

# Luke strand Named Blugold Men's Hockey Coach

*Posted: Thursday, July 21, 2005*

An Eau Claire native and a four-year Blugold letterwinner has been named the new UW-Eau Claire men's hockey coach.

Director of Athletics Scott Kilgallon has announced that Luke Strand will take over as the Blugold men's coach, replacing Jean Laforest who resigned to take a pro position with the Youngstown, Ohio SteelHounds.

Strand, who played for Blugold coach Ian Perrin from 1993-97, comes to the Blugolds after a two-year stint as an assistant coach and assistant general manager with the Green Bay Gamblers of the United States Hockey League.

A graduate of Eau Claire North High School, Strand played his prep hockey for Tom Kuklinski and then went on to play for the Junior A North Iowa Huskies from 1991-93 before joining the Blugolds.

As a Blugold, he ranks among the top 20 all-time career scorers with 85 points (41 g, 44 a) during a 104-game career. He was given the Wally Akervik Memorial Award as the top freshman in 1994 and received the Most Dedicated Player Award as both a junior and a senior. He was a member of one of the school's most successful teams in 1994-95 when the Blugolds finished 16-11 overall.

Following his career at UWEC, Strand spent two seasons with the Madison Monsters and one season with the Madison Kodiaks of the UHL. When his playing career ended, he became an assistant coach and head JV coach with the perennially powerful St. Norbert men's hockey program under head coach Tim Coghlin. The Green Knights were 68-15-5 during his three seasons on the staff with an NCAA Frozen Four appearance in 2002-03. He recruited a 2003-04 team that finished runner-up in the NCAA Division III national tournament.

Strand had this comment about his selection as the head Blugold coach. "First of all, I am particularly grateful to Director of Athletics Scott Kilgallon and the UW-Eau Claire administration for the opportunity of becoming the head coach of the men's ice hockey program. I look forward to building relationships with the players, supporters and staff at UWEC. My vision and passion for this position will help create a great environment for student-athletes to grow in."

- TP -