

2008 Volleyball Season Preview

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EAU CLAIRE, Wis. - With 10 letterwinners, including five starters, returning in 2008, the UW-Eau Claire volleyball team will look to continue to build on last season's success.

A year ago, the Blugolds were predicted to finish fourth in the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) with a young team, but instead tied for second place with Oshkosh. The Blugolds ended the season with a WIAC record of 6-2 and an overall record of 22-11. Eau Claire was also one of five WIAC teams to advance to the NCAA Championships, making its ninth appearance in program history.

This season the Blugolds are ranked 19th in the CBS College Sports Network/American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) Division III Coaches Top 25 Preseason Poll. Eau Claire will also be playing on a new wood floor, which was installed over the summer in the McPhee Physical Education Center as part of a multi-million dollar renovation of the complex.

The Blugolds return three All-WIAC players from a season ago. First team selection **Abby Freiborg** (*Sacred Heart, Minn./Renville County West*), who led the team in kills with 397 and led both the WIAC and team in service aces with 76, begins her senior season with the Blugolds. **Emily Haese** (*Sr.-Mishicot, Wis.*), who led the team with 1,372 assists, and **Katie Fox** (*Sr.-Chippewa Falls, Wis./Chi-Hi*), who led the team with 106 blocks (14 solos, 92 assists) and was second on the team with 291 kills, are both returning All-WIAC honorable mention recipients.

Also returning this year are **Lindsey Smith** (*Jr.-Maple Lake, Minn.*), who was second on the team with 43 service aces, **Cassie Hunt** (*Jr.-Chippewa Falls, Wis./McDonell*), **Amanda Lessner** (*So.-Watertown, Wis.*), **Danielle Lucia** (*So.-St. Cloud, Minn./Apollo*), **Kristen Moore** (*Sr.-Green Bay, Wis.-Ashwaubenon*), **Rachel Ver Voort** (*So.-Madison, Wis./La Follette*) and **Jenna Weber** (*Sr.-Antigo, Wis.*).

The Blugolds also bring in some height, as four of the six newcomers are 5-10 or taller. **Liz Amici** (*Fr.-Whitewater, Wis.*) and **Sam Pitzl** (*Fr.-Burnsville, Minn.*) are 5-11, while **Stephanie Peterson** (*So.-Duluth, Minn./East*) and **Katie Wall** (*Fr.-Madison, Wis./La Follette*) are 5-10. The other new players this season are **Jackie Tucker** (*So.-Sun Prairie, Wis.*) and **Emily Zupon** (*So.-Antigo, Wis.*).

The Blugolds' season will begin this weekend with a total of four matches at the Washington University-St. Louis Tournament on Saturday and Sunday.

2008 Blugold Volleyball Roster

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