

2005 Men's Outdoor Track & Field Season Preview

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EAU CLAIRE - Now that the indoor track and field season is complete, the UW-Eau Claire men's track and field team and third-year head coach Chip Schneider will turn their attention to the outdoor season, which kicks off this Saturday at the Viking Olympics hosted by Augustana (IL).

Last year's Blugold outdoor squad finished in sixth place out of nine teams at the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Championships with 55.5 points. UW-La Crosse won the event with a total of 262.5 points while UW-Whitewater was second with a score of 174.5.

Only two Blugolds qualified for national competition last season, one of which was **John Schuna** (*Sr.-Hudson*), who will be back this spring for his final campaign. Schuna won the shot put event at the WIAC Championships and went on to grab third place at nationals. He posted a season-best throw of 17.84 meters (58-6?) on May 29 at national competition. Chris King qualified in the weight throw and took ninth at nationals last season.

Schuna, who was a force in both the shot put and the weight throw events during the indoor season, will likely be competitive in both the shot put and the discus throw this season. He was the team's top thrower in both events last year.

The jumping duo of **Eric Johnson** (*Jr.-Schofield/D.C. Everest*) and **Shaun Marek** (*Sr.-Waunakee*) will again anchor both the long and triple jump competition for Eau Claire. The pair led the men with fifth and sixth place finishes in the long jump at last year's WIAC Championships. Johnson earned fifth with a jump of 6.88 meters (22-7) while Marek took sixth with a distance of 6.77 meters (22-2 ?). Johnson posted the best jumps in both events during this year's indoor season, with Marek close behind in each.

Nick Aliota (*So.-Brookfield/Central*) is back after a phenomenal freshman season that saw him post the top Blugold times in both the 110 and 400-meter hurdling events. His time of 15.63 seconds paced the Blugolds all season in the 110-meter event while his mark of 1:00.63 was the best on the team in the 400-meter event.

Aliota, who may also compete in the 200-meter dash as he did during the indoor season, will be joined in the short sprints by **Adam Sturgis** (*So.-Bruce*). Sturgis posted the fastest time in the 55-meter dash this indoor season with a time of 6.74 seconds. He had the second fastest time in last year's outdoor season in both the 55 and 200-meter dash events.

Adam Koger (*So.-Eau Claire/Memorial*) and **Jake Ebner** (*Jr.-Cameron*) will likely anchor the mid-distance events this season. Koger had the fastest time in the 400-meter dash during the indoor season while Ebner posted the best Blugold times of the season in both the 800 and 1,000-meter runs.

Adam Condit (*Sr.-La Crosse/Central*), in his final year of competition, will head up the distance events. Condit was the fastest runner in the 1,500 and 3,000-meter events during the indoor season.

The pole vault competition will likely be spearheaded again by returning letterwinner **Justin Wolfe** (*Sr.-Brodhead*). Wolfe posted the best mark last spring in the outdoor season and was also the best vaulter on the team during this year's indoor season.

The 2005 men's outdoor track and field season begins this Saturday in Rock Island, Illinois, as the Blugolds travel to Augustana College for the Viking Olympics.

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