

FIGHTING BEES Golf

No varsity athletics program at St. Ambrose better illustrates the university's winning tradition than men's golf. In 26 years as head coach of the Fighting Bees, Jeff Griebel has set a lofty standard of success, and each year his squad manages to meet its potential.

"You have to recycle the program all the time," Griebel says. "In 2005, we graduated two National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics All-Americans, and a lot of people thought we were ripe for the picking. But the young guys played competitively during the summer and improved their stroke average. The team recycled itself and we were just as competitive, finishing in 4th place at the 2006 national championship"

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Many talented golfers have chosen SAU, but that doesn't necessarily mean Griebel's recruits have been all-state champion golfers in high school.

"I tend to look at people who have had success, but primarily have shown improvement from their freshman to senior years," Griebel says. "I look for the team-oriented individual who has displayed leadership. If they get involved in a program that will be competitive and challenging, they're only going to get better."

Athletic success

SAU has qualified for NAIA Nationals 20 times in 26 years and 10 times in the last eleven years. In 2004, the SAU squad set a school-record stroke average (292) and placed third in a field of the 28 best teams in the nation. In 2005, they were ranked fourth in the nation and won all 14 regular-season tournaments.

"Our ultimate goal is to win a national championship. It always has been and always will be," Griebel says. "If we keep doing things the right way, I think we'll get ourselves in a position again to have a chance."

Since joining the Midwest Collegiate Conference in 1991, SAU has won the conference championship all but two years. The Bees have produced nine MCC players of the year and eight first-team NAIA All-Americans. SAU plays in the Region VII tournament in the fall and stays competitive during the spring before heading to nationals in May.

The conference

St. Ambrose became a member of the highly competitive Midwest Collegiate Conference in 2007, formerly the Midwest Classic Conference. The conference contains nine colleges scattered across the state of Iowa with one Wisconsin member. Each school in the conference is a four-year institution with enrollment between 500–3,900 students.

Midwest Classic Conference

St. Ambrose University, Davenport, Iowa
Ashford University, Clinton, Iowa
Clarke College, Dubuque, Iowa
Grand View College, Des Moines, Iowa
Iowa Wesleyan College, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa
Mount Mercy College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Viterbo University, LaCrosse, Wis.
Waldorf College, Forest City, Iowa
William Penn University, Oskaloosa, Iowa

Recent results

2003–04 MCC and Region VII Champs, third place of 27 teams at NAIA Nationals
2004–05 MCC and Region VII Champs, 19th place of 28 teams at NAIA Nationals
2005–06 MCC and Region VII Champs, fourth place of 28 teams at NAIA Nationals
2006–07 MCC and Region VII Champs; twelfth place of 28 teams at NAIA Nationals
2007–08 Region VII Champs, have qualified for the 2008 NAIA National Tournament

2007 Fall Results

Duane Chaney Invite.	1st.	284
Grand View Fall Invite	1st.	584
St. Ambrose Invite.	1st.	558
North County Classic	3rd	595
St. Francis Fall Classic (JV)	2nd	302
Statesman Fall Classic (JV)	1st.	573
IWC Classic	1st.	581
MCC Championship.	1st.	602
Viterbo Invite	1st.	590
Region VII Championship.	1st.	592

The coaching staff

Jeff Griebel has coached the Fighting Bees since 1982 and has compiled over 176 tournament victories in 26 years of coaching at SAU. He has been named Midwest Classic Conference Coach of the Year 12 times and has been named Midwest Region VII Coach of the Year 16 times. A past president of the NAIA Men's Golf Coaches Association, Griebel has coached 18 teams to the national tournament. He was inducted into the St. Ambrose Athletic Hall of Fame in 1994.

"We've had a strong tradition of competitiveness," Griebel says. "There's always internal competition within our program. If our players want to get better, they'll have to work harder."

Griebel has fostered a program that he says essentially recruits itself with its visible success. However, Griebel is always searching for that unique player and understands that athletics is only one part of a successful college career.

"I always tell people that they need to visit campus," he says. "They need to decide for themselves what's best for them. All the pieces of the puzzle need to fit—the competitiveness of the program, the campus, and the community."

Griebel also serves as the director of sports information and the coordinator of athletics recruitment at St. Ambrose.

Academic success

Last year's SAU squad averaged a 3.2 GPA. Fighting Bees golfers have traditionally kept their grades above a 3.0 average. Since Griebel has been the men's golf coach, 20 athletes have received NAIA Academic All-American awards.

Community service

Typically, the men's golf team will participate in four to five community service projects throughout the year. Projects have included a gift-giving program with SAU's neighborhood schools and providing lunch to the less fortunate at local shelters. Additionally, SAU golfers have worked with the "First Tee Program," a US Golf Association-sponsored program that educates young athletes on golf skills, manners and etiquette.

"The projects impact the guys' understanding that we're not just the college on the hill," Griebel says. "We want to have an impact on the lives of the people in the community."

Facilities

Emeis Golf Course in Davenport serves as the Bees' home. Emeis has a full range, a bunkered practice green for sand shots, chipping and putting, and allows full access to the course for SAU golfers at no cost. St. Ambrose teams also have limited access to private clubs in the Quad Cities such as TPC at Deere Run, which hosts an annual PGA Tour event, and the Arsenal Golf Club in Rock Island.

Financial aid

Partial scholarships not tied to academics and financial need are available.