

# Eau Claire To Host 2010 NCAA Division III Softball Championship

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EAU CLAIRE, Wis. - UW-Eau Claire and the city of Eau Claire have been selected to host the 2010 NCAA Division III softball championship.

Blugold Director of Athletics Scott Kilgallon and Visit Eau Claire Sports Sales Manager Michael Strubel were both notified of the selection last week by Jan Gentry, the NCAA Assistant Director of Championships.

The 2010 tournament will be the first to be hosted in the Midwest since Eau Claire hosted the 2002 championship. This will be the fifth time Eau Claire has hosted the championship, having previously been the host site in 1997, 1999, 2001 and 2002. Eastern Connecticut also has hosted the championship four times. Only the City of Salem, Virginia will have hosted more softball championships (eight).

Simpson College in Iowa won the first two tournaments hosted by Eau Claire in 1997 and 1999. Muskingum College in Ohio won the 2001 championship, and Ithaca College in New York won the 2002 championship.

Since the Blugolds last hosted, Salem hosted in 2003 and 2004, Peace College in 2005 and 2006, Salem in 2007 and 2008 and Montclair State University in New Jersey will host this year. The tournament has only been in the Midwest 11 times in the 27-year history of the Division III softball championships.

The eight-team, double elimination tournament will take place Friday, May 21 through Monday, May 24 with an "if necessary" game possible on Tuesday, May 25 to determine the national champion.

The tournament will be played on Carson Park's historic Gelein Field with the Hobbs Field used as a warm-up and practice facility. All teams will get an hour of practice on each field on Thursday, May 20 before the tournament kickoff banquet.

Hosting the national tournament does not guarantee a spot in the championship field. In fact, UW-Eau Claire participated only once in the previous four tournaments it hosted, finishing fourth in 1999. The Blugolds have participated in the national tournament four times, winning a national championship last year after placing third in 2007 and fourth in 1999 and 2000. The Blugolds have advanced to NCAA post-season tournament play seven times, also playing in regional competition in 1997, 1998 and 2006.

This is not the only sport in which UW-Eau Claire has been a national tournament host. The Blugolds hosted the 1984 NAIA men's ice hockey championships, the 1986 NAIA women's gymnastics nationals, the 1994 NCAA Division III Women's Basketball Championship, the 2003 National Collegiate Gymnastics Association national meet and the 2004 NCAA Division III Men's and Women's Cross Country Championships.

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