

# Blugolds Win Two To Survive In NCAA Softball Championship

Posted: Sunday, May 20, 2007

SALEM, VIRGINIA - UW-Eau Claire remained one of three teams in the hunt for an NCAA Division III national championship after winning two elimination contests on the third day of the eight-team national tournament at the James I. Moyer Sports Complex here Sunday.

The Blugolds beat Emory University of Georgia, 3-1, then overcame a 5-0 deficit to beat Plattsburgh State of New York, 6-5.

The win sends the Blugolds into the losers' bracket final at noon (EDT) Monday against Linfield College of Oregon, which dropped a 6-3 decision to Washington University of Missouri Sunday.

The Blugolds need to beat top-seeded Linfield to have another shot at second-seeded and unbeaten Washington University which sent the Blugolds into the losers' bracket with a 1-0, eight-inning setback Saturday.

The Blugolds, who are the No. 3 seed in the double elimination tournament, are assured of their best finish ever in the Division III World Series. They had finished fourth in both 1999 and 2000 in their only other two World Series appearances.

**Mandy Tschernach** (Sr.-Rice Lake) was the hero of the Blugold win over Emory as she went three for three, driving in single runs in both the first and third innings to stake the Blugolds to a 2-0 lead. After Emory scored one in the fourth, the Blugolds added an insurance run on a **Casey Leisgang** (Jr.-Seymour) double in the sixth inning.

The Blugolds had Emory in trouble throughout their showdown with eight hits and five walks that resulted in 11 runners left on base. **Mallory McKinney** (Sr.-Brooklyn Park, MN/Champlin Park) went the distance on the mound for the Blugolds, firing a four-hitter with two walks and 10 strikeouts. Her teammates had an uncharacteristic three errors but Emory could not convert on any of those miscues.

Emory finished the season with a 33-8 record while the Blugolds moved on with a 37-13 mark.

**Bekki Kidnie's** (Fr.-St. Paul, MN/Johnson) one-out opposite field hit to right plated **Rachel Paulus** (Sr.-Wisconsin Rapids/Lincoln) with the winning run in the bottom of the seventh against Plattsburgh, capping a comeback that started in the fourth inning. The win was the second of the season for the Blugolds over Plattsburgh which finished 37-14 overall. The Blugolds beat Plattsburgh State, 6-0, in the NFCA Lead-Off Classic back in March. The Cardinals had stayed alive in the NCAA Championships with a 2-1, eight-inning win over DePauw University in the first tournament game Sunday.

Plattsburgh State jumped on Blugold starter **Bri Sturm** (So.-Zumbrota, MN/Zumbrota-Mazeppa) for two runs in the top of the first including a lead-off home run by Amy Woo. The Cardinals tacked on three in the top of the fourth as they chased Sturm who was replaced by McKinney.

In the bottom of the fourth, the Blugolds scored three times thanks to three hit batters by Cardinal starter Stephanie Zweig. Cardinal ace Jennifer Leitzke came but but the Blugolds got to her for eight hits over the final two and two-thirds innings to finish with 13 for the game.

McKinney helped her own cause with a two-out, two-run single to right in the bottom of the sixth.

In the seventh, **Jill Janke** (Jr.-Black River Falls) opened with a single followed by Paulus' bunt single. After Janke was forced at third on a sacrifice attempt, the freshman Kidnie delivered her game-winning hit to the right field fence.

Tschernach contributed three hits again for the Blugolds while **Stephanie Salter** (Sr.-Schofield/D. C. Everest), batting in the No. 9 position, also had three hits and drove in one run.

McKinney picked up the win with three and one-third innings of relief. She allowed five hits with three walks and five strikeouts to push her season record to 20-9. She broke the school career victory mark with her two

wins on the day as she now has 76 to better the mark of 74 set by Heidi Bergstrom.

The Blugolds will take a 38-13 record into the game against Linfield, which is now