

Blugold Volleyball Uponds Eighth-Ranked Whitewater

Posted: Friday, September 17, 2004

EAU CLAIRE - The UW-Eau Claire women's volleyball team ended an eight match losing streak to conference opponent UW-Whitewater as the Blugolds defeated the eighth-ranked Warhawks in five games Friday night at the McPhee Physical Education Center.

The streak dated back to September 19, 1997, when Eau Claire topped Whitewater 3-1. The Blugolds had lost their last six matches to the Warhawks by scores of 3-0 prior to Friday's big victory. With the win, Eau Claire jumps to 8-3 on the season and 1-1 in Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference play while Whitewater drops just its second match of the season to fall to 11-2 overall and 1-1 in the WIAC. The Warhawks came into the contest ranked eighth in the nation according to the latest American Volleyball Coaches Association NCAA Division III women's volleyball rankings.

The Blugolds jumped to a quick start against their conference rivals and took the first game by a score of 30-25. Eau Claire looked poised to take the second game as well, leading by a score of 29-26, but the Warhawks took six of the next seven points to win the second game 32-30. Much like Whitewater had done in the second game, the Blugolds bounced back in the third game. Eau Claire won the game in convincing fashion, taking a 2-1 game lead with a 30-21 victory. Again the Warhawks did not flinch with their backs against the wall as they sent the match to a decisive fifth game with a 30-23 win in game four. The deciding game was close, but it was Eau Claire who wanted it most, winning by a score of 15-13 to top the Warhawks.

Molly Menard (*Jr.-Eau Claire/Memorial*), **Becca Carstensen** (*Sr.-Eau Claire/Memorial*), and **Jodi Dunbar** (*So.-Platteville*) all totaled double-digit kills for the Blugolds. Menard led the way with 17 while also recording 10 digs. Carstensen tallied 15 kills and pounded out a .357 kill percentage in the match. The senior Blugold was a threat at both the net and from the back line with nine blocks and four service aces. Dunbar chimed in with 13 kills on the night, a career-high for the sophomore.

Carly Freiborg (*So.-Sacred Heart, MN/Renville County West*) and **Shanna Berger** (*So.-Baldwin/Baldwin-Woodville*) did the job from the back row, as Freiborg recorded 43 set assists and 15 digs while Berger led the team in digs with 21.

Eau Claire came up big when it counted most, as the team recorded a .429 kill percentage in the fifth game of the match. Just one game earlier momentum had appeared to shift in the favor of the Warhawks as the Blugolds posted a kill percentage of just .095.

Eau Claire will look to continue its great play Saturday afternoon when the Blugolds battle UW-Stevens Point at 2:00 p.m. at the McPhee Physical Education Center. The Pointers carried an 8-3 record, including an 0-1 mark in conference action, prior to their match with Superior Friday night.

Eau Claire-Whitewater Match Statistics

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