Men's Swimming & Diving Runner Up at Conference Championships

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Posted: Saturday, February 19, 2011 at 10:24 PM

BROWN DEER, Wis. (UWECBlugolds.com) - The UW-Eau Claire men's swimming & diving team earned its best finish at the WIAC championships since the 1999-00 season, earning a second place finish on the conclusion of the three-day event.

UW-Stevens Point was crowned the conference champion for the 12th consecutive year. Earning 945 total points, the Pointers ran away with the event. The Blugolds had a strong third day of competition and earned 639 overall points. The total was just enough to hold off UW-La Crosse, who racked up 622 points. In addition to the success of the team, head coach Art Brandt was honored as the coach of the year.

On the third day of competition, the Blugolds picked up two more event titles. **Jonathan Poppele** *(Jr.-Maple Grove, Minn./Wayzata)* was victorious in the 200-yard backstroke event. His time of 1:51.72 set a new school record and also qualified as a DIII “B-cut.”

The Blugolds swept the top two spots in the 200-yard breaststroke race. **Alex Card** *(Fr.-Prior Lake, Minn.)* earned the championship title with a time of 2:05.74, another DIII “B-cut. **Corey Groshens** *(So.-St. Louis Park, Minn./Hopkins)* finished just two seconds behind him for second place.

Eau Claire also had two third place finishes, one in the 200-yard butterfly competition and one in three-meter diving. **Alex Plaetzer** *(Jr.-Rochester, Minn./John Marshall)* finished third with a time of 1:57.48 while **Nick Badilla** *(So.-Appleton, Wis./North)* earned third with a dive scoring 473.55.

After the competitions were completed, the Blugolds earned another award. **Tommy Dahl** *(Sr.-Minnetonka, Minn./Hopkins)* was named the Eau Claire representative on the All-Sportsmanship team. One player from each participating team was honored with this membership.

With the conference championships completed, Eau Claire will next compete on the national stage. All Blugolds who have qualified will compete in the NCAA Division III Championships in Knoxville, Tenn. The national championships will take place March 23 through 26.