

## Falcons Stay A step Ahead Of Men's Basketball

*Posted: Wednesday, February 7, 2007*

RIVER FALLS - The UW-River Falls squad avenged a last-second December 6th 63-62 loss to the Blugolds today by defeating the UW-Eau Claire men's basketball team 68-66.

**Zack Ryan** (*Jr.-Lake Elmo, MN/Tartan*) had won the previous meeting with a lay-up with two seconds to go. Today's game was less dramatic as Eau Claire was down five points with four seconds to go, though Ryan again hit the buzzer-beater to make for the final score.

Eau Claire's last lead was at 1:24. It remained 63-62 Blugolds until 37 seconds were left when the Falcons took the one point lead. After Eau Claire started fouling, the Falcons put up four straight free throws to go up 68-63. Ryan then hit his three-pointer to make it 68-66.

The loss drops Eau Claire to 3-10 in Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) play and 10-12 overall. The Falcons are now 5-9 in WIAC games and 10-13 overall. The Falcons stay in seventh place, one spot ahead of the Blugolds in the WIAC standings. The all-time series stands at 102-78 for Eau Claire

The game was very tight early, with the largest early margin being a 9-5 Eau Claire lead at 15:13. A three and a lay-up later and the lead belonged back to River Falls. The Falcons kept the lead for the rest of the half, pushing it to 39-22 at 1:25. Eau Claire had gotten to within two during the run, but River Falls held the lead and increased it to the game-high deficit of 17. **Dan Beyer** (*Jr.-Waukesha/Catholic Memorial*) made a bucket before half to make the score 39-24 at intermission.

The Blugolds shot 33.3% on the half while going just 2-of-12 from long range. They also made 2-of-4 free throws. River Falls made 53.8% from the floor, going 6-of-10 on threes and 5-of-7 on free throws. The Falcons also had 18 bench points while Eau Claire had none.

The Blugolds began cutting into the lead in the second half and brought it to single figures at 16:01 with a 44-35 score. By 10:28 the game was within one after a Beyer jumper. Though the Blugolds never took the lead until the lone 63-62 advantage, the game was back-and-forth for the rest of the contest and tied five times after 8:46. **Jared Bardon** (*Jr.-DeForest*) counted for 11 of the 21 Blugold points after 8:46, but a jumper at 00:37 followed by four free throws put the Falcons on top as they went on to win 68-66.

Eau Claire shot 45.8% over the entire game and 42.9% on threes. They went 3-of-9 on free throws, the second lowest percentage of the year. The eight Falcon fouls tied for least on the season by an opponent. River Falls shot 44.6% while making 40.0% of three-pointers. They went 12-of-16 on free throws.

River Falls outrebounded Eau Claire 36-to-32 while barely winning the turnover battle 12-to-13. A total of 26 points came from the River Falls bench while Eau Claire had six. The Falcons had 28 points in the paint to Eau Claire's 18.

Bardon collected 20 points. Both Beyer and **Steve Hoelzel** (*Jr.-Kaukauna/UW-Milwaukee*) had 12 while **Matt Riley** (*Sr.-Cadott*) had 10. Riley's nine boards were a Blugold best.

The leading Falcon scorer was Erik Olson, who had 14. Jontae Koonkaew and Courtney Davis were behind him with 12 as another pair had 11.

The Blugolds have three games left on the schedule and all are WIAC games. The next one is Saturday in Zorn Arena against eighth-ranked UW-Oshkosh. The game will tip-off at 3:00 p.m..

Eau Claire-River Falls Box Score- PH -