

# Sikora Named Head Wrestling Coach

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EAU CLAIRE, Wis. - Former UW-Eau Claire wrestling national champion Derek Sikora has been selected as the program's sixth head coach following the retirement of Don Parker, who led the Blugolds for 32 seasons, Director of Athletics Scott Kilgallon has announced.

In addition to Sikora, Russ Peloquin, who has served as an assistant wrestling coach for the Blugolds since 2004, will also remain on board. Peloquin, a former wrestler from UW-La Crosse is a two-time All-American, recording a second place finish at 118 pounds at the 1998 NCAA Division III Championships and a sixth place finish at the 1999 championships at 125 pounds.

"We are excited to have both Derek and Russ on board to continue to lead the Blugold wrestling program," Kilgallon said.

Sikora, a Neillsville native, wrestled for the Blugolds from 2002-06. In 2006, he became the program's only national champion, as he captured the 165-pound title at the NCAA Division III Championships. Sikora finished his Blugold career winning his final 18 matches and ended his senior season with a record of 31-2. He finished as a three-time All-American with a career record of 111-23. He also took third and fifth at the national meets his sophomore and junior seasons, respectively. In addition to his national title, Sikora won conference titles twice in his career.

Following his playing career with the Blugolds, Sikora helped coach the team for parts of three seasons. He was a graduate assistant during the 2006-07 season and started out coaching during the 2007-08 season but after earning his master's degree, transferred to UW-Oshkosh to be an assistant wrestling coach there for the remainder of the season. He then came back to UW-Eau Claire to help as an assistant for the 2008-09 season.

Sikora is excited about the opportunity to lead the Blugolds into the future.

"I am very honored and thankful for the opportunity to be the next head coach of Blugold Wrestling," Sikora said. "I have had a great experience wrestling for and working with Coach Parker and as an alum of the university, I take great honor in taking this job."

Sikora, who earned his bachelor of science in movement studies and his masters of education in professional development degrees from UW-Eau Claire, also played four seasons of football for the Blugolds. Sikora was a two-time All-WIAC selection at cornerback and received All-WIAC honors as a return specialist his senior season. He was also named twice to the All-West Region third team, once as a cornerback and the other as a returner. He also helped coach the football team in 2006, 2007 and 2008 and will assist the team again next season.

Peloquin brings with him nine years of wrestling coaching experience. Prior to his five seasons with the Blugolds he was a graduate assistant for UW-La Crosse for one year. He also coached as an assistant at Wabash College (Ind.) and Lawrence University. Peloquin has coached three national champions, one at UW-Eau Claire, one at UW-La Crosse and one at Lawrence.

Peloquin is no stranger to great achievement on the wrestling mat either as he was a very successful wrestler for the UW-La Crosse Eagles. In addition to his All-American honors, he won WIAC titles in 1998 and 1999 at 118 and 125 pounds, respectively, as the Eagles went on to win the conference team championship. Peloquin finished his career with a record of 70-19 as he wrestled from 1995-99.

In 2001, Peloquin earned a bachelor of science degree in physical education from UW-La Crosse while he earned his master of science in exercise and sport science-pedagogy degree in 2004 at La Crosse as well. He currently serves as an associate lecturer in the Department of Kinesiology at UW-Eau Claire.

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