Volleyball Bumps Two Minnesota Foes

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Freshman **Amanda Lessner** *(Watertown)* made her collegiate debut a successful one as she directed the UW-Eau Claire volleyball team to wins over Minnesota-Morris and Hamline University on the final day of the Labor Day Classic in the McPhee Phy Ed Center Saturday.

With junior **Emily Haese** *(Mishicot)* participating in her sister's wedding, Lessner was called on to set for the Blugold offense and she did more than an adequate job as the Blugolds beat Morris, 28-30, 30-23, 30-24, 30-17 and Hamline, 30-28, 30-24, 30-24.

First-year coach Kim Wudi's crew might have escaped the day without losing a game but let a 26-19 lead slip away in dropping the first game of the day, 30-28.

Wudi gave extended playing time to a lot of inexperienced players and while she saw bumps in the road, feels the ride will become smoother as the season progresses.

The Blugolds' hitting percentage was not that outstanding as they hit .231 against Morris and .220 against Hamline but Wudi thought her team cut down on the number of errors it had made Friday on the first day of the Classic.

As it turned out, the first match against Gustavus turned out to be the championship showdown as the Gusties beat the Blugolds in three close games and went unbeaten for the rest of the tourney to claim the crown with a 4-0 record. The Blugolds were second at 3-1 while Hamline was third with an identical record but a loss in the head to head matchup against Eau Claire. UW-Stout was fourth at 2-2 while both UW-River Falls and Morris failed to win a match.

Leading the Blugolds Saturday was senior **Nikki Peterson** *(North St. Paul, MN/North)*, who was one of eight players to make the All-Tournament team. The 6-foot-1 rightside hitter picked up 12 kills in each match, hitting .300 for the day. **Abby Freiborg** *(Jr.-Sacred Heart, MN/Renville West)* led the team against Hamline with 13 kills to go along with a team-high 19 digs while **Katie Fox** *(Jr.-Chippewa Falls/Chi-Hi)* tied Peterson with 12 kills against Morris.

Lessner had 45 assists with seven digs against Morris and 38 assists with 10 digs against Hamline.

Senior co-captain **Heather Harnell** *(Minnetonka, MN)* led the team with 22 digs against Morris, then added 16 against Hamline. **Cassie Hunt** *(So.-Chippewa Falls/McDonell)* had 11 digs against Morris.

Also getting some extended time against Morris with seven kills each were sophomore **Cary Rasmussen** *(Sparta)* and freshman **Rachel Ver Voort** *(Madison/Middleton)*.

The Blugolds will be back in action next weekend when they participate in the Augsburg Tournament in Minneapolis.

Eau Claire-UM-Morris Box Score

Eau Claire-Hamline Box Score

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