

Conference Championships In store For Swimming & Diving

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MINNEAPOLIS, MN - The UW-Eau Claire men's and women's swimming and diving teams look to take down their Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) opponents this Thursday through Saturday as they compete in the WIAC Championships, hosted by UW-River Falls.

Each day begins at 10:30 a.m. River Falls is hosting, but the event is in the U of M Aquatic Center.

The men have taken third the past three years at this event. Last year UW-Stevens Point won with 1,328 points. UW-La Crosse took second with a 1,013 score in front of Eau Claire, which totaled 733 points. UW-Whitewater, UW-Oshkosh and River Falls followed in that order.

The men split their dual meets this year, both in the WIAC and overall. The men ended the season with the three wins against Macalester College, Whitewater and Oshkosh. Eau Claire lost to MSU-Mankato, Stevens Point and La Crosse to make for the .500 records.

Scott Heatwole (*Sr.-Port Washington*) was the big winner last year at the championships. He was the Diver of the Meet at the championships as he pulled off wins in both the one and three-meter events. He even went on and performed in nationals. Heatwole continued his dominance into this season, as he rattled off top places at a rapid rate. Heatwole also claimed honors this season as a WIAC Diver of the Week and WIAC Athlete of the Week, which he pulled off twice.

There are a couple of other Blugolds looking for success. **Cale Schmidt-Jackson** (*Jr.-Duluth, MN/East*) and **Patrick Finley** (*Fr.-Waunakee*) have won numerous races and hold the top times in many of Eau Claire's season records. Schmidt-Jackson has been the fastest Blugold in the 100-yard butterfly, the 100-yard backstroke, the 200-yard backstroke, 100-yard breaststroke, the 200-yard individual medley and the 400-yard individual medley. Finley owns the records in the 100-yard freestyle, the 200-yard freestyle and the 500-yard freestyle. Both have teamed up with other successful Blugolds for some superb relay teams.

The women's teams have taken third the past two years in the WIAC Championships and look to move up this year. In last year's event, the Blugold women posted 777.50 points. La Crosse won with 1,297.50 while the Pointers were the runners up at 1,247. Oshkosh, River Falls and Whitewater followed.

The women were even in WIAC dual meets at 2-2 while going 4-2 in all dual meets. The team had a three-meet winning streak at the end of the year. It defeated Macalester College, Whitewater and Oshkosh in that run. Earlier in the season, the women beat MSU-Mankato in the first dual meet of the season before falling to Stevens Point and La Crosse before the break.

A couple of current Blugolds excelled last year in the championships. **Cori Severson** (*Sr.-Brainerd, MN*) took second in the 100-yard freestyle and **Emmie Lee** (*So.-Zimmerman, MN/Elk River*) took fourth in the 200-yard backstroke. Severson has been fastest in the pool numerous times and has been the fastest Blugold over the entire season in many race categories. She has the 50-yard freestyle, the 100-yard freestyle, and the 100-yard butterfly. Lee has continued her success as she is in the fastest two or three in numerous categories herself and has taken first often in many meets this season.

Annie Gorman (*Sr.-Menomonie*) and **Emily Diehl** (*So.-Prairie du Sac/Sauk Prairie*) have had terrific seasons, as well. The 200-yard freestyle, the 500-yard freestyle, 1,650-yard freestyle, and the 200-yard butterfly all belong to the swift Gorman. Diehl has left her mark in the 100-yard breaststroke, the 200-yard breaststroke and the 200-yard individual medley. The team has had other standouts in the season, accounting for the spread of names across the top times and also the fantastic relay squads.

The action in the pool begins at 10:30 a.m. this Thursday and continues through Saturday at the U of M Aquatic Center.