

Men's Basketball Prepares For Two Games this Week

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EAU CLAIRE - The UW-Eau Claire men's basketball team will travel to third-ranked UW-Stevens Point for a conference game Wednesday before hosting Finlandia University (MI) on Saturday.

The Blugolds hold a 9-10 overall mark and a 3-8 record in Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) play. The team is coming off a string of eight consecutive WIAC contests. Eau Claire is 2-6 in those games and most recently lost 61-58 to UW-Platteville this past Saturday.

The Blugolds are shooting 44.1% on the year while averaging 63.4 points per game. Eau Claire has shot 36.6% for threes and 63.1% from the line. The team is up 3.3 in rebounding margin while going -2.1 in turnovers. The 227 offensive rebounds are second in the WIAC. The assist to turnover ratio is 1.1. The defense has allowed 64.1 points per game while opponents shoot 44.6%. The defense is also second in the conference in terms of opponent's three point percentage, holding teams to 32.8%.

Jared Bardon (*Jr.-DeForest*) averages 13.6 points per game to lead all Blugolds. **Dan Beyer** (*Jr.-Waukesha/Catholic Memorial*) is not far behind with 12.8. That puts Bardon 13th in the WIAC for scoring and Beyer 17th. Bardon's 47.0% percentage from long range is fourth in the conference.

Beyer has led the way in rebounding for Eau Claire, averaging 6.7 boards per game. He is tops in the conference for offensive rebounds with 49 total boards and 2.58 offensive rebounds per game. Bardon's 16 steals lead for Eau Claire, as does **Zack Ryan** (*Jr.-Lake Elmo, MN/Tartan*) and his 60 assists. Ryan's 2.07 assist to turnover ratio ranks fifth in the WIAC.

The conference-leading Pointers are 16-2 overall and 9-1 in WIAC games. They are coming off their lone WIAC loss, a 72-55 defeat at the hands of fifth-ranked UW-Oshkosh. Stevens Point averages 81.2 points per game while opponents score 64.8. The team ranks first in the conference in scoring, scoring margin (+16.3), free throw percentage (83.6%), three point percentage (43.0%), assists per game (16.39), turnover margin (+5.56), assist to turnover ratio (1.89), and three pointers per game (10.94).

Pete Rortvedt's 17.0 points per game lead the team and are second in the conference. Jon Krull is right behind him in the team and WIAC rankings with 16.7. Steve Hicklin also averages 12.9 points per game, good for 16th in the conference.

Khalifa El-Amin's 3.94 assists per game are the standard in the conference as is Hicklin's 56.5% from behind the arc and Rortvedt's 3.56 threes per game. El-Amin also leads in assist to turnover ratio with 2.96. Many Pointers are also second in the conference for different categories, as Bryan Beamish is in shooting percentage (59.1%), Krull is in free throw percentage (80.0%), and Hicklin is in three pointers per game (2.67).

The Finlandia Lions are 2-14 this season and are on a 12-game losing streak. They average 61.6 points per game and allow 88.3 points per game. They shoot 38.8% while opponents shoot 51.2%. Victor Harrington's 16.6 points per game lead the Lions, with Tyler Gordon's 15.1 mark second on the team. Harrington's 7.8 boards per game also are best for the Lions, with Tucker Thoreson behind him with 6.3 rebounds per contest.

Wednesday's game will tip-off at 7 p.m. in Stevens Point while Saturday's game starts at 5 p.m. in Zorn Arena. Saturday night is also Youth Night.