

## Men's Basketball To Host 38th Annual Holiday Classic

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EAU CLAIRE - The UW-Eau Claire men's basketball team will kick off a three-game home stand starting after Christmas when the Blugolds will host the 38th Annual UW-Eau Claire Holiday Classic December 29-30.

Participating teams include the Finlandia Lions from Hancock, Michigan, the Wartburg Knights from Waverly, Iowa and Marian Sabres of Fond du Lac. Wartburg will face Finlandia at 6:00 P.M. on December 29 followed by Marian and UW-Eau Claire at 8:00 P.M. The consolation game will be played at 6:00 P.M. on December followed by the championship game at 8:00 P.M.

It will be the first time that both Marian and Wartburg have appeared at the Holiday Classic. It will be the fourth appearance in the last six years for Finlandia. The Blugolds are 5-0 all time versus the Sabres including an 81-52 win in their last meeting on November 18, 1994. Wartburg and Eau Claire have only met once in the history of both programs in which the Blugolds won 66-59 during the 1949-50 season. The Blugolds are 6-1 all-time versus the Lions including a 90-57 victory on December 16 at Hancock, Michigan.

The Blugolds enter the Classic with a 6-3 record including a four-game winning streak. During that winning streak the Blugolds have on average outscored their opponents 75-57 with no team scoring more than 62 points against them during the streak. The Blugolds have made 46.5% of their field goals and 43.7% of their three-point field goals during that stretch while their opponents have made 40.7% of their field goals and 29.6% of their three-point field goals. The Blugolds have averaged 21 assists per game against 12 turnovers in the last four games including dishing out 25 assists in each of the last two games. Opponents during that stretch have averaged 9.5 assists and 15 turnovers per game.

The Blugolds are led in scoring by **Jared Bardon** (*Jr.-DeForest*) at 13.1 points per game and **Dan Beyer** (*Jr.-Waukesha/Catholic Memorial*) close behind at 12.2 points per game. Bardon has scored double-digit points in eight of nine games this season. Beyer is coming off his first career double-double against St. Scholastica (MN) when he scored 22 points and grabbed 12 rebounds. **Geoff Probst** (*Fr.-Moose Lake, MN/U. of North Dakota*) has averaged a team-best 7.8 rebounds over the last four games. **Zack Ryan** (*Jr.-Lake Elmo, MN/Tartan*) has scored double-digit points in three of the last four games and **Dan Ottney** (*Jr.-Glenwood City*) has averaged five rebounds per game during the same stretch.

Marian enters the Classic with a 4-4 record including a two-game winning streak. Both of those wins have come on the road at Dominican and Concordia-River Forest. Three of the Sabres' four wins have come on the road. Guard **Jerid Holewinski** (*Fr.-Menasha*) is the top scorer for Marian at 11.6 points per game followed closely by swing/post **Titus Redmond** (*Sr.-Chicago, IL/Gordon Tech*) with 11.3. Holewinski has made 16 of his 31 field goals from three-point range while the 6-3, 230-pound Redmond leads the team averaging 5.6 rebounds per game including a team-best 16 offensive rebounds. Nine players average double-figure minutes for the Sabres with 6-7 swing Jordan Van Ess (*Jr.-Oostburg*) playing the most minutes at 26.6 per game.

Wartburg also arrives at the Classic with a 4-4 record with two of those losses coming against Division I Northern Iowa and Division II Colorado State-Pueblo. The Knights are the defending back-to-back Iowa Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (IIAC) regular season conference champions and have won 20-plus games in five of the last six seasons. Forward **Nick Gullickson** (*Sr.-Ossian, IA/South Winneshiek*) is the leading scorer and rebounder for the Knights averaging 18.1 points and 4.5 rebounds per game. The 6-5 Gullickson is shooting 62.8% from the floor including 56.3% from behind the arc making 18-of-32 three-point attempts. Gullickson has scored 20-plus points in three consecutive games. **Lee Nelson** (*Jr.-Northwood, IA/Northwood-Kensett*), a 6-5 guard, is the team's second leadin