

Superior picked to place fifth in the WIAC

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The Yellowjackets also found key wins in the playoffs last year against UW-Stout, winning one game 4-2, and then winning the deciding mini game 1-0 to move on to the second round where they were ousted by Stevens Point.

The 'Jackets will have more home ice time this season after only getting eight games in Wessman last year. They will play 14 games at home in 2017-18 including hosting the four-team Superior Showdown Dec. 29 and 30.

The Eau Claire Blugolds are picked to win the WIAC, followed by 2017 regular season champion Stevens Point Pointers, River Falls Falcons, and then the Stout Blue Devils.

2017-18 Preseason Predictions

2016-17 Record

1. UW-Eau Claire 18-7-3 overall, 5-3 WIAC
2. UW-Stevens Point 21-5-3, 7-1
3. UW-River Falls 12-13-2, 3-4-1
4. UW-Stout 12-13-2, 3-5
5. UW-Superior 8-19-2, 1-6-1

Team Nuggets

UW-Superior

Head Coach: Rich McKenna; 2nd season at UWS; 8-19-2

Letterwinners Returning/Lost: 11/13

Goalies Returning/Lost: 2/2

Returning All-WIAC: Ian Ecklund (Twig, Minn./Proctor H.S.), Sr., F (2016-Honorable); Daniel Litchke (Superior, Wis./Superior H.S.), Jr., F (2017-Honorable)

Notable Returning Players: Bruno Birzitis (Riga, Latvia/Riga Distance Education Secondary), So., F; Jake Hamilton (Decatur, Ill./Nequa Valley H.S.), So., D; Jerry Miettunen (Tuusula, Finland/Makelanrinne Sports H.S.), So., D; Kyle Miller (Prior Lake, Minn./Prior Lake H.S.), Sr., F

UW-Eau Claire

Head Coach: Matt Loen; 11th season at UWEC;

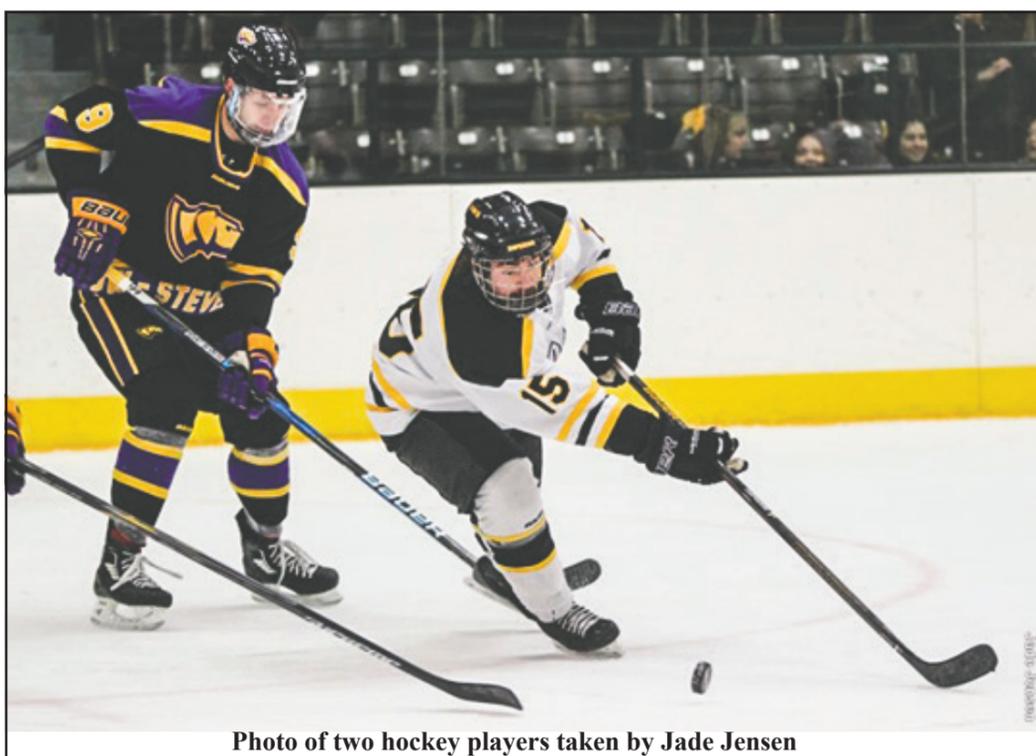


Photo of two hockey players taken by Jade Jensen

154-100-24

Letterwinners Returning/Lost: 19/8

Goalies Returning/Lost: 2/1

Returning All-WIAC: None

Notable Returning Players: Todd Koritzinsky, Sr., F; Colton Wolter, Sr., F

UW-River Falls

Head Coach: Steve Freeman; 22nd season at UWRf; 368-192-48

Letterwinners Returning/Lost: 10/16

Goalies Returning/Lost: 1/2

Returning All-WIAC: Joe Drapluk, Jr., F (2017-First); Terry Leabo, Sr., D (2017-Honorable); Zach Quinn, So., G (2017-First)

Notable Returning Players: Brian Drapluk, Jr., D; Ryan Gotelaere, Jr., D; Eddie Matsushima, Jr., F; Aussie Miller, So., F

UW-Stevens Point

Head Coach: Tyler Krueger; 1st season at UWSP; 0-0-0

Letterwinners Returning/Lost: 15/9

Goalies Returning/Lost: 2/0

Returning All-WIAC: Ryan Bittner, Jr., D (2017-First); Stephan Beauvais, Jr., D (2016-Honorable, 2017-Honorable); Max Milosek, Sr., G (2016-Honorable, 2017-Honorable)

Notable Returning Players: Logan Fredericks, So., F; Nathan Harris, Sr., D; Tanner Karty, Jr., F; Willem Nong-Lambert, Sr., F

UW-Stout

Head Coach: Terry Watkins; 22nd season at UWST; 245-294-37

Letterwinners Returning/Lost: 13/9

Goalies Returning/Lost: 2/1

Returning All-WIAC: Mathias Ahman, Jr., D (2017-Honorable); Joe Kleven, Jr., D (2016-Honorable)

Notable Returning Players: Tommi Ahlgren, So., G; Adam Kresl, So., F; Jordan Stejskal, Sr., D; Connor Valesano, So., F

Greg Polkowski Named Interim Men's Basketball Coach

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Before his time at UW-Eau Claire Polkowski was the head boys basketball coach and a physical education instructor at Waukesha North High School, where his win totals increased each year and culminated with the Northstars winning a region championship in 2015.

"The opportunity to come back to UW-Superior as the head men's basketball coach is something that I truly have only dreamed about until this point," Polkowski said. "Since completing my time as a student-athlete in 2008, I have always thought to myself that the experiences I have encountered would prepare me to be the head men's basketball coach at UW-Superior if I was ever fortunate enough to have the opportunity. Now that it is reality it is beyond surreal, and I am extremely grateful for this opportunity.

"I have a huge amount of pride in being a UW-Superior alumnus and I know that so many others feel the same way. My experience as a student-athlete at UW-Superior is invaluable; the lessons learned, and relationships created during my time here have played a huge part in who I am today and I will cherish those experiences forever. I look forward to the opportunity to play a part in giving current students the same great experience that I had during my time here."

Polkowski was a member of the Yellowjacket men's basketball team from 2004 until 2008, playing 58 games.

"I was able to be a part of so many positive experiences and create relationships with great people that are still some of my closest friends to this day," Polkowski said. "We all have a great deal of pride that we were fortunate enough to represent UW-Superior men's basketball."

Immediately upon his graduation he joined the staff of then-head coach Dave Buchanan and began his coaching career. Polkowski spent the 2008-09 season as an assistant coach with the Yellowjackets before moving to Carroll University, where he coached under Buchanan for two seasons. There, he helped the Pioneers to a 28-20 record and an appearance in the Midwest Conference championship game.

A native of Goodman, Wisconsin, Polkowski graduated from UW-Superior with a Bachelor of Science Degree in physical education. He followed that with a Master's Degree in Education from Carroll University in 2011. His family includes his wife Stephanie (Janigo), a 2006 UW-Superior graduate and former standout on the Yellowjacket women's basketball team and their two sons, William (3), and Nolan (6 months).

"I am beyond excited to get back on campus and get to work with the current student-athletes on building a successful culture and foundation to what I have 100 percent confidence in can be a program that all involved can be very proud of," Polkowski said. "My wife and I and our two sons are also extremely excited to come back to the UW-Superior community and the city of Superior where we both have so many great memories. We look forward to the next chapter of our lives there."

Eberhardt Resigns Men's Basketball Post

UWS Athletics

"I am excited to stay part of UW-Superior Athletics as the men's golf coach and will continue to take pride in being a Yellowjacket."

Eberhardt came to UW-Superior in 2012 following a stint at Ellsworth Community College in Iowa Falls, Iowa where he served as the director of athletics and dean of students. Previous coaching stops for Eberhardt included Winona (Minn.) State University, UW-River Falls, and Scottsdale (Ariz.) Community College.

In his five seasons leading the Yellowjackets Eberhardt's teams had a record of 44-83. He led the Yellowjackets to a WIAC playoff berth in his first season as head coach, and a spot in the UMAC post-season followed in 2016. Along the way Eberhardt coached numerous players to All-WIAC and All-UMAC honors, including Zach Schradle who was named UMAC Player of the Year in 2016.

During the spring of 2016 Eberhardt added the title of head men's golf coach to his resume and he is currently in the midst of his second season leading the team on the links.

"Since he arrived here in 2012 Paul has worn a few different hats, not just in our department but all around campus and has done whatever we've needed him to do over the years," said UW-Superior Athletics Director Nick Bursik. "We hate to see him leave our men's basketball program, but understand his decision to move into a position that will allow him more time at home and with his young family.

"Paul's a valuable member of our department, so we're happy that he will remain in the family as our head men's golf coach."

A replacement for Eberhardt will be announced in the coming days.