



Chris Graham  
Commissioner  
grahamc@midwestconference.org

www.midwestconference.org

Emily Amici  
Sports Information Director  
amicie@midwestconference.org

## MWC WOMEN'S TENNIS OCTOBER 14, 2009

### Grinnell Sweeps South Division, Beloit Claims North: Will Battle for Team Title

RIPON, WIS. -- Both Beloit College and Grinnell College swept the competition en route to claiming the MWC North Division and South Division Titles, respectively. The Pioneers won their seventh Midwest Conference South Division title in a row, while Beloit makes its first trip to the Team Tournament since 2006.

After defeating Beloit 6-3 in a dual match earlier this season, Grinnell enters this weekend's 2009 Midwest Conference Women's Tennis Championships with a strong chance of earning its sixth consecutive Midwest Conference Title. Lake Forest College and St. Norbert College also earned a trip to the Boylan Tennis courts after posting 3-1 records in MWC divisional action. The 2009 championships begin with the team tournament on Friday, October 17 in Rockford, Ill. and continue with the doubles and singles tournaments on October 18 and 19, respectively, in Madison, Wis.

#### CHAMPIONSHIP PREVIEWS:

Under the direction of head coach **Bob Hodge**, a young Buccaneers squad will enter the 2009 Midwest Conference Women's Tennis Team Tournament with a perfect 4-0 MWC record, a complete reversal from a 0-4 2008 season. By sweeping the competition, the Bucs sewed up the No. 1 seed in the Midwest Conference North Division, its fifth MWC North Division Title, and its first trip to the MWC Team Tournament since 2006.

Seniors **Hannah Perwin** and **Erika Zevin** have led the youthful team through a successful 2009 campaign and will look to continue that success this weekend both as a team and individuals. As former MWC Champions, the two tennis standouts are no stranger to the medalist stand. Perwin won the No. 1 singles title in 2007 and Zevin took the No. 2 singles crown that same year as well as the No. 3 Singles Championship in 2006. Last year, the duo was runner-up at the No. 1 and No. 2 singles positions, respectively, and also finished as the runner-up at No. 1 doubles for the second straight season. They will both look to cap a successful Beloit career with an additional singles title and their first doubles and team title.



The Carroll University women's tennis team came up just short in their bid for a spot in the Midwest Conference Team Championship Tournament, but the Pioneers will still be a major factor during the league's doubles and singles championships. Senior **Samantha Bachmann** will be a strong competitor at the No. 3 singles flight while sophomore **Melissa Skibba** (No. 6) will bring experience from last year's championships. At No. 4 singles, freshman **Kate Rasmussen** has put together a stellar first-year campaign and could be a big point-producer for the Pioneers. She is undefeated at the No. 4 position and holds a 9-1 overall singles record with her only loss coming at the No. 3 singles spot against St. Norbert College.

Carroll also figures to score heavily in the doubles competition with **Elissa McKinley** and **Rasmussen** likely playing at the No. 1 flight and **Bachmann** and **Alyssa Larson** playing at No. 2. McKinley and Rasmussen have posted a 5-1 record in the No. 1 doubles position so far this season and will look to keep their loss column limited to one this weekend. Larson was the only Pioneer to be named a MWC Performer of the Week in 2009 and that honor came after she and **Bachmann** won their No. 2 doubles flight over Monmouth and Knox. The duo heads into MWC Championship action undefeated at 6-0.



#### --PAST TEAM CHAMPIONS--

|      |                  |
|------|------------------|
| 2008 | Grinnell         |
| 2007 | Grinnell         |
| 2006 | Grinnell         |
| 2005 | Grinnell         |
| 2004 | Grinnell         |
| 2003 | Lake Forest      |
| 2002 | Beloit           |
| 2001 | Beloit           |
| 2000 | Beloit           |
| 1999 | Lake Forest      |
| 1998 | Grinnell         |
| 1997 | St. Norbert      |
| 1996 | St. Norbert      |
| 1995 | Coe              |
| 1994 | Beloit           |
| 1993 | Coe              |
| 1992 | Beloit           |
| 1991 | Ripon            |
| 1990 | Ripon            |
| 1989 | Ripon            |
| 1988 | Ripon            |
| 1987 | Cornell          |
| 1986 | Lawrence         |
| 1985 | Lawrence         |
| 1984 | Cornell          |
| 1983 | Univ. of Chicago |
| 1982 | Cornell          |
| 1981 | Grinnell         |
| 1980 | Knox             |
| 1979 | Grinnell         |
| 1978 | Knox             |

#### --2008 SINGLES CHAMPIONS--

|                                  |
|----------------------------------|
| No. 1 - Elizabeth Larson, LU     |
| No. 2 - Amy Unzicker, MC         |
| No. 3 - Katie Colver, GC         |
| No. 4 - Maya Lipert, GC          |
| No. 5 - Tatyana Sukharnikova, GC |
| No. 6 - Emma Kent, LU            |

#### --2008 DOUBLES CHAMPIONS--

|   |
|---|
| No. 1 - Kelly Van Handel/Lauren Post, SNC |
| No. 2 - Katie Colver/Maya Lipert, GC      |
| No. 3 - Emily Dalton/Emma Kent, LU        |

#### --2008 TEAM POINT STANDINGS--

|                 |    |
|-----------------|----|
| 1. Grinnell     | 81 |
| 2. Lawrence     | 72 |
| 3. Monmouth     | 43 |
| 4. St. Norbert  | 47 |
| 5. Beloit       | 48 |
| 6. Carroll      | 30 |
| 7. Lake Forest  | 22 |
| t-8. Knox       | 14 |
| t-8. Ripon      | 14 |
| 10. Illinois C. | 8  |

\*The top four places are dictated by the team tournament



Grinnell College will look to continue its title string as the Pioneers pursue their sixth consecutive MWC crown. Despite graduating **Katie Colver**, the only person ever to win 12 MWC tennis titles (four in singles, four in doubles and four team crowns), and 11-time champ **Maya Lipert**, Grinnell has simply reloaded.

The Pioneers' most experienced returnee is senior **Jill Akiyama**, who has two MWC singles titles to her credit. Sophomore **Tatyana Sukharnikova** won the No. 5 singles crown last year. She enters the MWC Championships with an 11-3 overall record and a 6-2 record at No. 3 singles. She will team up with No. 1 singles player **Toby Cain**, a sophomore, to make up a talented No. 1 doubles squad that is undefeated in MWC action. Akiyama and senior **Kelsey Picken** finished second in the No. 3 doubles division last year. The duo is undefeated in league play as well and has posted a 12-3 overall record this season.



Illinois College's **Candace Norville** picked up two wins at the No. 1 singles position during the 2008 Midwest Conference women's tennis finals and the senior has her sights set on improving upon that effort this time. Norville was also part of the Lady Blues' tandem that fell in the consolation championship at No. 1 doubles.

This season, Norville is 5-2 overall and 2-2 in MWC South Division action at the No. 1 singles flight after posting wins over Grinnell's Toby Cain and Knox's Megan Funk. Norville will team with junior **Martha Kwiecinski** at the top doubles position, while Kwiecinski hopes to be in the hunt for an individual championship title at No. 2 singles. Those two will be the leading ladies and carry the Lady Blues' hopes for improving upon the team's 10th place finish in 2008.



At the Midwest Conference Women's Tennis Championships this weekend, Knox will be looking to better their eighth place finish from a year ago. Sophomore **Megan Funk** has been the Prairie Fire's No. 1 singles player all year, gaining valuable experience in her second full season at Knox. Sophomore **Rachel Clark** (No. 4 singles) sports the team's best singles record at 4-9 overall, 2-2 in Midwest Conference play, while sophomore **Jordan Kuban** and senior **Ginny Graves** have knotted three wins each. All four will look to further their seasons by winning matches at the conference singles tournament this weekend.

The No. 3 doubles team of freshmen **Aimee Neilan** and **Emily Tyl** has posted a winning record in doubles play, winning four matches in a row at one point during the 2009 season. The No. 1 and 2 doubles pairings of Funk/Kuban and sophomore **Katie Beadling/Clark**, respectively, have earned one win in MWC South Division action.



The addition of freshman **Melika Celebic** to the top of the Forester's lineup is easily the biggest reason why Lake Forest has improved upon its 7-7 overall record from a year ago to 10-4 in 2009. With a 3-1 record in MWC South Division play, the Foresters claimed a spot in this weekend's MWC Women's Tennis Championships team tournament. Lake Forest enters the weekend 6-2-1 against Midwest Conference teams.

Celebic holds an 11-3 No. 1 singles record overall and enters this weekend as a strong contender for an individual title. She has posted a 6-3 No. 1 doubles record in MWC play primarily with sophomore **Nonie Carson** (5-3). Together, the duo is 9-4 overall. Senior **Molly Stapleton**, last year's consolation champ at No. 3 singles, has also improved tremendously. She sits at 6-2 in the No. 3 singles flight after MWC action. Stapleton will team up with junior **Natalie Atroschenko** in the No. 2 doubles flight where the duo has a record of 5-3 in MWC play and is 7-4 overall.



Lawrence saw last year's team that finished second in the conference gutted by graduation as the Vikings lost five of their six starters. Despite the team's youth, the Vikings were in the hunt for the final spot in the 2009 Women's Tennis Team Tournament until the very end. However, a loss to St. Norbert dropped them to 1-3 in North Division action. Therefore, the Vikings will use the doubles and singles championships to rack up as many points as possible and look to place fifth, the highest they can possibly finish.

Luckily, the lone returning starter for Lawrence is defending No. 1 singles champion **Beth Larson**. The sophomore from Maplewood, Minn., is 11-2 on the season and went 3-0 against North Division opponents. Larson, who was the first Lawrence player since Anita Salzberger in 1987 to win the top singles title, is looking to become the first Viking to repeat as the league's No. 1 singles champion.



Last year's No. 2 singles champion **Amy Unzicker** moved up to Monmouth's No. 1 slot for 2009 and is making a statement that she belongs. The talented sophomore was tested early in the season and passed with a pair of three-set wins – one against conference foe, senior Candy Norville of Illinois College.

Like Unzicker, junior **Kimi Wegner** has moved up a notch from a year ago. The Fighting Scots' No. 2 singles player has been in nearly every match this season and is hitting her stride just before the MWC Tournament.

Monmouth's No. 3 singles player – freshman **Nicole Anson** – has also been bumped up a spot and has adapted quickly, winning three of her first six matches at No. 3.

As Monmouth's No. 1 doubles team, Unzicker and Wegner form a formidable combination. They have either dominated opponents in their wins, or gone deep in the losses. This marks the second year for the two to be paired as doubles partners.



The Red Hawks are looking to improve on last year's eighth place finish at the MWC Championships. The Red Hawks finished the regular season with a 3-10 overall record and a 0-4 mark in the Midwest Conference, earning two of their three victories against MWC South Division foes Knox and Illinois College. With sights set on improving upon last year's eighth place MWC Championships finish, Ripon heads into this weekend looking to rack up as many points as possible in the MWC singles and doubles championships.

In singles play, Ripon is led by sophomore **Josie Ullsperger**, who has a 4-7 record at the No. 1 flight. Junior **Brooke Deans** has also played well, recording a 5-7 record at the No. 4 position.

In doubles play, Ullsperger will team up with senior **Chelsey Foster** at the No. 1 spot, where they've won two of their eight matches in the key team wins over Knox and Illinois College. At the No. 2 doubles position, Deans will pair up with fellow junior **Megan Sockness**, where they have recorded a 3-9 record.



St. Norbert looks to claim its first Midwest Conference women's tennis championship since 1997 when it participates in the league's annual team tournament Friday. The Green Knights enter the tournament at 6-7 overall, with five losses to Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference foes, but went 3-1 to finish as the North Division runner-up.

St. Norbert is led in singles' action by No. 1 player **Lauren Post**, who is 9-4 this season and 8-3 at the No. 1 flight. **Kelly Van Handel** is 8-6 on the season and is 7-5 at the No. 2 flight. In doubles play, St. Norbert is 26-17 as a team. Post and Van Handel are 8-7 this season and 7-6 at No. 1, while the tandem of **Erin Riutta** and **Allyson Yankle** is 8-4 overall and in the No. 2 flight.

