

Volleyball To Host WIAC Final Four

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EAU CLAIRE - The top-seeded UW-Eau Claire volleyball team will host this Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) Volleyball Final Four today and tomorrow at the McPhee Physical Education Center.

Second-seeded UW-Whitewater will face seventh-seeded UW-Platteville tonight at 5:00 PM followed by the UW-Eau Claire versus fifth-seeded UW-River Falls match up at 7:30 PM. The third place match will take place tomorrow at 4:30 PM followed by the championship match in which the winner earns a NCAA post-season automatic birth at 7:00 PM.

Both the Blugolds and UW-Whitewater are currently ranked nationally in the latest CSTV/American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) poll released this week. The Blugolds are ranked fifth while the Warhawks, the defending NCAA Division III national champion, are ranked 10th. UW-Platteville, the seventh seed, advanced to the final four by defeating WIAC co-champion and sixth-ranked UW-Oshkosh this past Tuesday.

The Blugolds enter the weekend leading the WIAC in four of six team statistical categories including hitting percentage (.265), kills (15.32/game), blocks (2.99/game) and service aces (2.54/game). Middle hitter **Jess Groh** (Sr.-Eau Claire/North) has played a big role in the success of the Blugolds this season ranking second among WIAC leaders in blocks (1.62/game) and points (5.20/game) while ranking fourth in hitting percentage (.351) and kills (3.84/game). Outside hitter **Jodi Dunbar** (Sr.-Platteville) ranks second in kills (4.32/game) and third in points (4.71/game) while setter **Carly Freiborg** (Sr.-Sacred Heart, MN/Renville County West) ranks second in service aces (0.66/game) and fifth in assists (11.99/game).

UW-River Falls advanced to the Final Four with a 3-0 victory at UW-Stevens Point. The Falcons rank second in assists (13.85/game) and digs (21.32/game) in addition to ranking fourth in kills (14.87/game). Setter **Kat Krtnick** (Sr.-Fridley, MN) leads the WIAC with 12.38 assists per game. Outside hitter **Kate Thompson** (Sr.-Forest Lake, MN) and middle hitter **Andrea Geehan** (Sr.-St. Paul, MN/Como Park) rank third and fifth in kills with 4.15 and 3.77 kills per game, respectively. Thompson also ranks fourth in points (4.68/game) while outside hitter **Molly Thompson** (Sr.-Forest Lake, MN) ranks fourth in service aces (0.48/game).

UW-Whitewater arrives to the Final Four after defeating UW-La Crosse 3-0. The Warhawks rank second in kills (14.97/game) and blocks (2.89/game) while ranking fourth in hitting percentage (.239) and service aces (2.19/game). Setter **Alyse Karls** (Fr.-Dane/Lodi) leads the WIAC in service aces at 0.73 per game. Setter **Kate Lazotte** (Jr.-Stoughton) ranks second in assists at 12.37 per game. Middle blockers **Carley Polk** (Jr.-Dousman/Mukwonago) and **Sarah Theis** (Jr.-Lodi) rank fourth and fifth in blocks per game (1.18 and 1.17 per game, respectively) in addition to ranking fifth and sixth in hitting percentage (.343 and .321, respectively).

UW-Platteville punched their ticket to the Final Four by winning at second-seeded UW-Oshkosh 3-2. The win marked the first win by a seventh seed since 1996 and only the second time in the history of the WIAC post-season volleyball tournament that a seventh seed has ever advanced out of the first round. The Pioneers rank second in hitting percentage (.261) and fourth in assists (13.65/game). Middle hitter **Dana Alf** (Sr.-Eleva/Eleva-Strum) is tops in the WIAC in kills (5.08/game) and points (5.72/game) while ranking second in hitting percentage (.414). Setter **Kelly Laschinger** (Jr.-Verona) ranks third in assist averaging 12.34 per game.

Tournament Website