Terry Gibbons Retires from Blugold Basketball Program

By: Kevin Meinholz, Sports Information Director
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EAU CLAIRE, Wis. (UWECBlugolds.com) - After 22 years on the Blugold men's basketball staff including 16 years as the head coach, Terry Gibbons is leaving the men's basketball program at UW-Eau Claire.

Gibbons announced his retirement from the basketball program today. He will retain his teaching duties and will be reassigned as a special assistant to Director of Athletics Scott Kilgallon who said he will begin a national search for someone to become only the fourth head coach in the last 84 years at the university.

"This was a tough decision after pouring my heart and soul into the coaching profession for so many years, but I've decided this is a good time to retire from coaching" Gibbons said. "While I will miss coaching greatly, I look forward to the challenges my new position will present."

Gibbons leaves the program with the third best winning percentage (.560) out of eight coaches in school history, finishing his 16 years as head coach with a 235-185 mark. His years of service and victories are the third best behind Blugold and NAIA Hall of Fame coaches Bill Zorn, who headed the program for 40 years (1928-68) and finished with a 397-357 record, and Ken Anderson, who headed the program for 27 years (1968-95) and posted a 631-152 mark.

Gibbons came to UW-Eau Claire in 1989 and served his first six years as Anderson's assistant before becoming the interim head coach in August 1995, when Anderson retired. He was named the permanent head coach the following year.

Gibbons, a Wisconsin native, arrived in Eau Claire after four years at Western State, Colo. He was the youngest head coach in the nation at age 24 when he was hired by the Mountaineers in 1985. He played college ball for legendary UW-Oshkosh coach Bob White. At Antigo High School, he played for two well-known Eau Claire high school coaches, Pat Hammond (North) and John Nicholas (Memorial).

Gibbons enjoyed six consecutive winning seasons to begin his tenure at UWEC, posting a 111-60 mark during those years. His best conference finishes were a second in 1999-2000 and a tie for second in 1998-99. The 1999-2000 team produced a 20-victory season as the Blugolds finished 27-6 and were the NCAA Division III national runner-up. The Blugolds advanced to the national tournament that year with a shocking 60-58 triumph over conference champion UW-Stevens Point in the sectional final at Storm Lake, Iowa. That game included one of the most famous shots in school history as Sherm Carstensen nailed a three-point basket in the final second for the win over the Pointers. The Blugolds played the sectional final and both games in the national tournament without three-time all-conference player Jon Wallenfelsz, who suffered a knee injury in the sectional semi-final game.

The following season, Gibbons led the Blugolds to a conference tournament championship as the No. 4 seed when the top three seeds fell in the opening round of the tournament and the Blugolds went on to beat UW-Oshkosh in the title contest. The Blugolds made their second straight NCAA appearance that year and lost in the second round to the University of Chicago.

During his tenure, Gibbons had eight first team all-conference players, including five who were selected multiple times. They included Wallenfelsz (1998, 1999, 2000), Sherm Carstensen (1999, 2000, 2001), Cory Kulig (1996, 1997), Casey Drake (2004, 2005) and Dan Beyer (2008, 2009). The other three were Andy Fisher (1998), Jason Larson (2003) and Geoff Probst (2010). The Blugolds had the conference scholar-athlete in back-to-back years when Casey Drake won the award in 2004-05 and Tyler Birkel in 2005-06.

"Terry is a personable individual who gets along with players and staff well; he has affected many of his players very positively," Kilgallon said."He worked hard for this program. He was committed to his program and he loved his players. Overall, he recruited good students. I know he was proud of the fact that his team GPA was a 3.0 or higher the last couple seasons."