

SPORTS

Men’s and Women’s Basketball has Eyes Set on UMAC Championship

Evan Ludwig
eludwig@uwsuper.edu

UW-Superior men’s and women’s basketball teams hit the court in search of a conference championship.

The UWS men’s basketball team is poised for a big season in 2024-25, coming off a 18-9 record and a second-place finish in the Upper Midwest Athletic Conference regular season.

The Jackets roll into the season only losing one regular starter from the team, that being Josef Fahrenholtz, who is now playing professionally in Norway.

The Yellowjackets are also coming off their second straight appearance in the UMAC postseason tourna-

ment championship game in which both came against Bethany Lutheran.

Returning to the lineup this season is J’Vaun Walker. Last season Walker led the team in points at 16.3 and assists and steals. Walker returns for his 5th year senior season coming off an appearance on the All-UMAC First Team and All-UMAC Defensive team.

“We’ve made history in this program before, but we’ve never achieved our ultimate goal. Making it to the championship is pretty much an expectation for us now, so we want to make sure that the when we get there this year we walk out of the gym on the winning side of that last game,” said Walker.

The Yellowjackets open up their season with an exhibition against Minnesota-Duluth on Nov. 3.

They will open the regular season hosting the 15th annual Bruce and Merrill Thompson Classic on Nov. 8 against Marian and then hosting St. Olaf the next day. Another challenge the Jackets face will not be seeing the friendly confines of Mertz Mortorelli Gym for nearly two months until they open up UMAC play against North Central on Jan. 8, 2025.

For the Jackets it should be an interesting season filled with challenges and hopefully ending with a UMAC title. On the women’s side the team looks to bounce back this season after a disappointing end in the UMAC championship game. In the 2023-24 regular season, the Yellowjackets were outstanding in conference only losing once to North Central on their way to a conference title--which is their fifth since joining the UMAC. The Jackets would fall short after having their halftime lead evaporate.

However, the Jackets return many of their team including 2024 UMAC player of the year Elise Besonen while losing only one starter. They also got back other UMAC postseason award winners MyKenzie Leccia and Charlotte Ferstl.

The Yellowjackets are poised for another run towards a NCAA tournament appearance with many



J’Vaun Walker going up for a Layup Against North Central at Mertz Mortorelli Gymnasium.
Photo from Promethean File

returning players. The Yellowjackets will open their season against Marian at Fond du Lac, Wis.

Their home opener comes against Macalester on Nov. 16. The Yellowjackets have a tough non-conference schedule which leads into Jan., when they will open conference play against North Central in Mertz Mortorelli Gym.

The Yellowjackets have an opportunity to avenge their championship loss when they play Minnesota Morris later in the season. The Yellowjackets are ready for the season to begin and potentially end with a UMAC championship.



Women’s Basketball Team Taking the Court Against North Central at Mertz Mortorelli Gymnasium.
Photo from Promethean File

Bre Simon Set for First Season as Head Coach of UWS Women’s Hockey

JoLynn Bailey
jbaille17@uwsuper.edu

The University of Wisconsin-Superior’s women’s hockey program is welcoming a new head coach this semester. Bre Simon, a native of Elk River, Minn., has an impressive playing career that precedes her coaching. While at Hamline University, she was a three-time CCM West First Team All-American, becoming the top student athlete in NCA Division III.

Following her career as a college athlete, Simon spent two years as assistant coach at Gentry Academy helping to bring the hockey program to an overall record of 41 and 11. She also helped in getting the team to the Minnesota State High School Tournament.

For the past two years, Simon has been the assistant coach at NCA Division III Elmira College, helping the

team get to the New England Hockey Conference Championship Game in 2023.

During a press conference held on May 7, Simon said, “I can’t wait to see what this talented group of young women can accomplish this upcoming season, on and off the ice. It is important to me that my athletes are committed to player development, academic success, and are positive, influential role models within our community.”

In 2019, while playing junior forward at Hamline University, Simon won the Laura Hurd Award, which is given to the top player in NCAA Division III Women’s Hockey. The award is named in honor of former Elmira College hockey star Laura Hurd, who died in a car accident shortly after graduation.

Hurd was a four-time All-American who led her team to a win in the first

NCAA Division III Women’s Ice Hockey Championship.

“I am very honored to be named the new head coach of the University of Wisconsin-Superior. I’m very excited and eager to embrace and continue the strong tradition that UWS women’s hockey program has”, Simon said. Prior to starting a collegiate career at Hamline, Simon played for the Elks from 2012-2016. She scored 49 goals and 61 assists for 110 points in 148 career games.



Yellowjacket Women’s Hockey Head Coach Bre Simon.
Photo From Yellowjacket Athletics

Up Next in Sports				
Men’s Soccer	Women’s Soccer	Volleyball	Men’s Hockey	Women’s Hockey
vs Martin Luther Oct 26 (Sat) / 1 p.m. Superior, Wis.	vs Martin Luther Oct 26 (Sat) / 3:30 p.m. Superior, Wis.	vs North Central (Minn.) Oct 26 (Sat) / 12 p.m. Superior, Wis.	vs Gustavus Adolphus Nov 8 (Fri) / 7:05 p.m. Superior, Wis.	at Lake Forest Nov 1 (Fri) / 7:00 p.m. Lake Forest, Ill.
at Northland Oct 30 (Wed) / 4:30 p.m. Ashland, Wis.	at St. Olaf Oct 29 (Tue) / 3:30 p.m. Northfield, Minn.	vs Northwestern (Minn.) Oct 26 (Sat) / 5 p.m. Superior, Wis.	vs St. Olaf Nov 9 (Sat) / 7:05 p.m. Superior, Wis.	at Lake Forest Nov 2 (Sat) / 2:00 p.m. Lake Forest, Ill.
vs Crown Nov 2 (Sat) / 1 p.m. Superior, Wis.	vs Crown Nov 2 (Sat) / 3:30 p.m. Superior, Wis.	at Minnesota Morris Nov 1 (Fri) / 7 p.m. Morris, Minn.	at St. Scholastica Nov 15 (Fri) / 7:00 p.m. Duluth, Minn.	vs Saint Benedict Nov 5 (Tue) / 7:00 p.m. Superior, Wis.
UMAC Semifinal Nov 6 (Wed) / TBA	UMAC Semifinal Nov 5 (Tue) / TBA	at Crown Nov 2 (Sat) / 11 a.m. St. Bonifacius, Minn.	at Bethel Nov 16 (Sat) / 7:00 p.m. St. Paul, Minn.	vs Hamline Nov 8 (Fri) / 3:00 p.m. Superior, Wis.
UMAC Championship Nov 9 (Sat) / TBA	UMAC Championship Nov 9 (Sat) / TBA	at Martin Luther Nov 8 (Fri) / 7 p.m. New Ulm, Minn.	vs UW-Eau Claire Nov 22 (Fri) / 7:05 p.m. Superior, Wis.	