

Men's Basketball Holds Lead In Victory Over Finlandia

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EAU CLAIRE - The UW-Eau Claire men's basketball team ended a three-game losing skid as it never trailed in a 75-69 win over Finlandia University (MI).

The win moves Eau Claire to 10-11 on the year while the Lions lose their 14th game out of the last 15. They are now 2-16 this season. The Blugolds beat them earlier this year 90-57 and the all-time series is now 7-1 for Eau Claire.

The Blugolds got off to a 7-0 lead after a **Dan Beyer** (*Jr.-Waukesha/Catholic Memorial*) three. It was a 10-point ballgame by 13:18 with Eau Claire in charge 13-3. The teams fought back and forth for a while with the lead not getting larger than 12 points before **Zack Ryan** (*Jr.-Lake Elmo, MN/Tartan*) hit a three of his own with 4:20 to play in the half that made the score 34-21. At halftime the scoreboard showed 42-31 Blugolds.

Eau Claire shot 55.2% in the half while connecting on 5-of-11 from long range and 5-of-10 on free throws. Finlandia actually shot better from the floor, making 56.5% of its shots. The Lions also shot 16.7% on threes and 66.7% on free throws. The Blugolds had 12 points off of turnovers in the first half while Finlandia had only two.

In the second half the Lions brought the lead back down to seven at 16:58. The Blugolds then kept increasing their lead until it was 15 at 11:50. A **Matt Riley** (*Sr.-Cadott*) free throw made it 56-41. Finlandia did not go down quietly, as it fought the deficit back to down to single-digits again. For the most part, the lead was in single figures from 7:05 on. The Lions even clawed back to within four at 1:57. **Jared Bardon** (*Jr.-DeForest*) made his free throws when it counted as he made four after 1:57 to help keep the success secure as Eau Claire won 75-69.

The Blugolds shot 47.2% from the floor and 31.3% on threes while connecting on 62.5% of free throws. The free throw buckets included 15-of-22 in the second half. Finlandia shot 55.1% as it made 16.7% of its three pointers and 76.5% of its free throws.

The Blugolds made 20 free throws over the course of the game, tying the season-high. Bardon's seven free throws are the most for a Blugold this season. The Blugolds won the rebound battle 33-to-26. Turnovers went 17-to-14 in favor of the Blugolds. Eau Claire had 13 second chance points while Finlandia had four. The Lions had 42 points in the paint compared to 32 for Eau Claire.

The leading scorers for the Blugolds were Riley and **Geoff Probst** (*Fr.-Moose Lake, MN/U. of North Dakota*), each with 14. Ryan, Bardon, and Beyer all had 13. Beyer's eight boards were just ahead of Probst's seven.

Finlandia's Victor Harrington's 26 points is the most the Blugolds have given up all season to a single player. The 22 they gave up to Tyler Gordon ties for the third most. The rest of the team accounted for 21 points.

The Blugolds will head to River Falls Wednesday for a conference battle. Eau Claire is eighth in the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) while River Falls sits one spot above them.

Eau Claire-Finlandia Box Score

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