

Blugold Women Dominate Pioneers, Advance To The Championship

Posted: Wednesday, February 21, 2007

EAU CLAIRE - The UW-Eau Claire women's basketball team led from start to finish tonight as it defeated UW-Platteville in the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) Tournament semifinal 73-41 at Zorn Arena to advance to the WIAC Championship game on Saturday to face arch-rival and 17th-ranked UW-Stout.

Eau Claire (19-8) becomes the third straight No.3 seed to advance to the championship game. The Blugolds also improve to 4-0 against the Pioneers in WIAC Tournament play and have won their last 12 overall meetings. Eau Claire also extends its home winning streak to 17 games. Platteville hasn't beaten the Blugolds at Zorn Arena since 1988, a streak of 22 straight games.

Heidi Arciszewski (So.-Thorp, WI) came out firing for the Blugolds to begin the game as she would score 13 of Eau Claire's first 18 points. The Blugolds had a 10-2 early lead after a 7-0 run. Platteville struggled early as it was 0-for-4 on three-point attempts before the first media timeout. Eau Claire was up 18-9 after a pair of Arciszewski free throws with 10:41 left to play in the half.

The Pioneers cut the Blugold-lead down to four after a three-pointer with less than eight minutes to play. The Blugolds ended the half on a 6-0 run, including a **Michelle Burns** (Jr.-Eau Claire, WI/North) jumper as time expired to give Eau Claire a 32-20 halftime advantage.

The Blugolds shot 41% in the first half, while the Pioneers shot 39%. Eau Claire scored 12 points off of 10 Platteville turnovers. Arciszewski had 15 first half points.

The Pioneers scored the first points of the second half to cut the margin to 10, but that would be as close as they would get. Eau Claire went on a 9-0 run to extend its lead to 41-22 with 16 minutes to play.

The Blugolds then out-scored the Pioneers 20-9 over the span of eight minutes to have a 61-31 lead with 7:39 remaining. The Eau Claire lead got as high as 37 with 1:15 left as the Blugolds advance with a 73-41 victory.

The Pioneers had 12 second half turnovers that led to 17 Blugold points. Eau Claire shot 55% in the second half and finished 48% for the game. The Pioneers finished with a field goal percentage of 35%. The Blugolds out-rebounded the Pioneers 38-29.

The Blugolds had four players score in double-figures. Arciszewski led the way with a game-high 21 points. That follows her 22-point performance against UW-La Crosse on Monday in the quarterfinals. Michelle Burns and **Ashley Anderson** (So.-Oakdale, MN/North St. Paul) each had 12 points, while **Brittanni Hakanson** (So.-Wheeler, WI/Boyceville) chipped in 10 points. The 12 points for Anderson tied a career-high.

Anderson and Hakanson each had six rebounds apiece to lead the team and **Missy Fremstad** (So.-Osseo, WI/Osseo-Fairchild) had a team-high four assists. Liz Wisdom led the Pioneers with 15 points. The Pioneers season ends with an 11-16 overall record.

The Blugolds will travel to face I-94 rival UW-Stout on Saturday for the Championship game. Stout defeated UW-River Falls in the other semifinal tonight by a final score of 70-59. The Blue Devils will be looking for their third straight tournament championship. Both Eau Claire and Stout have won a conference-best three tournament titles. The teams split the season series with each winning on their own court.

The Championship game is set to tip-off at 3 p.m. Saturday at Johnson Fieldhouse.

Eau Claire-Platteville Box Score

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