th of 30 teams at Central Region Meet

Players to Watch

- Kimber Meyer (Sr. | Defending MIAC champion; 3-time XC All-American; 5th at 2016 regional; 30th at 2016 NAAs)
- Eliza Ramsey (36th at 2015 regional; among Macalester's top 2 finishers in 3 races in 2016)
- Elena Torry-Schrag (34th at MIAC in 2015)

Did You Know?

- Macalester's best MIAC finish during coach Betsy Emerson's tenure (4th) came in 2013, when this year's seniors were first years.
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SAINT BENEDICT | [Blazers women's cross country home page](#) |



Head coach

- Robin Balder-Lanoue (20th season)

A Year Ago

- 4th place | 107 points

In the 2015 Postseason

- 10th at NCAA Central Regional

Players to Watch

- Mattia Hendrickson (Sr. | All-MIAC Honorable Mention in 2015)
- Allison Kosobud (Sr. | Ran top-10 times in CSB history in 5K and 10K this season)
- Taylor Loth (Fy. | Ran 17th best 5K in school history this season)

Did You Know?

- Allison Kosobud hasn't competed in cross country since her first year at CSB in 2013 and she has led Saint Benedict in four meets and has two top-10 times in school history.



ST. CATHERINE | [Wildcats' women's cross country home page](#) |

Head coach

- Cami Paulson (5th season)

A Year Ago

- 11 place | 275 points

Players to Watch

- Courtney Kirkeide (Sr. | top finisher for St. Kate's at 2015 MIAC Championship (37); four top-20 finishes this season, two top-10; top-20 finisher at Roy Griak Invitational; recorded fifth-fastest time in school history at Seven Sisters Championship)
- Rachel Hall (Sr. | Recorded third-fastest time in program history at Seven Sisters Championship; top-five finishes at St. Kate's Invite and Seven Sisters Championship)
- Leighlin Ahlstrom (Fy. | four top-20 finishes in 2016; recorded fourth-fastest time in program history at Seven Sisters Championship)

Did You Know?

- The Wildcats were regionally ranked by the USTFCCCA for the first time in program history this season.



SAINT MARY'S | [Cardinals' women's cross country home page](#) |

Head coach

- Ward Berndt (12th season)

A Year Ago

- 12th place | 365 points

Players to Watch

- Alyssa Thiel (Freshman | Has been one of the Cardinals' top two runners in each of their five races this season. ... Posted a career-best six-kilometer time of 24:55 at the UW-L Tori Neubauer Invitational)
- Danielle Franke (Freshman | Has been one of the Cardinals' top two runners in each of their five races this season. ... Recorded career-best six-kilometer time of 25:15 at the UW-L Tori Neubauer Invitational)
- Erika Thiel (Sophomore | Among Cardinals' top five runners in all five meets this season. ... Stopped the clock in a season-best 25:26 at the UW-L Tori Neubauer Invitational)

Did You Know?

- For the first time since the start of the 2011 season, the Cardinals' lineup in 2016 will not have a pair of sisters. Mary and Bridget Hayes competed for coach Ward Berndt from 2011-2014, while Allie and Erika Thiel competed together a year ago. The 2016 roster does, however, boast two freshmen—Maddie Bollig and Emma Mockler—who are sisters of Cardinal women's cross country alums Ashley Bollig and Katherine Mockler.



ST. OLAF | [Oles' women's cross country home page](#) |

Head coach

- Chris Daymont (36th season)

A Year Ago

- 3rd place | 97 points

In the 2015 Postseason

- 3rd at the NCAA Central Region Championships with 164 points... 27th at the NCAA Championships (574 points)

Players to Watch

- Mary Naas (Sophomore | Transfer from Wellesley... Finished 70th at the 2015 NCAA Championships)
- Josefine Brekke (Senior | 71st at the 2015 MIAC XC Championships... 10th in the 2016 Outdoor MIAC 1500 Championships)

- Jamie Hoornaert (Senior | 9th at the 2015 MIAC Championships... 17th at the NCAA Central Region Championships... 122nd at the NCAA Championships last year)

Did You Know?

- The Oles host an indoor marathon annually on their indoor track for the community.
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ST. THOMAS | [Tommies' women's cross country home page](#) |

Head coach

- Joe Sweeney (37th season)

A Year Ago

- 2nd place | 72 points

In the 2015 Postseason

- NCAA regional 1st; national championships 26th

Players to Watch

- Bridget McGivern (Sr., | 2X Academic All-MIAC; 2X All-Region; 11th MIAC in 2015)
- Alex Fossum (Jr., | 2X Academic All-MIAC; All-Region, 17th MIAC in 2015)
- Kayla Janto (Sr., | 2X Academic All-MIAC; 20th MIAC in 2015)

Did You Know?

- Two fixtures in UST's top eight the last four seasons -- Bridget McGivern and Kayla Janto -- will run their 25th and 24th career varsity CC races this weekend.
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[MIAC Women's Cross Country Home Page](#)