

# Matt Loen To Lead Blugold Men's Ice Hockey

*Posted: Friday, August 24, 2007*

A familiar face will lead the UW-Eau Claire men's ice hockey team for the 2007-08 season.

Matt Loen, who has been an assistant to Luke Strand the past two years, has been named the interim head coach for the upcoming season, Director of Athletics Scott Kilgallon has announced.

Strand submitted his resignation last Friday after two years as the Blugold head coach to take an assistant coaching position with the Houston Aeros of the American Hockey League.

Like Strand, Loen is a Blugold alum, having played for Ian Perrin in the period from 1991 through 1995. The Spring Lake Park, Minnesota native was the Northern Collegiate Hockey Association Player of the Year for the 1994-95 season. He was a two-time All-NCHA first team pick and also one of only four Blugolds ever named to the American Hockey Coaches Association All-American first team. With that award, he stands in the company of Alex Hicks, Greg Robertson and Mike Schwengler as Blugold AHCA All-Americans.

Loen ranks 10th on the school's all-time scoring list with 120 points on 43 goals and 77 assists. However, he was not a dominant performer until his junior season. In his final two years, he scored 96 points in 54 games including 56 as a senior. That represents the fifth best single season production in school history.

Following his Blugold career, Loen spent eight seasons playing professional hockey. He was affiliated with the Madison Monsters and Madison Kodiaks of the UHL, the Milwaukee Admirals of the IHL and the AHL, the Cincinnati Mighty Ducks of the AHL, the Kalamazoo K-Wings of the UHL, the Tacoma Sabercats of the WCHL and the Rockford IceHogs of the UHL. He played over 500 games and compiled over 575 points. He was named the United Hockey League Rookie of the Year in 1995-96 while playing for the Madison Monsters.

During his final year as a professional player, he was also an assistant coach with the Rockford IceHogs. He returned to Eau Claire to assist Jean Laforest as a Blugold assistant for one season before helping college teammate Mike Schwengler at Eau Claire Memorial High School during the 2004-05 campaign. He returned to the Blugolds when Strand took over in 2005-06.

"In the best interest of our student-athletes and the recruits that Luke and Matt have brought here for the upcoming season, Matt is the right person to move this program forward in the coming year," said Kilgallon. "I'm very confident in Matt's coaching ability and his work ethic." Kilgallon indicated that "A national search for a permanent head coach will begin immediately after the 2007-08 season."

Loen will be introduced to alumni at a hockey booster golf outing at 1 p.m. Saturday at Hillcrest Country Club.

- TP -