

## Missed Rule Costs Blugold Men A Spot In Nationals

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The UW-Eau Claire men's golf team, coached by Jim Maguire, will not participate in the NCAA Division III championships this year because of an administrative mistake. This mistake involved missing the rule that required participation in four contests after January 1. The Blugolds competed in just three.

The Blugolds, who are ranked No. 5 in the most recent GCAA/Bridgestone Division III poll, were bidding for their ninth straight appearance and 10th overall in the NCAA championships. The Blugolds won the national title in 2001 and had finished 4th, 10th, 11th and 10th in the 23-team field the last four seasons.

Fall and spring schedules are considered in the selection process but a team must compete in a minimum of four contests after January 1 each year, according to the NCAA Golf Championships Handbook. The Blugolds had four meets scheduled this spring but pulled out of a meet late in the season which resulted in the missed criteria.

Director of Athletics Scott Kilgallon expressed regret that the Blugold players are being penalized as a result of this collective administrative failure. "This was our fault. The coach missed the rule. I was unaware of the rule. We take full responsibility for this mistake. I feel bad for the student-athletes who have worked so hard this season with this tournament as their ultimate goal. We apologize to the student-athletes, their parents and alumni who have supported the men's golf program."

Kilgallon explained that he had contacted the NCAA to see if there was a way the institution could appeal the situation, but was told that the rule is published in the Golf Championships Handbook and is not flexible.

As a result, St. John's University, Nebraska Wesleyan and Gustavus Adolphus, who are ranked 9th, 8th and 10th, respectively, in the most recent poll, were selected as participants from the Central Region of which Eau Claire is a member.

This year's national meet is scheduled May 8-11 at the Firethorn Golf Club in Lincoln, Nebraska, hosted by Nebraska Wesleyan University.

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