

Blugolds Win First Two Matches In Labor Day Classic

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The UW-Eau Claire volleyball team, ranked No. 6 in the AVCA Division III preseason poll, had little trouble winning the first two matches of its own Labor Day Classic in the McPhee Phy Ed Center Friday.

The Blugolds rolled over both the College of St. Catherine and Hamline University by 3-0 scores. In beating St. Kate's for the 13th consecutive time in the all-time series, the Blugolds posted 30-13, 30-21 and 30-13 game wins. In downing Hamline for the 15th time in succession, the Blugolds notched 30-20, 30-19 and 30-13 victories.

The Blugolds are scheduled to face Alverno College of Milwaukee at 10 a.m. Saturday and nationally ranked (No. 17) Central College of Iowa at 2 p.m. Saturday.

The nine-team classic continues with three matches each at 10 a.m., noon and 2 p.m. Each team is scheduled for four games during the Classic.

All but Alverno and Crown recorded a win on the first day of competition. The only other team to match the Blugolds with two wins was Central which beat Cardinal Stritch and UW-Stout, both by 3-1 scores.

The Blugolds, who started last season with an eight-game win streak en route to a 30-5 season mark, were led in this year's opener by senior **Jess Groh** (*Eau Claire/North*) who had 16 kills while hitting .609 and also recorded nine blocks. Senior **Shanna Berger** (*Baldwin/Baldwin-Woodville*) led the team in digs with 16 while sophomore **Emily Haese** (*Mishicot*) had 14. Senior **Carly Freiborg** (*Sacred Heart, MN/Renville West*) had 35 assists. The Blugolds hit .337 for the match with 43 total kills and also totaled eight service aces and 11 blocks.

Against Hamline, senior **Jodi Dunbar** (*Platteville*) had a team-high 15 kills with a .444 hitting percentage. Sophomore **Abby Freiborg** (*Sacred Heart, MN/Renville West*) also reached double digits with 10 kills. Berger was tops in digs with 14 and Carly Freiborg had 34 assists. The Blugolds hit .302 as a team with 48 kills, 11 service aces and nine blocks.

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