

Football Holds On Against Oshkosh

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Oshkosh, Wis. - After losing close games for two years in a row to UW-Oshkosh, the kicking games made the difference in a 21-20 victory for the UW-Eau Claire football team at Titan Stadium today.

This is Eau Claire's first Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) victory. The team is 1-1 in WIAC play and 4-1 overall. Oshkosh now has an overall record of 3-1 and is 0-1 in conference competition.

With **Mitch Schaeuble** (*Sr.-Wrightstown*) and **Ben Luehrs** (*Fr.-Hudson*) quarterbacking for the Blugolds, neither team made much noise until late in the first. At 6:16, Oshkosh started a drive at the Blugold 44 after a punt. Receptions of 15 and 26 yards helped bring the Titans to the 13. However, they had to settle for a field goal as they got on the board first. It was kicker Lucas Raschke's 220th career point, an Oshkosh record.

Eau Claire did nothing with their next drive and punted to midfield. Andy Moriarty had rushes of 13 and 26 yards during the drive, with the latter finding the end zone as Oshkosh went up 10-0.

The first play of the second quarter saw Eau Claire get on the board. Schaeuble connected with **Chris Hull** (*Sr.-Blaine, MN/Spring Lake Park*) on a 55-yard play that made it 10-7. It was the longest pass of the season.

The Titans marched down the field on their following drive, but came up empty. The nine-play, 57-yard drive had a clutch 44-yard pass on third down that brought them to the Eau Claire 20. Oshkosh could not find paydirt and attempted a 40-yard field goal that went wide left.

The next Eau Claire drive ended abruptly, as Chris Hull fumbled at the Blugold 49 after a 17-yard catch. The Titans then pounded their way to the 5 on five rushes. The defense held and Oshkosh tried another field goal. **Kyle Meulemans** (*Jr.-Wrightstown*) got his hand on the kick, though, and **Craig Polifka** (*Jr.-Kewaunee*) picked up at the 20. He dashed 80 yards as the special teams touchdown, and 10-point swing, made it 14-10 Eau Claire with 6:22 to play. It was the first blocked field goal of the season, though the team does have two blocked punts.

The Blugold had a chance to add a field goal at the end of the half, but **Craig Kolb** (*So.-Marshfield*) went wide left. Schaeuble orchestrated the drive, but a Luehrs fumble nearly cost Eau Claire. **Sam Cummings** (*Sr.-Rochester, MN/John Marshall*) recovered it.

Eau Claire had 154 yards to 251 for Oshkosh in the half, but had 14 first downs over the Titan 10. The Blugolds had just two yards on 10 rushes, compared to 105 yards on 24 attempts for Oshkosh. Schaeuble had 148 yards and a touchdown, with Chris Hull collecting 93 of those yards.

On the Blugolds' first drive of the second half, they went 64 yards in nine plays on the back of some Schaeuble passes. However, the 33-yard Kolb kick went wide left.

The Titans went 80 yards in the ensuing drive. Moriarty rushed for 36 yards and Patek hooked up for a 30-yard throw to end it with the TD. The Kyle Kubasa touchdown put Oshkosh back in front 17-14.

Eau Claire wasted little time going back on top, as Schaeuble and Chris Hull broke their own season record for longest pass play. Three plays into the next drive, Schaeuble and Chris Hull had a 74-yard connection to make for a 21-17 score.

After Oshkosh came up empty on their drive in the fourth quarter, the Blugolds drove deep into Titan territory. Once again, the special teams couldn't collect points when Kolb's kick was blocked. Most of the drive came from Schaeuble passes and rushes, including a 27-yard toss to **Tony Hull** (*Sr.-Blaine, MN/Spring Lake Park*). Kolb's 33-yard kick was knocked down, but **Dan Puls** (*Jr.-Onalaska*) recovered.

Oshkosh took advantage of the block, going 71 yards in 13 plays. Moriarty rushed for 61 of the yards to set up a 25-yard field goal. Raschke split the uprights as the Titans got within a point at the 3:01 mark.

The next Titan drive started with just under a minute left. Patek completed three passes before **Dave Wicklund** (*Jr.-Kewaskum*) came up with the game-clinching interception at the Oshkosh 46.

The home team outgained Eau Claire 505-to-395. Despite the 4-1 record, Eau Claire has outgained its opponent just one time. The Blugold air attack put up 352 yards to 279 for Oshkosh, but the Oshkosh running game had 226 while Eau Claire managed just 43. Oshkosh totaled 28 first downs to 15 for the Blugolds.

Kolb went 0-for-3 on field goals with one block. Raschke went 2-for-4 with one block as well.

In his first appearance as signal-caller, Schaeuble went 17-of-27 for 348 yards and two touchdowns. Chris Hull caught five of those passes for 176 yards and two touchdowns, while his brother Tony grabbed seven for 89 yards. Besides the only turnover of the day, Wicklund led in tackles with 15. **Zach Paul** (*Sr.-Edgar*) had 13 and Cummings had 12.

The Blugolds will come home for their next game, which is homecoming. The game against UW-La Crosse is scheduled for 11:30 a.m. Eau Claire is 38-20-3 in homecomings and has won the past three. The last time Eau Claire faced La Crosse in homecoming was 1973.

Eau Claire-Oshkosh Box Score

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