



2021-22 St. Thomas Men's Basketball Schedule

Overall: 3-4 Summit League: 0-0
Home: 0-0 Away: 1-4 Neutral: 2-0

Date	Opponent	Time/Result
Nov. 9	at Chicago State	L, 72-77
Nov. 13	at St. Francis (N.Y.)	W, 91-73
Nov. 15	at Fordham	L, 78-84
Nov. 19	at Youngstown State (YSU Tourn.)	L, 79-75
Nov. 20	Niagara (YSU Tourn.)	W, 76-67
Nov. 21	S. Illinois-Edwardsville (YSU Tourn.)	W, 86-73
Nov. 27	at Seattle	L, 81-64
Dec. 2	vs. Crown	7 p.m.
Dec. 5	at Drake	2 p.m.
Dec. 11	vs. Montana State	7 p.m.
Dec. 14	vs. Northland	7 p.m.
Dec. 20	at Omaha*	7 p.m.
Dec. 22	at Denver*	3 p.m.
Dec. 29	vs North Central	7 p.m.
Jan. 1	vs Western Illinois*	2 p.m.
Jan. 6	vs Oral Roberts*	7 p.m.
Jan. 8	vs Kansas City*	7 p.m.
Jan. 13	at North Dakota State*	7 p.m.
Jan. 15	at North Dakota*	1 p.m.
Jan. 20	vs South Dakota State*	7 p.m.
Jan. 22	vs South Dakota*	7 p.m.
Jan. 29	at Western Illinois*	2 p.m.
Feb. 3	at Kansas City*	7 p.m.
Feb. 5	at Oral Roberts*	7 p.m.
Feb. 10	vs North Dakota*	7 p.m.
Feb. 12	vs North Dakota State*	7 p.m.
Feb. 17	at South Dakota*	7 p.m.
Feb. 19	at South Dakota State*	2 p.m.
Feb. 24	vs Denver*	7 p.m.
Feb. 26	vs Omaha*	7 p.m.

All home games in **BOLD**
Neutral site games in *Italics*
* Denotes Summit League games
All times listed are Central Standard Time



ST. THOMAS ATHLETICS

For Immediate Release
Subject: Men's Basketball

Dec. 1, 2021

St. Thomas Men's Basketball hosts Crown College before traveling south to face Drake

The Purple play their first home game of the Division I era as they host Crown College before traveling down I-35 this weekend.

Coming and Going

St. Paul - Minn. - The St. Thomas Men's Basketball Team makes its Division I era home debut at Schoenecker Arena against Crown College on Thursday night before taking to the road and continuing its non-conference schedule against Drake in Des Moines, Iowa.

Through the first seven games of the season, St. Thomas has four scorers averaging double-digits, led by senior G Anders Nelson who is scoring 19.4 points per game. Fellow senior G Riley Miller is averaging 18.4 points per game and shooting a blistering 46 percent from behind the arc, connecting on 35-of-77 three point attempts. Senior F Parker Bjorklund (14.0 points per game) and grad student G Ryan Lindberg (10.9).

As a team, the Tommies are averaging 77.4 points per game and connecting on 45 percent of their shots from the field and 40 percent from behind the arc. Additionally, St. Thomas has dished out 100 assists and committed only 10 turnovers.

Historic Season

After 112 seasons as a small-college, NAIA and Division III men's basketball program, St. Thomas started its Division I era last Tuesday night at Chicago State. The Cougars topped the Tommies and spoiled their D-I debut, 77-72. Four days later, St. Thomas picked up its first win as a Division I program over St. Francis College with a 91-73 score.

Busy Month

This pair of games are two of 12 non-conference games for St. Thomas, 11 of which will occur before the Dec. 20 Summit League debut.

St. Thomas played three games in Youngstown, Ohio, Nov. 19-21, competing in six games over a 14-day span.

In the first month alone the Purple traveled to Chicago, New York, Ohio and Seattle for contests. Overall they will play games in 11 different states this season.

In a stretch from Dec. 2 through January 1, the Purple are scheduled to play five of their seven games at home.

They open Summit League play on the road Dec. 20 against Omaha.

Seattle Recap

The Tommies kept the contest within seven points entering halftime, 35-28, before a 46-point showing by the Redhawks in the second half allowed the team to pull away.

Riley Miller led the Tommies with a team-high 20 points in 33 minutes, his fourth 20-point performance of the campaign thus far. Miller has made five or more three-pointers in all but one game this year. Anders Nelson (15) and Parker Bjorklund (14) also reached double digits in scoring for St. Thomas.

The two teams traded scores early on and a layup in the paint by Will Engels at the 11:27 mark in the opening half put St. Thomas up 13-12 on Seattle. After a layup from Bjorklund with the team trailing by three, and extended scoring drought allowed the Redhawks to push their lead to four points, 19-15. Nelson (7) and Miller (6) combined for all 13 of the team's points over the final nine minutes of the first half.

Seattle founds its stroke over the final 20 minutes, hitting on 44.4 percent of its shots, and 40.0 percent of its threes. The Tommie three-point shooting went cold in the second half, with just 3-14 threes falling, all of which came from Miller. St. Thomas would cut the Redhawks lead to nine points on a turnaround jumper by Nelson off of an opponent turnover, but a plus-eight finish for Seattle over the final 14:28 sealed the Toms' fate.

Over the course of the game, St. Thomas shot 37.5 percent from the field, 32.3 percent from deep, and 66.7 percent at the charity stripe. 16 of the 64 points scored by the Tommies came in the paint and eight were on second chance opportunities. The Toms scored four more points off of turnovers than the opposition.

About Youngstown

The Crown men's basketball team got back to .500 this past Saturday with a 75-70 win at Luther College. The Storm took a one point advantage into the break and won by five in a game that featured 13 lead changes and eight ties.

The game was tight throughout, with Crown's largest lead being only six points and Luther only leading by four early on. With neither team ever leading by more than two possessions, the game was decided by fine margins. Crown was outshot 53.7% to 44.2%, but the Storm hit eight more threes and nine more free throws than their opponents to make up for it. The Storm hit eleven shots from deep, led by five first half triples from Seth Royston and the team was a clutch 18-21 from the charity stripe.

About Drake

Drake saw two shots come up short in the final 10 seconds suffering a 57-54 loss to North Texas in the seventh-place game of the ESPN Events Invitational this past Sunday. It was the first meeting between these schools since 1984 when North Texas played in the Missouri Valley Conference. North Texas advanced to the second round of the 2021 NCAA Tournament.

Drake will play its first conference game of the season against Valpo on Dec. 2 before continuing its non-conference schedule against St. Thomas on Saturday, Dec. 5.

Effectively Efficient

The Tommies are the only team in NCAA Men's basketball each of the past three seasons to average 80-plus points per game, fewer than 10 turnovers per game, and 10-plus made 3-point shots per game.

The Purple is continuing on that trajectory seven games into their D-I tenure, averaging 77.4 points per game, 13.1 made 3-point shots per game and 8.1 turnovers per game.

Opponent Talk

St. Thomas plays 21 different opponents this season, including 18 D-I programs. Here are those 15 teams' 2020-21 won-loss records:

- Chicago State (0-9)
- St. Francis (N.Y.) (9-10)

2021-22 St. Thomas Men's Basketball Quick Facts

Location St. Paul, Minn.
 Founded 1885
 Enrollment 6,200 undergraduates (9,800 total enrollment)
 Nickname Tommies
 Colors Purple & Grey
 Affiliation NCAA Division I (1st year)
 Conference Summit League (1st year)
 President Dr. Julie H. Sullivan
 Director of Athletics Dr. Phil Esten
 Facility Schoenecker Arena

Head Coach Dr. Johnny Tauer (tauer@stthomas.edu)
 Year 11th
 Alma Mater St. Thomas
 Assistant Coach Mike Maker (mike.maker@stthomas.edu)
 Year First
 Alma Mater Cal Baptist
 Assistant Coach Gameli Ahelegbe (gameli.ahlegbe@stthomas.edu)
 Year First
 Alma Mater Minnesota State
 Assistant Coach Cameron Rundles (cameron.rundles@stthomas.edu)
 Year First
 Alma Mater Wofford
 Dir. of Operations Josh Rodenbiker (rodenbiker@stthomas.edu)
 Year First
 Alma Mater St. Thomas

All-Time Record 1,725-866
 2021-22 Overall Record 3-4
 Returning Players Nine
 Newcomers Five

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St. Thomas Athletics Web Site www.tommiesports.com
 St. Thomas Athletics Twitter @TommieAthletics
 St. Thomas Men's Basketball Twitter @UST_MBB



2021-22 Summit MBB Standings:

Team	League	Overall
South Dakota State	0-0	6-2
Western Illinois	0-0	5-2
North Dakota State	0-0	4-2
South Dakota	0-0	4-2
Oral Roberts	0-0	4-3
Kansas City	0-0	3-4
St. Thomas	0-0	3-4
Denver	0-0	3-5
North Dakota	0-0	2-5
Omaha	0-0	1-5

- Fordham (2-12)
- Youngstown (15-12)
- Niagara (9-11)
- Southern Illinois-Edwardsville (9-17)
- Seattle (12-11)
- Drake (26-5)
- Montana State (13-10)
- Omaha (5-20)
- Denver (2-19)
- Western Illinois (7-15)
- Oral Roberts (18-11)
- Kansas City (11-13)
- North Dakota State (15-12)
- North Dakota (9-17)
- South Dakota State (16-7)
- South Dakota (14-11)

He's the Coach

Dr. Johnny Tauer's first 10 Tommie teams compiled a 218-50 overall mark (.813 win clip). A two-time National Coach of the Year in D-III, Tauer guided the 2016 Toms to the D-III national championship.

Tauer's winning percentage ranks in the top five of all 1,000-plus NCAA men's head coaches – in fact he is the only NCAA men's hoops coach at any level with both an NCAA championship trophy and a winning percentage above .800.

Sports Illustrated Says

The SI preseason ranking of all 358 Division I men's teams put the Tommies at No. 274. *"If you're looking for a fun story to track this year, how about St. Thomas? The Tommies are the first men's team in nearly 30 years to jump directly from D-III to D-I, becoming the second D-I program in Minnesota. Coach Johnny Tauer has a PhD in social psychology, is a tenured member of the St. Thomas faculty and runs the Princeton offense."*

Tommie Talk

The good news is that Tauer returns 96 percent of last season's points, rebounds and assists -- he brings back all five starters and four other contributors off the bench from the program's final season in Division III.

The flip side is that St. Thomas will likely come into this season at or near the bottom of any team list of most returning Division I points. The three transfers coming on board combined for 100 points, 56 rebounds and seven assists last season at their previous D-I teams. In all, Tauer's roster has two true freshmen, three transfers and nine returners.

The Purple's starting five coming back includes two graduate students in their fifth seasons, G-F Burt Hedstrom and G Ryan Lindberg, plus senior guards Anders Nelson and Riley Miller, and senior Parker Bjorklund. Miller made D-III All-America last season. Hedstrom made the elite CoSIDA Academic All-America team.

Here's a look at each returning Tommie player's career stats prior to 2021-22:

No. 1 Kevin Cunningham: Senior guard... D-III: played in 49 games totaling 160 points

No. 3 Zach Theisen: Senior guard... D-III: played in 47 games totaling 177 points

No. 4 Anders Nelson: Senior guard... D-III: played 65 games totaling 1,005 points and 295 rebounds... 2019 Named to MIAC All-First-Year Team, MIAC First Team All-conference, D3hoops.com National Rookie of the Year, and West Region Rookie of the Year... 2020 repeat all-conference and second-team All-Region by both the NABC and D3Hoops.com

No. 5 Parker Bjorklund: Senior forward... Was St. Thomas student but didn't play varsity sports in freshman and sophomore seasons... D-III: started in all six of the games he played in 2020-21, scored 79 points and secured 34 total rebounds...

No. 10 Riley Miller: Senior guard... D3Hoops.com All-America last season... D-III: in 65 career games made 102 baskets from 3-point range at a 45 percent clip, with a near 4-to-1 assist-to-turnover ratio with 161 assists to go with 525 points.

No. 20 Courtney Brown, Jr.: Junior forward... Transfer from UW Milwaukee, where he played 45 games in two seasons.

No. 22 Burt Hedstrom: Graduate student guard, CoSIDA Academic All-America... D-III: in 91 career games has recorded 710 points, 385 rebounds and 151 assists, with 138 made 3-pointers at a 41-percent clip...

No. 23 Will Engels: Junior forward... D-III: played in 29 games totaling 156 points and securing 82 rebounds

No. 24 Ryan Lindberg: Graduate student guard... D-III: started 72 games and in 84 career games made 144 baskets from 3-point range, and recorded 623 points, 160 rebounds, 139 assists with just 44 turnovers.

No. 31 Brooks Allen: Junior forward... D-III: played in 12 games

No. 32 Dom Martinelli: Sophomore Guard... Transfer from Northwestern U., where he played in four games.

No. 33 Bennett Kwiecinski: Sophomore forward... Transfer from Siena, where he played in nine games

Last Season

The 2020-21 Tommies went 7-0 in a Covid shortened season with several highlights:

- They finished ranked No. 2 in the final Division III national poll
- They ranked second among all NCAA men's basketball teams in 2020-21 in assist-to-turnover ratio (1.91)
- They averaged 83 points a game, including 12.4 made threes a contest converted at a .403 clip
- They shot 51 percent from the floor and averaged only 8.2 turnovers a game

Tommie Player Career Highs

- #1 Kevin Cunningham: 11 Points, 5 Rebounds, 5 Assists, 3 Steals
- #3 Zach Theisen: 14 Points, 7 Rebounds, 4 Assists, 4 Steals
- #4 Anders Nelson: 42 Points, 11 Rebounds, 11 Assists, 6 Steals
- #5 Parker Bjorklund: 18 Points, 12 Rebounds
- #10 Riley Miller: 30 Points, 6 Rebounds, 7 Assists, 4 Steals
- #20 Courtney Brown, Jr.: 15 Points, 8 Rebounds, 2 Assists, 2 Steals (UW-Milwaukee)
- #22 Burt Hedstrom: 17 Points, 13 Rebounds, 7 Assists, 3 Steals
- #23 Will Engels: 17 Points, 9 Rebounds, 2 Assists, 3 Steals
- #24 Ryan Lindberg: 24 Points, 6 Rebounds, 5 Assists, 2 Steals
- #31 Brooks Allen: 12 Points, 4 Rebounds, 1 Assist, 2 Steals
- #32 Dom Martinelli: 4 Points, 2 Rebounds, 1 Assist, 0 Steals (Northwestern U.)
- #33 Bennett Kwiecinski: 2 Points, 2 Rebounds, 0 Assists, 0 Steals (Sienna)

Unprecedented Move

St. Thomas is the first NCAA institution to move all of its athletics teams directly from Division III to D-I in one season.

Tommie teams have begun competing in four conferences across all 21 sports:

- The Summit League (18 sports)
- the Pioneer Football League
- Western Collegiate Hockey Association for women's hockey
- Central Collegiate Hockey Association for men's hockey

D-III Chapter and Tradition

- Program's all-time D-III record: 1,722-863; had third most wins of any D-III program before it moved into D-I this season
- 2 NCAA DIII championships (2011, 2016)
- 4 NCAA Division III Final Fours
- The program posted winning seasons in 40 of last 41 years
- Qualified for 14 of the last 15 NCAA Tournaments
- MIAC Champions 14 of the last 15 seasons
- Finished 1st or 2nd out of 400 D-III schools in fewest turnovers for three-consecutive seasons
- NCAA D-III Tournament appearances in 20 of last 31 seasons
- Conference regular-season champions 34 times (12 in row from 2006-2017)
- Johnny Tauer name National Coach of the Year in 2013 and 2016
- Steve Fritz named National Coach of the Year in 2011
- 47 MIAC championships (34 regular-season)
- 21 MIAC playoff appearances in row (league record), qualified 33 of 36 seasons format in place
- 4 30-win seasons since 2009
- 8 D3Hoops.com All-America honors (2002-2021)
- 6 CoSIDA Academic All-Americans
- 10 of the 31 MIAC Player of the Year honors, 16 of the 31 MIAC Coach of the Year honors

2021-22 St. Thomas Tommies Numerical Roster

No.	Name	Year	Pos.	Height	Hometown/High School
1	Kevin Cunningham	Sr.	G	6-0	Glenview, Ill. / Loyola Academy
2	Ben Nau	Fr.	G	6-2	Brookfield, Wis. / Central
3	Zach Theisen	Sr.	G	6-0	Maple Grove, Minn. / Osseo
4	Anders Nelson	Sr.	G	6-0	Edina, Minn. / Edina
5	Parker Bjorklund	Sr.	F	6-6	Chaska, Minn. / Chaska
10	Riley Miller	Sr.	G	6-3	Eden Prairie, Minn. / Benilde-St. Margaret's
12	Ryan Dufault	Fr.	G	6-0	Waseca, Minn. / Waseca
20	Courtney Brown, Jr.	Jr.	G/F	6-7	Cottage Grove, Minn. / East Ridge
22	Burt Hedstrom	Gr.	G	6-4	Minnetonka, Minn. / Minnetonka
23	Will Engels	Jr.	F	6-5	Clarendon Hills, Ill. / Benet Academy
24	Ryan Lindberg	Gr.	G	6-3	Plymouth, Minn. / Wayzata
31	Brooks Allen	Jr.	F	6-7	Shakopee, Minn. / Shakopee
32	Dom Martinelli	So.	G	6-4	Glenview, Ill. / Glenbrook South
33	Bennett Kwiecinski	So.	F	6-9	Chicago, Ill. / Loyola Academy

Head Coach: Dr. Johnny Tauer, 11th season (221-54 overall, 218-50 D-III, 3-4 in D-I)

Assistant Coaches: Mike Maker, Gameli Ahelegbe, Carmeron Rundles

Director of Basketball Operations: Josh Rodebiker