

2004-05 Men's Cross Country Season Preview

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Returning arguably three of their top runners from one season ago, the UW-Eau Claire men's cross country team and head coach Chip Schneider appear poised to improve on their seventh place finish at the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Championships last season.

The 2003 Blugold season was highlighted by a first place finish out of five teams at the Midwest Long and Short Course Challenge, hosted by Eau Claire. The Blugolds finished the 2003 season with a 12th place finish out of 32 teams at the NCAA Midwest Regional.

Anchoring the Eau Claire squad in 2004 will likely be the trio of **Adam Condit** (*Sr.-La Crosse/Central*), **Micah Hernandez** (*Sr.-Milwaukee/Wisconsin Lutheran*) and **Ben Schmiede** (*Sr.-Madison/Lakeside Lutheran*). All three runners performed well last season. Condit finished in first place on the Blugold team in four of the seven Eau Claire meets, including taking first place and 40th overall at the Midwest Regional with a season-best time of 25:53. The senior Blugold looks to lead the way in his final campaign with Eau Claire.

Hernandez finished in the top five runners on the Blugold team in all seven meets last season, including five top-three finishes. He paced the Eau Claire team with a season-best time of 26:08 at the Midwest Collegiate Championship on September 20 of last year.

Schmiede had a very strong season last year as he finished in the top four Blugold runners in six of the seven meets. He ran a season-best time of 26:14 last season at the Midwest Long and Short Course Challenge, good for second on the Eau Claire roster.

Also returning for the 2004 season is **Zach Severson** (*Jr.-Sun Prairie*), who finished in the top four on the Blugold team in the first three meets of the season before missing the final four competitions. Severson finished the 2003 season opener in a time of 26:09, good for second on the team at the Midwest Collegiate Championship.

Ethan Kreul (*Jr.-Poynette*) rejoins the Blugolds after missing last season studying abroad. Kreul was Eau Claire's top runner in 2002, participating in five meets and finishing first on the Blugolds in three of them.

Head coach Chip Schneider will look to his upper classmen to guide a relatively young team through the season. The 2004 roster features 10 freshman, making up half of the 20-man roster. The combination of youth and experience could be exactly what the doctor ordered for the Blugolds to climb the ladder in the WIAC.