

Blue Devil Report

Fall sports wrap-up

Youth and experience go hand-in-hand for fall season

Looking back over the 1996 UW-Stout fall athletic season, two words stand out for the majority of the six fall varsity sports – youth and experience.

Youth, in that most of the teams had very few seniors, and experience, because it gives those youngsters a chance to improve under the tough, adverse conditions of the perennially strong Wisconsin State University Conference (WSUC) and Wisconsin Women's Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WWIAC) schedules.

Soccer: The women's soccer team concluded their second season of varsity competition and nearly doubled their win total from the previous year, finishing with a 7-10-3 record. Without a doubt, the highlight of the season occurred when the Blue Devils advanced to the second round of the WWIAC championships by defeating heavily favored UW-River Falls in a quarterfinal overtime shootout.

Andrea Schroeder (Sr, New Berlin) was named to the all-WWIAC first team, and Kari Stapleton (Sr, Hartford) was named to the second team.

Football: The Blue Devil football team finished with a 4-6 record, not quite where coach Ed Meierkort was wanting to be, but a step up the record ladder over the previous year.

The Blue Devils had difficulty getting their newly installed West Coast style offense in gear, but the defensive team kept Stout in all of their games but one.

Lapses in the fourth quarter seemed to doom the Blue Devils in most of their games, but Meierkort sees the experience as a definite plus for a team that will lose only eight seniors.

The Blue Devils exploded to win in the final game of the year and set the stage for next year at the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome, a 50-43 overtime win over NCAA Division II Winona State.

Linebacker La Rue Pierce (Sr, Reddick, Fla.), the team's most valuable player, led the Blue Devil defense all season and was named to the all-WSUC first team, along with punt return specialist Tony Aizupura (Sr, Reddick, Fla.) – Aizupura ranked 10th nationally in punt returns with a 14.6 yards per return average – and defensive lineman Mike Olson (Sr, Farmington, Minn.). Named to the second team were defensive lineman Andy Wickstrom (Sr, Menomonie), Aizupura as a cornerback, offensive lineman Jason Lehman (Jr, Bruce) and wide receiver Scott Wojcik (Jr, Marshfield). Honorable mention awards went to offensive linemen Russ Germain (Sr, Somerset)

and Chris Memelink (So, Hastings, Minn.) and free safety Ryan Zeman (Sr, Northfield, Minn.).

Volleyball: The Blue Devil volleyball team slid back this season to an 8-20 record, but Stout returns all but one player next year.

Much of the team can be built around Stacy Stoddard (So, St. Paul, Minn.) and Monica Cyrus (So, Farmington, Minn.), the team's statistical leaders. Stoddard has already broken the Stout career record in solo blocks (98) and this year had 76 solos.

Cyrus led the team with 30 service aces and 424 digs. Jenny Kraczek (Fr, Blaine, Minn.) took over as the team's quarterback, dishing up 776 assists.

Women's Tennis: Amy Jamieson (Jr, Dayton, Minn.) led the women's tennis team this season, taking second at No. 1 singles and teaming with Lauren Mader (Fr, Neenah) to place second at No. 1 doubles.

Jamieson, a multi-sport standout for the Blue Devils, finished her season at 12-3 at singles and was 7-1 with Mader at No. 1 doubles.

Pine City, Minn., natives Carrie Eberhardt (Jr) and Susan Hamann (So) teamed up to finish second at No. 3 doubles.

As a team, the Blue Devils finished fourth at the conference tournament and fifth overall with a 2-4 WWIAC dual record, 6-4 overall.

Men's Cross Country: Paul Gilles (Jr, Plum City) advanced to the NCAA Division III Cross Country Championships, placing 48th. Gilles and Jason Petersohn (Jr, Manitowoc) battled all season long for the Blue Devils' No. 1 spot. The men's team fell flat at the WSUC Championships to place sixth, but rebounded to place ninth at the NCAA Midwest Regionals two weeks later with Gilles, Petersohn and the Blue Devils only senior, Craig Sandbulte (Willmar, Minn.) breaking the 26-minute mark.

Women's Cross Country: It's been a long time since a Blue Devil women's cross country performer earned all-WWIAC first team honors, but Katy Olsen (So, Rice Lake) earned the title by placing 10th and leading the women's team to a fourth place finish.

The Blue Devils continued to surprise at the NCAA Midwest Regionals when six of the Blue Devils' seven runners broke the 20-minute mark, and Stout placed ninth under first-year coach Carlene Hochhalter.



The Blue Devils Kari Stapleton was named to the WWIAC's all-conference soccer team as a second team pick.



Linebacker La Rue Pierce led the Blue Devils in almost every defensive statistical category and was named Stout's most valuable player.



Jason Petersohn (left) and Paul Gilles battled all season long for the Blue Devils' No. 1 cross country runner spot. Gilles qualified to the NCAA Division III National Cross Country Championships.



Stacy Stoddard has already shattered the Stout career record in solo blocks and is only a sophomore.

Blue Devils Online

Alumni can access information about Blue Devil athletics from anywhere in the world any time of day through the Internet. The Stout Athletics home page includes schedules, preseason previews, coaches' biographies, history, records and season review stories. Also available are team rosters, feature stories, Hall of Fame, and up-to-date scores.

Stout offers eight intercollegiate sports for women – cross country, volleyball, soccer, tennis, basketball, gymnastics, track and softball – and seven for men – football, cross country, basketball, wrestling, hockey, baseball and track.

The address to access the pages is:

<http://www.uwstout.edu/athletics/athhome.html>



Calling Blue Devil track and field alumni

The UW-Stout track and field team invites all former Blue Devil participants and their families to a track and field reunion at the NCAA Division III National Championships at the Holiday Inn in La Crosse, Wis., May 23-24 as the Blue Devils make a run for the national title.

The reunion will begin Friday, May 23 and continue Saturday, May 24 with a tailgate party prior to the finals at Veterans Stadium on the UW-La Crosse campus. The reunion will be held at the Bikini Yacht Club beginning at 8:30 p.m., or at the Skipper Liner Suite, if there is inclement weather.



The tailgate party Saturday will be held at the Eagles' Nest across from Veterans Stadium and is scheduled to begin at 10:30 a.m.

The Blue Devil men's team last year placed fifth at the national outdoor tournament, and UW-Stout's Terry Anders won three individual titles as a junior. Anders leads a talented group of athletes that could very well challenge for the national crown.

Rooms are available at the Holiday Inn in La Crosse. Call 608/784-9500 for reservations. For more information, contact UW-Stout athletic director Steve Terry at 715/232-2224.