Men's Tennis Loses Close Battle to Warhawks in NCAA Opener

By: Kevin Meinholz, Sports Information Director
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WHITEWATER, Wis. (UWECBlugolds.com) - For the second year in a row, the UW-Eau Claire men's tennis team fell to UW-Whitewater in the first round of the NCAA Division III Championship to end the season.

While the Blugolds fell 5-0 last season, they played much closer today despite falling short 5-2. Eau Claire ends its season with a 24-7 overall while Whitewater improves to 22-9 and will move on to face Kenyon College (19-6) in the second round of the tournament Saturday. Earlier this season the Blugolds beat the Warhawks 7-2.

The Blugolds opened the day going 1-2 in doubles play. **Chris Kuna** *(So.-Edina, Minn.)* and **Phil Loprinzi** *(Sr.-Rochester, Minn./Mayo)* won 8-6 at No. 1 doubles. The No. 3 doubles pair of **Eric Wollum** *(Jr.-Eau Claire, Wis./Memorial)* and **Dirk Van Rybroek** *(So.-Madison, Wis./Edgewood)* fell just short in a tough match 9-8 (12-10). Wollum had won 10 straight No. 3 doubles matches coming into the day, nine with Van Rybroek and one with **Lars Olson** *(Jr.-De Pere, Wis.)*.

On the singles side, Wollum was the lone Blugold to record a victory as he won 6-1, 6-2 in the No. 5 spot. He finished the season winning six out of his last seven matches and had a record of 22-7 overall in singles play.

The No. 3 and No. 6 singles matches remained unfinished as Whitewater captured the win with three singles victories to go along with its two doubles wins.

Eau Claire competed in the NCAA Tournament for just the third time in program history since joining the NCAA in the mid-1990s. The Blugolds competed last year while their first time was in 1996.