

Men's Basketball To Host Conference Rival La Crosse Saturday

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EAU CLAIRE - The UW-Eau Claire men's basketball team will host 16th-ranked UW-La Crosse this Saturday in the first game of a men and women's doubleheader at Zorn Arena.

Earlier this season, the Eagles defeated the Blugolds 60-44 in La Crosse. The Blugolds could never recover from a 17-3 first half run.

Eau Claire will come in to the contest with an 8-8 overall record and a 2-6 Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) record. The Blugolds are coming off of a 72-65 victory over UW-Superior on Wednesday night. The win snapped a five-game losing streak. The last time the Blugolds had a five-game losing streak was back in the 2003-04 season. Eau Claire is just 3-4 at home this season.

La Crosse will come in with an overall record of 11-5 and a 6-2 WIAC record, which is tied for second with UW-Oshkosh. The Eagles had a three-game winning streak snapped on Wednesday night with an 81-70 loss at UW-River Falls. Four of the five Eagles losses have come away from home this year.

The Blugolds are out-rebounding their opponents 539-487 this year and are tied for second in the WIAC with 196 offensive rebounds. Eau Claire also has the best three-point defense in the conference, holding opponents to just 33% from beyond the arc.

The Blugolds are led in scoring this season by **Jared Bardon** (*Jr.-DeForest, WI*), who is averaging 14.1 points per game. Bardon had a game-high 22 points against Superior on Wednesday night. **Dan Beyer** (*Jr.-Waukesha, WI/Catholic Memorial*) is the only other Blugold averaging double-figures in scoring as he averages 12.4 points per game. Beyer also leads the team in rebounds, averaging 6.2 boards per game. He has the second-most offensive rebounds in the conference with 39.

Luke Meier (*Jr.-Cross Plains, WI/Middleton*) is second in the conference with a .568 three-point percentage. Meier is 21-37 from behind the three-point line this season. **Zack Ryan** (*Jr.-Lake Elmo, MN/Tartan*) leads the Blugolds with 51 assists and is sixth in the WIAC with a 2.32 assist-to-turnover ratio.

La Crosse is led by conference leading scorer Joe Werner, who is averaging 17.4 points per game. Werner has led La Crosse in scoring in 11 games this season, including the last two contests. Werner is averaging 9.4 rebounds per game, which is second in the WIAC. Chris Ask is second on the team in scoring, averaging 13.9 points per game. Chris Fehrenbach is also averaging in double-figures at 11.7 points per game.

Brandon Brown leads the conference with 2.06 steals per contest. La Crosse as a team is tied for the league-high in steals with 133. The Eagles have the second-best scoring defense in the WIAC as they holding opponents to 62.8 points per game.

The Blugolds own the advantage in the all-time series with a 100-65 record. However, the Eagles have won the last two meetings and have a 7-5 record since the 2000-01 season.

This game will be aired on Fox Sports Net North on Friday, February 2nd at 8:30 p.m.

The tip-off between the Blugolds and the Eagles will take place at 3 p.m. Saturday in Zorn Arena.

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