

Softball Sweeps Rival Stout

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MENOMONIE - The UW-Eau Claire softball team picked up a crucial sweep over I-94 rival UW-Stout today at Alumni Field, winning game one 5-1 and then blanking the Blue Devils 8-0 in five innings in game two.

The Blugolds, who fell out of the National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) Division III top 25 poll this week, improve to 23-9 this season and get above .500 for the first time in the conference with a 6-4 record. The Blue Devils fall to 13-15 overall and 4-8 in the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC). Eau Claire has won the last four meetings after dropping the previous two.

The Blugolds scored first in game one with a big four-run second inning. With two outs **Rachel Paulus** (Sr.-Wisconsin Rapids, WI/Lincoln) singled to score **Amber Haack** (Sr.-Madison, WI/La Follette) to give Eau Claire a 1-0 lead. The next batter **Casey Leisgang** (Jr.-Seymour, WI) then drilled a double to score both **Bekki Kidnie** (Fr.-St. Paul, MN/Johnson) and Paulus to make the score 3-0. **Mallory McKinney** (Sr.-Brooklyn Park, MN/Champlin Park) then singled to plate Leisgang to give Eau Claire a 4-0 advantage.

Stout scored one run in the bottom of the inning on a Jessica Glasgow double that scored Amanda McKellips. The score stayed that way until the top of the sixth inning when Leisgang smacked her team-high sixth home run of the season to make the score 5-1. Leisgang, just a junior, continues to add on to her school record with 25 career home runs.

The Blue Devils would only get one base runner in their final two at-bats as the Blugolds took game one 5-1. Leisgang was 2-for-3 with three RBIs and two runs scored. McKinney was also 2-for-3 with a RBI. McKinney (9-6) received the win on the mound for Eau Claire as she pitched four innings, struck out five and allowed only three hits. **Bri Sturm** (So.-Zumbrota, MN/Zumbrota-Mazepa) then finished the final three innings and allowed only one hit to pick up her second save of the season, which ties a school record for saves in a season. It's the fourth time that someone has had two saves in a season, Sturm did it last year and Sarah Brelsford did it in 1995 and 1997.

Sturm continued to quiet the Blue Devil offense in game two as she allowed only two hits and did not allow a Stout base runner to advance past first base. The Blugolds offense supported her with a three-run second inning. **Jill Janke** (Jr.-Black River Falls, WI) hit a RBI double to score **Katie Stalker** (Fr.-Madison, WI/La Follette) all the way from first base for the first run of the inning. Eau Claire then picked up two runs when **Mandy Tschernach** (Sr.-Rice Lake, WI) stole second and the Blue Devils threw the ball away to let Janke score from third and Tschernach came all the way around to score to make it 3-0 Blugolds.

Eau Claire extended its lead in the third inning by scoring four runs. Casey Leisgang began the inning with a double. Then after advancing to third she scored on a passed ball to make the score 4-0. After two consecutive walks Amber Haack singled in **Michelle Butkus** (Jr.-Medford, WI) to make the score 5-0. After a wild pitch put runners at second and third Bekki Kidnie hit a two-RBI single that scored **Stephanie Salter** (Sr.-Schofield, WI/D.C. Everest) and Jill Janke to give Eau Claire a 7-0 lead. After a Stout error prolonged the fourth inning Tschernach hit a single that scored Butkus to give Eau Claire an 8-0 advantage. The game ended in five innings with Eau Claire winning 8-0.

Leisgang, Janke, and Tschernach each had two hits to lead the Blugolds. Kidnie had a team-high two RBIs. Sturm (12-3) picked up her sixth consecutive win as a starter striking out two.

It will be a quick turnaround for the Blugolds as they will travel to Oshkosh to play a make-up doubleheader tomorrow against the 14th-ranked Titans. The game was originally scheduled for last Saturday but was called off because of a food poisoning outbreak on the Titans team. The first game is scheduled