

Softball Wins First NCAA National Tournament Game In Five

Posted: Friday, May 18, 2007

SALEM, VIRGINIA - The UW-Eau Claire softball team defeated Rhode Island College, 9-1, in five innings to advance to the second round of the NCAA Division III championship tournament at the James I. Moyer Complex here Friday afternoon.

The Blugolds rapped out 11 hits and took advantage of seven Rhode Island errors to hand the Anchorwomen their worst setback of the season.

Rhode Island, ranked No. 12 in the most recent NFCA Division III national poll, had won 14 of its last 15 games coming into the national tournament. Eau Claire, ranked No. 21 in the NFCA poll, also has been hot lately, winning 12 of its last 13 outings including four against No. 8-ranked UW-Oshkosh.

Blugold pitcher **Mallory McKinney** (*Sr.-Brooklyn Park, MN/Champlin Park*) allowed Rhode Island its only run in the top of the second as Mandy Shurgot hit her third home run of the season. The Anchorwomen managed just one other hit against McKinney who tied Heidi Bergstrom's school career win record with her 74th. McKinney, who is 18-8 for the season, walked one and struck out four.

The Blugolds, who are now 36-12 for the season, broke the game open with five runs in the bottom of the third on four hits and three Rhode Island errors as they sent 11 batters to the plate.

McKinney actually ended the game with a bases-loaded hit in the bottom of the fifth. Although she hit the ball to the fence, she was only credited with a single as the Blugolds won on the 8-run rule. It was the third hit of the game for McKinney. Leadoff hitter **Casey Leisgang** (*Jr.-Seymour*) also had three hits for the Blugolds while designated player **Shannon Barone** (*Sr.-DePere*) had a pair of hits as did **Mandy Tschernach** (*Sr.-Rice Lake*). Barone plated three runs with her two hits. Leisgang and McKinney had the only extra base hits by the Blugolds, both doubles.

Anchorwomen pitcher Nicole Riley, who yesterday was named to the NFCA All-American second team, had a 29-3 season record and an 0.84 ERA coming into the Eau Claire contest. She was charged with eight hits and four earned runs in the four innings she worked. She walked two and struck out two. Reliever Jamie Sacco did not retire any of the five batters she faced in the fifth before the Blugolds ended the game.

The Blugolds will play again at 6:30 p.m. (EDT) Saturday against the winner of an in-progress game between second-seeded Washington University of St. Louis (32-5) and seventh-seeded Plattsburgh State of New York (35-12). The Blugolds beat Plattsburgh, 6-0, early in the season.

Rhode Island College, now 41-6, will face the loser of the Wash U-Plattsburgh game in an elimination contest at 1:30 p.m. (EDT) Saturday.

Eau Claire is making its third national tournament appearance while Rhode Island College, the three-time defending Little East Conference champion, is making its first appearance.

Eau Claire-Rhode Island College Box Score

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