

# Blugold Offense stifled In Loss To Whitewater

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EAU CLAIRE - The 13th ranked UW-Eau Claire football team totaled just 132 total yards while allowing 245 rushing yards to Warhawk tailback Colin Burns as the Blugolds fell to No. 21 Whitewater 12-7 here today at Carson Park.

The loss is the first of the season for Eau Claire as it falls to 2-1 overall and 0-1 in Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference play. The Warhawks remain undefeated at 4-0 and are now 1-0 in WIAC action.

The Blugolds had the only legitimate scoring opportunity in the first quarter, taking over possession on the Whitewater 46 yard line after a 19-yard punt return by **Derek Sikora** (*Jr.-Neilsville*). The Eau Claire offense was able to move the ball to the 28 yard line before failing to convert a fourth down and seven.

The Warhawks got on the board first early in the second quarter when they drove 40 yards on seven plays. The big play was an 18-yard completion from Mike Askren to Peter Schmitt, setting up a one-yard touchdown run by Keiya Square. The point after was blocked by Sikora, making the score 6-0 in favor of Whitewater.

The Blugolds went three and out on the next possession and then forced Whitewater to punt from their own 44 yard line. The snap was high to punter Nick Croak who picked up the ball and attempted to boot it. The Eau Claire defense forced a fumble before Croak was able to kick the ball, and **Adam Zehm** (*Fr.-Chippewa Falls/McDonell*) picked up the loose ball and returned it 18 yards for a Blugold touchdown. The point after by **Andy Schneider** (*Jr.-Green Bay/Ashwaubenon*) was good and Eau Claire took a 7-6 lead.

The Warhawks regained the lead late in the second quarter when Colin Burns ran eight times for 45 yards, setting up a Michael Chaulk 23-yard field goal. The Warhawks had decided to go for the touchdown on fourth and goal from the one yard line and the Eau Claire defense made the stop but a false start penalty on Whitewater negated the play. The field goal came with just 14 seconds left in the game, sending the Blugolds into the locker room with a 9-7 deficit.

Eau Claire wasted a golden opportunity early in the third quarter when **Nels Fredrickson** (*Sr.-Burnsville, MN*) hooked up with **Matt Evensen** (*Jr.-Junction City/Auburndale*) for a 33-yard reception, setting up a first and goal from the four-yard line. On the very next play Fredrickson threw an interception in the end zone, ending the Blugold drive. Neither team was able to mount a productive drive the rest of the third quarter and Eau Claire still trailed by two heading into the final 15 minutes.

After a Blugold punt early in the fourth quarter, Burns again led a scoring drive for Whitewater. The tailback carried the ball 13 times on the drive, including getting the ball nine times in a row to start the drive. Burns tallied 65 yards on the drive, setting up a 21-yard field goal by Chaulk to make the score 12-7. The drive took more than nine minutes off the clock, leaving just 3:31 for the Blugolds to score the winning touchdown.

Eau Claire went three and out on their next possession, and head coach Todd Hoffner opted to punt. The Blugold defense was up to the task as they forced a punt from the Whitewater 34 yard line. Again the snap to Croak was over his head and all he could do is fall on it, giving Eau Claire the ball at the Whitewater 14 yard line 2:12 left in the game. After **Brian Mitchell** (*Jr.-Carol Stream, IL*) ran for gains of three and four yards, he lost seven on third down, setting up a fourth and 10. Fredrickson's final pass fell incomplete to Evensen and the Warhawks walked away with a 12-7 win.

Burns finished with 54 carries for 241 yards. The 54 carries broke the old conference record of 53 carries set by Luke Bundgaard last season against UW-Platteville. The Warhawks tallied 277 yards of total offense.

The Blugolds will look to get back on track next week when they host UW-River Falls for the annual homecoming game. The contest is set to begin at 1: