

## Women's Basketball Opens Season at Home Tuesday

By: Kevin Meinholz, Sports Information Director

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EAU CLAIRE, Wis. (UWECBlugolds.com) - The UW-Eau Claire women's basketball team will open the 2009-10 season Tuesday when it hosts the College of St. Benedict (Minn.) at Zorn Arena. Tipoff is set for 7 p.m.

The Blugolds return eight letterwinners from last year's team while they have six newcomers. This season's roster consists of one senior, two juniors, six sophomores and five freshmen.

Eau Claire was picked to finish third in this year's Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference standings while receiving one first place vote according to the league's sports information directors. The Blugolds also received votes in the preseason D3hoops.com Top 25 poll.

While the Blugolds finished third in 2008 and 2006 and captured a share of the league title in 2007, they will have to replace some key players from those teams. Eau Claire returns just three players who saw starts on last year's team. Beyond that, the rest of the returners each played in nine or fewer games.

Despite being a young team, the Blugolds will look to where they have the most experience, their post players, to try to keep them near the top of the league.

Junior **Hannah Mesick** (*Chatfield, Minn.*) started all 30 games for Eau Claire last year and was second on the team in scoring and tied for second in rebounding with this year's only senior, **Jodi Lindner** (*Neillsville, Wis.*). With 4.6 points per game, Lindner was also fifth on the team in scoring last year and started 16 games. **Ellen Plendl** (*So.-Chippewa Falls, Wis./McDonell*) will also see significant playing time this year as she started 13 of the Blugolds' final 14 games a year ago. She was sixth on last year's team in scoring.

The Blugolds will get a chance to start their season off strong as they play six of their first seven games at home. In Zorn Arena, the Blugolds have posted a 36-3 overall and 23-1 WIAC record over the last three seasons.

Tonja Englund will guide the Blugolds this year, her 10th season leading the team. She needs just 10 wins to reach the 200-win mark for her career. Englund would become just the seventh coach in WIAC and second in Blugold history to reach the mark. Assisting the Blugolds this year will be former players Becca Bestul and Amanda Zenner, while Peg Johnson will also be back.