

Gymnastics Set to Kick off New Season

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EAU CLAIRE, Wis. (UWECBlugolds.com) - The UW-Eau Claire women's gymnastics team is set to open the 2011 season, when it heads to Winona, Minn. to take on Winona State University on Friday at 6:30 p.m.

A season ago the Blugolds saw improvement over the previous year and with a majority of the Blugolds' major contributors back from last year squad, the Blugolds will look to improve even more this season.

A total of 13 letterwinners return from last season while six new members join this year's team.

Danielle Schulzetenberg (So.-Maple Grove, Minn.) is the Blugolds' top returner from a season ago. She won the conference title on the balance beam in 2010, becoming the Blugolds first conference champions since 2005, while also claiming first team All-American honors on the balance beam at nationals. Along with **RachelAnn Anderson** (So.-Maple Grove, Minn.), who was a second team All-American last season, it was the first time since 2007 the Blugolds had an All-American finish at the national meet.

While the Blugolds had a number of individual accomplishments last season the entire team saw an overall improvement. After finishing in eighth place at the WIAC Championships in 2008-09, the team improved to a fourth place finish last year, narrowly missing on qualifying for nationals as the top three teams automatically earn a bid to nationals. The Blugolds came up just over three points short of qualifying but still saw seven student-athletes qualify individually.

This season the Blugolds know they will be competing as a team at nationals as UW-Eau Claire will host the 2011 NCGA National Championships, March 25-26 at the McPhee Physical Education Center. Five or six other teams will join the Blugolds to compete for the national title. The last time the Blugolds hosted nationals was in 2003 and they came away with a fifth place finish.

The Blugolds will have two other home meets to prepare for nationals as they will be at McPhee on January 14 and February 25, while they are slated for eight days of competition on the road.