

Matt Loen Named Head Men's Hockey Coach

Posted: Monday, April 14, 2008

EAU CLAIRE, Wis. - After leading the UW-Eau Claire men's hockey program to one of its most successful seasons ever as interim head coach, Matt Loen has been named the permanent head coach following a national search, Director of Athletics Scott Kilgallon announced today.

The Blugolds finished with an overall record of 11-16-1 and 6-7-1 in the Northern Collegiate Hockey Association, taking fifth place in the conference. In the NCHA playoffs, the Blugolds won their first-round series against Superior and then lost to Stout in overtime of the NCHA Semifinals. Prior to the 2007-08 first-round playoff series victory, the Blugolds had never won a series since joining the NCHA.

"We are excited to have Matt Loen on board as the head men's hockey coach," Kilgallon said. "He did a tremendous job with the program last season and has what it takes to get the program to the next level. He knows UW-Eau Claire and the community very well and will provide great leadership for the program."

Loen is equally excited about the opportunity to be the Blugolds' ninth head coach in program history.

"I am honored to be the head coach for the Blugold men's hockey team," Loen said. "I feel very fortunate to be in the position, and it is a dream come true. I look forward to continuing the process of building a strong program."

Loen is a Blugold alum who 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 former head coach Luke Strand took over in 2005-06.

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