

Men's Basketball Heads To Madison To Take On Badgers

Posted: Monday, November 5, 2007

EAU CLAIRE, Wis. - On Wednesday, the UW-Eau Claire men's basketball team will play a game unprecedented in team annals when it heads to Madison and faces Bo Ryan's Badgers in an exhibition game.

The ability to play this Division I opponent is through an agreement with Madison and the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) that establishes a rotation among the WIAC teams. Each year, the Badgers will play a different WIAC team in an exhibition contest. The rotation involves the men's basketball team for each school in the conference and some of the women's basketball teams.

This is the fourth year the Badgers will face a WIAC team. Last year, UW-Stout traveled to Madison and lost 82-33. It started in 2004 when Ryan faced his former team, UW-Platteville, and won 78-44. In 2005, Madison defeated UW-River Falls 79-52.

Eau Claire is coming off a 10-16 season that saw a first-round loss in the playoffs. They are predicted to finish eighth in the WIAC this season, just as they did a year ago.

The Badgers went 30-6 last year and took second in the Big Ten Conference. Second-seeded Madison's season ended in a 74-68 loss to seventh-seeded UNLV in the second round of the NCAA Tournament. The team also claimed its first No. 1 ranking in school history. This year they received votes in both the AP and the ESPN/USA Today preseason polls, but not make the Top 25.

Division III teams are facing larger schools recently because the NCAA passed legislation that allows such exhibition games in the preseason. These games don't count as one of the 25 allowed games for the DIII schools. The Division I trend continues next year for Eau Claire when it plays UW-Green Bay

For Eau Claire's game, there will be a pregame gathering in a suite at the Kohl Center for alumni. The Blugolds then battle the Badgers at 8 p.m.