

# Football Opens Season With A Big Win

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MARSHALL, MN - The UW-Eau Claire football team opened the season Thursday, firing on all cylinders as they defeated Southwest Minnesota State 42-13.

The Blugolds came out strong, with **Craig Polifka** (*Jr.-Kewaunee, WI*) taking the opening kickoff 55 yards. However, the Blugold offense was unable to gain yards on its opening drive. After the Blugolds punted, Southwest Minnesota State started its opening drive, but it was short-lived. On the third play of the Mustang drive, senior **Zach Paul** (*Edgar, WI*) picked off a pass and ran it back 20 yards to score the Blugold's first touchdown of the season.

On SMSU's next possession, the Blugolds were able to hold them to only 19 total yards, and the Mustangs would have to punt after five plays. The Blugold offense then showed what they could do, taking the ball 80 yards in eight plays for another Blugold touchdown. On the drive, **Tony Hull** (*Sr.-Blaine, MN/Spring Lake Park*) caught two passes for a total of 50 yards. **Cory Sartorelli** (*So.-Appleton, WI/North*) rushed for 22 during the drive, but junior quarterback **Kyle Paulson** (*Jr.-Amery, WI*) completed the drive with a rushing touchdown. Only eight minutes into the game, the Blugolds would find themselves up 14-0. The teams would then trade punts to end the first quarter.

The second quarter started out slow, as neither team scored until about seven minutes in. After a 43 yard drive by the Mustangs stalled, they would punt it away and were able to pin the Blugolds down to their own one-yard-line. The Blugolds were able to make it up to the 30-yard-line, but after a penalty and a rush for negative yardage, they were forced to punt from their own 13-yard-line. The snap would go over the punter's head and into the end zone, for a safety. The score was then 14-2.

The Mustangs and Blugolds would then trade punts again with time winding down in the second quarter. However, the Blugolds were able to sack the quarterback twice before the Mustangs were forced to punt. On the following Mustang drive, they would take the ball 63 yards and kick a field goal, making the score 14-5.

The Blugolds would get the ball once in the half but time ran out after one play. The Blugolds entered halftime with only a nine point lead, but would turn on the pressure in the second half.

SMSU took the opening kickoff in the second half, but their drive was short-lived, lasting only three plays. They would punt. After only one offense play, Paulson threw a 46 yard touchdown pass to **Chris Hull** (*Sr.-Blaine, MN/Spring Lake Park*). That would make the score 21-5.

The Blugolds would then hold the Mustangs to minus one yard on the next drive and forced another punt. The Blugolds then went 50 yards to score another touchdown. On the drive, the Blugolds kept it mainly on the ground, rushing ten times and passing three. Stetson Grant took the ball two yards to end the drive with a touchdown.

On the next possession, SMSU would score. They took the ball 53 yards in six plays. Paul Benesh completed the drive with a one-yard touchdown, making the score 28-13. The Mustangs would not score the rest of the game, but the Blugolds would on the next drive.

It only took 1:32, going 46 yards for the Blugolds to strike again. Sartorelli ended the drive with a three-yard touchdown. The quarter came to an end after the Mustangs turned the ball over on downs.

The fourth quarter opened with a fumble by both teams and recoveries by the other team. Over the next three possessions, the Blugolds were forced to punt twice and the Mustangs once. SMSU then fumbled again and Blugold **Jim Pruski** (*So.-De Pere, WI*) recovered.

The Blugolds scored their final touchdown of the game with 1:49 left. The Blugolds went 15 yards in three plays, and **Abou Amara, Jr.** (*So.-Madison, WI/East*) completed the drive with a one-yard touchdown run. The following SMSU po