

2005-06 Men's Hockey Season Preview

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EAU CLAIRE - A new era of the UW-Eau Claire men's hockey will begin as new head coach Luke Strand will take over the reigns. Strand will look to experience this season as they return 14 letter winners from last season's squad that posted an 8-15-4 record overall. The 2005-06 Blugolds are looking to climb up to the top of the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference and the Northern Collegiate Conference Association standings.

The 2004-05 Blugolds started out the season very well going 7-3 in the first 10 games of the season. The Blugolds then only got one win the rest of the way and finished with a WIAC record of 1-6-2 and NCHA record of 1-10-3. The Blugolds saw their season end when they lost in the first round of postseason play.

The Blugolds have five of the top nine leaders in points from the 2004-05 season returning for this year. **Dave Coleman** (Jr.-Whitby, ONT/Leo J.Austin), **Kyle Garner** (Jr.-Sun Prairie), **Chip Dunleavy** (Sr.-Littleton, CO/Columbine), **Brooks Lockwood** (Jr.-Hudson, WI) and **Sean Clark** (Sr.-Royal Oak, MI/Brother Rice) all return from last season. Coleman was second on the team in points and led the Blugolds in assists. He was also an All-WIAC honorable mention and an All-NCHA honorable mention. Garner, an All-WIAC honorable mention, had a solid sophomore season with 12 assists for the Blugolds. Dunleavy had four shorthanded goals last season to lead the Blugolds. Lockwood was fourth on the team in goals with eight. At defenseman, Clark contributed 10 points for the Blugolds last season.

Forward **Steve Dus** (Jr.-Onalaska, WI) also returns for the Blugolds this season. Dus was named the hardest worker on the team by his teammates last season. **Andy Klapperick** (Sr.-Austin, MN) is another Blugold member to return at forward. Klapperick had three goals and three assists last season. Senior **Matt Schultz** (Sr.-Menomonie, WI) returns adding experience for the Blugolds along with **Jeremiah Weber** (So.-Hayward, WI).

On the defensive side, the Blugolds return five defensemen. **Ryan Bluske** (Sr.-Onalaska, WI), **Dan Lohr** (Jr.-Madison, WI/Middleton), **Zack Tesar** (So.-Waterloo, NE/Butte, MT) and **Ted Thompson** (So.-Listowel, ONT/Peoria Richwoods, IL) each saw action in 20-plus games last season. Tesar was named rookie of the year last season by the Blugolds. **Kevin Knapp** (Jr.-Blaine, MN/Spring Lake Park) played in nine games last season and had two assists.

At goalie, **Steffan Braunlich** (Sr.-Playa del Rey, CA/Loyola) returns after a stellar season. He had a 90% save percentage and was an All-WIAC honorable mention and an All-NCHA honorable mention selection. **Chris Nelson** (Sr.-Madison, WI/Memorial) has just as much experience after playing in 14 games last season. **Mike Gatzke** (So.-White Bear Lake, MN/Hill-Murray) will also compete for time between the pipes.

The Blugolds will look to some freshmen newcomers to also contribute this season: **Evan Byers** (Fr.-Eagan, MN), **Mike Schneider** (Fr.-Owatonna, MN), **Brad Wiechmann** (Fr.-Austin, MN) and **Dan Fina** (Fontana, WI/Glenbard South, IL).

With the experience coming back and the incoming freshman coming in, along with a new coach, the Blugolds will look to improve from last season's record.