

Soccer Defends WIAC Crown, Moves On To NCAA Tourney

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EAU CLAIRE - Aided by two **Liz Kooistra** (So. -*Lakeville, MN*) goals, the top-seeded UW-Eau Claire soccer team defeated second-seeded UW-Oshkosh 3-0 today in the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) Tournament Championship to win its second consecutive WIAC Championship and earn an automatic bid into the NCAA Tournament.

This is the second WIAC Championship in school history and will result in the second NCAA Tournament in school history. The 18th ranked Blugolds also defended the WIAC regular season title this season and with today's win it has successfully defended both its WIAC regular season and tournament crowns.

This is the second time in as many years the Titans and Blugolds have faced off for the championship. Eau Claire won 2-1 last year. The match was the 10th time Eau Claire has faced off for a conference championship. It is also the third year in a row Oshkosh has made it to the championship and lost. The Titans lost 1-0 to UW-Stevens Point in 2004. It has never won a WIAC Championship. The Blugold record stands at 21-2-0 while the Titan mark is 12-6-2.

Maria laizzo (Sr.-*White Bear Lake, MN*) got the Blugolds on the board 12:05 into the contest with an educated right foot. **Emily Meisinger** (Sr.-*Green Bay/Notre Dame Academy*) provided the pass on laizzo's team-leading 15th goal.

Eau Claire went up 2-0 going into halftime after Kooistra found net at 25:49. **Allison Smith** (So.-*Bloomington, MN/Jefferson*) tallied the assist. For the first half Oshkosh was held to one shot compared to eight Blugold shots.

The offensive tempo increased in the second half with seven shots for the Titans and 12 for Eau Claire. Kooistra's second goal sealed the deal at the 88:11 mark with the assist coming from **Amy Smith** (So.-*Bloomington, MN/Jefferson*).

The Blugolds strayed from their normal goalie procedure and kept with one goalie for the entire match. For the entirety of the contest **Allie Rivard** (So.-*Plymouth, MN/Wayzata*) made four saves on eight Oshkosh shots. Eau Claire had 20 shots and forced Katie Bera to make eight stops. Eau Claire was whistled for 10 fouls compared to nine for the Titans.

The Blugolds reached the championship by defeating No. 8 seed UW-Platteville 3-0 in quarterfinal play and No. 4 seed UW-River Falls 2-0 in the semifinal. The Blugold defense suffocated the Pioneers by not allowing a single Platteville shot the entire match while the offense put up 34. Kooistra had two goals that match as well. Against River Falls **Shannon Conlin** (Fr.-*Reedsburg*) and **Allison Muer** (So.-*Minneapolis, MN/South*) put the ball past the goalie while the defense allowed seven Falcon shots compared to Eau Claire's 14. It was also a team record 15th shutout in a season, breaking a mark set last year.

Oshkosh advanced to the WIAC title game with a 6-1 quarterfinal win over seventh-seeded UW-Stout and a 1-0 semifinal victory over third-seeded Stevens Point. The six scores in the Stout game were recorded by six different players and all four assists were credited to four separate individuals. Michelle John set a school record in the game with her 23rd career assist. The Blue Devils were outshot 24-11. The lone goal in the semifinal came on an Amanda Matzke corner kick that sailed directly in. The Titans outshot the Pointers 12-6.

Eau Claire will now compete as one of 60 teams in the NCAA Division III Tournament. The brackets will be announced Monday and the first round runs from November 8th to the 12th.

Eau Claire-Oshkosh WIAC Championship Box Score

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