

# Indoor Track & Field Kicks off Season with Blugold Open Friday

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EAU CLAIRE, Wis. (UWECBlugolds.com) - The UW-Eau Claire men's and women's indoor track and field teams will kick off the new season by hosting their annual Blugold Open on Friday beginning at 4 p.m.

Last season the Blugold men won their season-opening invite out of four teams while the women took third out of six teams. Later in the season at the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Championship, the men finished fifth and the women took second.

This year's women's team will look to fill in some keep spots in a number of events as a fair number of last year's top individuals were lost to graduation. While the women took seventh at last year's NCAA Division III Indoor Championship, four out of eight student-athletes are back from last year's national's team. Among the returners, **Hayley Suckow** (Sr.-Elk Mound, Wis.) had the best finish at nationals, securing All-American honors with a third place finish in the pole vault.

On the men's side, the Blugolds' lone finisher from the national meet last season, Sam Johnson, was lost to graduation but a number of others will look to step up this season. While the Blugolds finished fifth at the WIAC Championship, they have a solid group of returners who had 10th-place finishes or better at conference last season. Among the group is **Chris Wirtz** (Sr.-Weston, Wis./D.C. Everest), who won the conference title in the 5,000-meter run.

Following the Blugolds' home-opener this week, the team will host a triangular next Saturday. The two meets will be the only ones held at UW-Eau Claire this season, both indoor and outdoor.