

Tough Double Overtime Loss For Men's Basketball

Posted: Saturday, February 18, 2006

EAU CLAIRE - The UW-Eau Claire men's basketball team lost in heartbreaking fashion tonight to UW-Whitewater in double overtime 91-88 in Zorn Arena.

The Blugolds end the regular season with a 12-13 overall record and 4-12 Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) record. The Warhawks finish with a 19-5 overall record and claimed the regular season conference title with a 13-3 WIAC record.

It was a tale of two separate halves in the first half. The Warhawks led for the first 11 minutes of the first half with their biggest lead being seven. The Blugolds would then use an 11-0 run, sparked by senior **Tyler Birkel's** (*Sr.-Spring Valley, WI*) dunk, to take their first lead of the game and go up 21-17.

The Blugolds would lead the rest of the first half with their biggest lead being six. **Matt Riley** (*Jr.-Cadott, WI*) would end the first half dramatically hitting a 40-footer at the buzzer to give the Blugolds a 32-28 halftime lead.

The Warhawks shot 46% in the first half, while the Blugolds shot just 43%. The Blugolds had nine points off of Warhawk-turnovers in the half.

The Blugolds would stay out in front for the first eight minutes of the second half. Whitewater would regain the lead, 48-47, at 12:03 on a 3-pointer. The Warhawks would stay out in front for next eight minutes. The Blugolds would nip away at the lead and **Jared Bardon's** (*So.-DeForest, WI*) three-point play gave the Blugolds the lead right back with 3:50 to go.

With the Blugolds up 65-63 in the final seconds, Whitewater's Jeremy Manchester would get fouled with 0.01 seconds left and connect on both free throws to send the game into overtime with the score tied at 65-65.

The lead would change hands three times in the first overtime and this time it was the Warhawks that had the lead in the final seconds. With Whitewater up 78-75 and the time winding down, it was the Blugolds' **Zack Ryan** (*So.-Lake Elmo, MN/Tartan*) hitting an off-balance 3-pointer with three seconds left to send it into a second overtime.

The Warhawks would never trail in the second overtime. With the score tied 86-86 with 32 seconds left, the Whitewater's Andy Freund would tip-in a missed shot to give the Warhawks the lead for good. The Blugolds had one last chance at end down three after a missed Whitewater free throw, but could not get a desperation shot off as the Warhawks went onto win 91-88.

Both teams combined for 94 points in the paint. Whitewater finished at 50% shooting for the game, while the Blugolds finished at 45%. The Warhawks out-rebounded the Blugolds 49-39.

Jared Bardon led all scorers with 24 points for the Blugolds and Zack Ryan added 18 points. Matt Riley just missed a double-double as he had 10 points and nine rebounds. **Dan Beyer** (*So.-Waukesha, WI/Catholic Memorial*) was the last Blugold in double-figures also scoring 10 points.

The Blugolds and Warhawks will now face each other again in the first round of the WIAC Conference Tournament. That game will take place in Whitewater Tuesday night at 7 p.m.

Eau Claire-Whitewater Box Score

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