

2007 UW-Eau Claire Soccer Season Preview

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After finishing on top of the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) the past two seasons, the Blugolds will look to defend their title this season. The Blugolds are predicted to finish in first place in the WIAC, based on a preseason poll voted on by the WIAC sports information directors.

In 2006, the Blugolds finished their season with a 23-3 record, or the most successful season in the history of the program. The Blugolds only lost one game at home, one on the road and one at a neutral site last season. They had a perfect record against conference opponents. Last season, the Blugolds hosted both the WIAC Tournament and NCAA first and second round games. After winning four games in the postseason, the Blugolds advanced to the NCAA Sectionals to face Wheaton College. For the second year in a row, Wheaton would cut the Blugold's season short.

During the season, the Blugolds only gave up ten goals and set a school record with 18 shutouts. **Allie Rivard** (*Jr.-Plymouth, MN/Wayzata*) and **Liz Weirick** (*St.-Kenosha, WI/Tremper*), who both shared time at goalkeeper, are back for their junior and senior seasons. Rivard finished the season with 48 saves and only three goals, a 0.19 goals per game average, which was good enough for third place among all Division III goalkeepers in that category. Weirick finished the season with 30 saves, allowed only seven goals and had a record of 16-2.

This season, the Blugolds are already receiving national recognition. Not only are they predicted to take first place in the WIAC, but they are also ranked 15th in the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA)/adidas and 10th in the D3Kicks.com preseason polls.

The Blugolds have a strong team coming back, returning 15 letterwinners and eight starters. Four All-WIAC selections returning this season are **Liz Kooistra** (*Jr.-Lakeville, MN*), **Allie Rivard**, **Allison Smith** (*Jr.-Bloomington, MN/Thomas Jefferson*) and **Amy Smith** (*Jr.-Bloomington, MN/Thomas Jefferson*).

Forward Amy Smith and Midfielder Liz Kooistra finished second and fourth on the team in points respectively. Smith finished the season second on the team in number of goals with 11, and Kooistra finished with 10.

Although the Blugolds lost three All-WIAC seniors from last season, the returning squad has depth and experience. With 13 freshmen and the experience coming back, the Blugolds and Head Coach Sean Yengo will look to make another run at the NCAA Tournament.

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