

Volleyball Advances To Face Whitewater In WIAC Championship

Posted: Friday, November 3, 2006

EAU CLAIRE - The fifth-ranked UW-Eau Claire volleyball team had to rally tonight after losing the first game to UW-River Falls, but won the next three to win in four games and advance to the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) final for the second straight year.

The top-seeded Blugolds had their worst game of the season in game one, losing 30-15. It was the first time this season the Blugolds scored under 20 points in a first to 30 game. The Blugolds had a negative attack percentage in that first game.

After the second game was close early, Eau Claire pulled away to win 30-20. The Blugolds had 15 kills in game two.

The third game was the best of the match as it was close throughout and the score was tied 25-25 late. However, the Blugolds would win five of the next six points to win 30-26. The Blugolds had their most kills of the match in game three with 18.

The Blugolds carried that momentum into game four as they pulled away from the Falcons to win 30-15. The Blugolds had .400 attack percentage in the fourth game.

Eau Claire finished with 58 kills in the match. **Jodi Dunbar** (*Sr.-Platteville, WI*) led the team with 16 kills. **Jessica Groh** (*Sr.-Eau Claire, WI/North*) had 12 kills and **Abby Freiborg** (*So.-Sacred Heart, MN/Renville County West*) added 10 kills. Groh led the Blugolds with eight blocks and with four service aces. Abby Freiborg also led the team with 17 digs. Her sister **Carly Freiborg** (*Sr.-Sacred Heart, MN/Renville County West*) had 48 assists in the win.

Molly Thompson led the Falcons with 12 kills.

Eau Claire will face the No. 3 seed UW-Whitewater in the finals. Whitewater rallied from a two games to one deficit to beat seventh-seeded UW-Platteville 30-21, 27-30, 30-32, 30-24, 16-14.

It was a tight semifinal as the Warhawks led game five 12-8 before the Pioneers rallied to take a 14-13 lead. Whitewater then blocked the Pioneers to stay alive and tie the game 14-14. With the score 15-14 Whitewater, the Warhawks won the match on a kill that hit the backline.

Carley Polk led the Warhawks with 20 kills. Rachel Chapman also had 20 kills to lead the Pioneers.

It should be an intriguing final as earlier this season the Warhawks handed the Blugolds their only conference loss, a five-game match in which Whitewater rallied to win the final two games. The Warhawks also ended Eau Claire's season last year in similar fashion in the NCAA Regional Final.

Tomorrow's action begins with the third place game between Platteville and River Falls at 4:30 p.m. The championship match between Eau Claire and Whitewater will take place at 7 p.m. All of the action will be in the McPhee Physical Education Center.

Eau Claire-River Falls Box Score

Tournament web site

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