

## 21 Teams in Doug Georgianni Memorial Blugold Invite

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EAU CLAIRE, Wis. (UWECBlugolds.com) - The annual UW-Eau Claire women's golf fall invite, which has been renamed the Doug Georgianni Memorial Blugold Invite in honor of the university's first women's golf coach who was killed in Arizona last April, will have 21 teams participating this weekend at Mill Run and Wild Ridge golf courses.

The renamed event will keep alive the memory of Doug Georgianni, who coached the Blugold women's golf team during its first six years of existence. Georgianni began the golf invite his first season as the head coach in the fall of 1995 and this year will mark the 15th annual event which last year had a record size of 25 teams.

Over the years, all eight Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) teams have participated in the event as well as 29 different non-conference teams from throughout the Midwest.

While only six full teams participated in the first invite, no less than 12 teams have been involved every year since. The Mill Run Golf Course has been used every year since the tournament began although in the past five years, the Wild Ridge course has been used on the second day of the 36-hole event.

A very competitive event, the field normally includes several teams ranked among the top 10 in NCAA Division III. Gustavus Adolphus is the defending invite champ and has won three of the last five titles. Simpson College has also been a top entrant, winning twice in its seven appearances and never finishing lower than fourth. The University of St. Thomas has won two of the last four championships and has appeared in 13 of the previous 14 invites. Minnesota State-Mankato won two titles in the early years of the tournament but has not competed since 1999. The host Blugolds also won back-to-back titles in 2001 and 2002. The only other school to win a championship was the College of St. Benedict.

This year's field includes two teams from Gustavus and also two teams from the host Blugolds. Also competing for invite honors this year will be St. Thomas, St. Olaf, St. Mary's, St. Benedict, St. Norbert, Ripon, Carroll, Augsburg, Concordia, Viterbo, Carleton, Edgewood plus UW schools Whitewater, Stevens Point, Platteville, River Falls, Stout and Stevens Point.

Georgianni was murdered April 19 while serving as a photo van operator for RedFlex Security which was contracted by the Arizona Department of Public Safety to help control speeding on Arizona highways. He was shot as he sat in his van alongside a highway on the north side of Phoenix. A suspect was arrested in the case.

Georgianni coached the Blugolds from 1995 through 2001 and took the first Blugold team to the NCAA Division III championships his final season. The Blugolds have been selected to compete in the national tournament eight consecutive times since then. Originally only 10 teams qualified for the nationals but in recent years, the field has been expanded to 20 or more teams. Georgianni also directed the Blugolds to their first conference championship in the fall of 1998. In the other four years there was a conference meet with Georgianni as head coach, the Blugolds were second each time. Georgianni was also tabbed the WIAC Coach of the Year in 1998.

"In recognition of his contributions to building the women's golf program into a national power and due to the tragic circumstances surrounding his death, we are pleased to rename this invite in Doug's honor and perpetuate his memory," said Director of Athletics Scott Kilgallon.

Current Blugold women's golf coach John Means, who directed a freshman-dominated squad to a sixth-place finish at the NCAA Division III championship last spring, credited Georgianni for "setting the table" for the excellence that he has been able to continue at the conference and national level. He indicated that Georgianni had contacted him on a couple of occasions as he maintained interest in and support for the current Blugold squads.

Georgianni's sisters Michelle Kohl and Melanie Georgianni and his mother June Dorcheus will be among family members in attendance at the invite. They will be involved in the recognition ceremonies at the close of

the meet Sunday afternoon (approx. 2:30 p.m.). Tee times begin at 7:30 a.m. Saturday and at 7:30 a.m. Sunday.