

# Gymnasts Head To Nationals

*Posted: Wednesday, March 30, 2005*

EAU CLAIRE - The UW-Eau Claire gymnastics team heads to the National Collegiate Gymnastics Association Nationals this weekend looking to improve on last year's eighth place finish.

The Blugolds hope to use the momentum from the NCGA Regionals as a springboard into nationals. Eau Claire finished second at regionals behind four-time defending national champions UW-La Crosse.

The second place finish at regionals matched the best ever finish for the Blugolds. Eau Claire finished second in 2003 and followed it up with a fifth place finish at nationals.

Eau Claire comes into nationals with its best winning percentage since the 1977-78 season. The Blugolds are currently 19-8 for a .704 winning percentage while the 1977-78 team finished 19-7 for a .731 winning percentage.

**Alison Eagles** (*Sr.-Shoreview, MN/Mounds View*) leads Eau Claire into nationals. Eagles finished in the top three in four of five events including a first place finish in the floor exercise and a share of the title in the all-around competition.

**Kristi Olson** (*Fr.-Minnetonka, MN*) added two top-10 finishes of her own. Olson took fifth in the vault and seventh in the uneven bars.

Joining Eau Claire and La Crosse at nationals will be UW-Oshkosh, SUNY-Brockport, SUNY-Cortland and Ithaca College. The tournament is switching from the usual eight-team event to feature six schools and specialist teams from the East and the West.

SUNY-Cortland has been La Crosse's top competition during the Eagles' four-year run. Cortland finished second in 2002 and 2003, third in 2001 and fourth in 2004. Oshkosh finished second to La Crosse in 2001 while Ithaca took second last year.

La Crosse comes into the weekend with a 20-3 record. The Blugolds are responsible for one of the three losses as they defeated the Eagles at the Hamline Invite. Brockport comes in with a 21-6 record while Ithaca is 13-7, Oshkosh is 12-12 and Cortland is 12-16.

Brockport's Carrie Santore returns to defend her individual titles in the vault, floor exercise and all-around competitions. Santore set the NCGA Championships record in all three events last year. Nina Schubert of La Crosse returns to defend her crown in the uneven bars.

The team competition is scheduled to begin Friday at 6:20 p.m. with the awards ceremony set to begin at 9:45 p.m. The individual competition is scheduled to start Saturday at 4 p.m. with competition finishing at 6 p.m.

Nationals Web Site

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