

## Men's Hockey To Face Pointers In Critical Home-&-Home Series

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EAU CLAIRE - The UW-Eau Claire men's hockey team will face UW-Stevens Point this Friday and Saturday in a crucial home-and-home series that will determine playoff seeding with Saturday's game and final regular season contest being played at the Hobbs Ice Center.

Both teams are tied for sixth place with five points in the Northern Collegiate Hockey Association (NCHA). The Blugolds have a conference record of 1-8-3, while the Pointers have a NCHA record of 2-9-1. This weekend's series will determine who gets the 6th-seed or the 7th-seed in the NCHA quarterfinals next Friday and Saturday. If both teams split the home-and-home series this weekend the Pointers will own the tiebreaker because they have more NCHA wins. Also, Lake Forest College (IL) lurks in eighth place just two points behind both teams. However, both teams own the tiebreaker over Lake Forest.

Earlier this season, both teams played to a 4-4 tie in non-conference matchup in Stevens Point. There were 31 combined penalties in that game and six power play goals.

Eau Claire has played in four straight overtime games going 0-2-2 in each of those games. In the last two games the Blugolds have had third period leads only to let them slip away.

Both of these teams have a lot of penalty minutes this season. The Pointers lead the NCHA with 478 penalty minutes, while the Blugolds are in sixth place with 474 minutes. The Pointers do lead the conference with nine short-handed goals. The Pointers have scored a short-handed goal in five straight games. The Blugolds, on the other hand, are at the bottom with just one short-handed goal.

The Blugolds have had a better conversion rate on the power play this season than their opponents as they converted 21% of their power play, while their opponents have only converted on 17%.

**Sean Garrity** (*Jr.-North St. Paul, MN*) leads the Blugolds with 11 goals scored this season. He also has 12 assists for a team-high 23 points. **Jesse Vesel** (*So.-Hibbing, MN*) leads Eau Claire with 16 assists, which is tied for fifth in the NCHA. **Greg Petersen** (*So.-Maple Grove, MN/Totino-Grace*) has also played well with 14 assists.

**Ryan Mensing** (*So.-Langley, BC/Walnut Grove SS*) has a 6-11-3 record between the pipes for the Blugolds. Mensing has a 2.89 goals against average as he has stopped 538 shots this season. Of the 57 goals he has given up, 23 have been power play goals. Mensing had 40 saves in the first meeting earlier this season.

The Pointers have lost seven of their last eight games and lost six straight before defeating Lake Forest on Friday night. Sean Fish leads the Pointers with 12 goals scored this year. He is also second on the team with 13 assists. Josh Calleja leads Stevens Point with 14 assists.

In goal for the Pointers is Marcus Paulson. Paulson is 6-13-2 on the year in 22 starts. Paulson has a 4.07 goals against average and a .873 save percentage. Paulson finished with 30 saves earlier this season against the Blugolds.

The Blugolds are 24-54-5 all-time against the Pointers. The Blugolds have just won two of the last 14 meetings.

The Pointers and Blugolds face each other Friday night at Stevens Point beginning at 7:30 p.m. Saturday night's game against the Pointers begins at 7 p.m. at the Hobbs Ice Center.

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