

Blugold Football To Open With St. John's NAIA Power St. Francis Joins Schedule

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Two teams that have played for a national championship in the past two seasons are on the 2005 UW-Eau Claire football schedule.

St. John's University, which won the NCAA Division III national championship in 2003, will be the Blugolds' opponent in the season opener September 3 at Carson Park.

The Johnnies are led by the legendary John Gagliardi, the winningest coach in collegiate football history. After winning a national title in 2003, the Johnnies "slipped" in 2004, going 7-3 but their three losses were by a total of just five points. The Blugolds were scheduled to host St. John's in their 2004 season opener but because the artificial turf project at Carson Park was not complete, they had to travel to Collegeville, Minnesota where they grabbed a 30-28 triumph on the Johnnies' home turf. The Blugolds have now beaten St. John's in three of the last four seasons in a rivalry that most recently began in the 1998 NCAA playoffs. The Eau Claire-St. John's game will be the 6th Annual Clear Water Bowl with game time at 7 p.m.

The Blugolds will open the 2005 campaign with back-to-back home games, hosting Illinois Wesleyan in a September 10 contest at 1 p.m. The Blugolds downed the Titans, 28-7, in the first-ever gridiron meeting between the schools last season.

A new opponent for the Blugolds is the University of St. Francis whom the Blugolds will face in Fort Wayne, Indiana September 24. The Cougars are an NAIA school whose only loss in 14 games last year was a 15-13 decision to Carroll College, Montana in the NAIA championship game.

The Blugolds, who were 7-3 overall last year and tied for second in the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference with a 4-3 mark, will open conference play with road games at UW-Whitewater October 1 and at UW-River Falls October 8.

The Blugolds will make their home conference debut October 15 against rival UW-Stout in the homecoming game. They will follow that with a home game against defending conference champion UW-La Crosse October 22. That game will start at 11:30 a.m. and will be televised live regionally on WQOW TV 18, Eau Claire and WXOW TV 19, La Crosse.

Following games at UW-Stevens Point October 29 and at UW-Oshkosh November 5, the Blugolds will close out their regular season schedule with a home game against UW-Platteville November 12.

2005 Blugold Football Schedule

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