

Kolb Comes through With Game-Winning Field Goal Over Ranked Eagles

Posted: Saturday, October 6, 2007

EAU CLAIRE, Wis. - With 24 seconds left in the game, **Craig Kolb** (So. -Marshfield) nailed a 46-yard field goal to give the UW-Eau Claire football team a thrilling 31-29 victory over sixth-ranked UW-La Crosse.

The game brings the Blugolds to 2-1 in Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) play and 5-1 overall. The loss drops La Crosse to 0-2 against WIAC opponents and 2-2 against all teams.

It was also the fourth consecutive homecoming win for Eau Claire and the kick that won it is tied for fifth longest in Eau Claire history.

Eau Claire had the early lead over the Eagles due to a blocked punt in the first quarter. La Crosse's opening drive got to the Eau Claire 48, but **Chris Hull** (Sr.-Blaine, MN/Spring Lake Park) knocked down the Brett Nagan punt and it rolled to the La Crosse 9 before **Nils Dillon** (So.-Iola/Iola-Scandinavia) recovered. Three plays later, **Mitch Schaeuble** (Sr.-Wrightstown) threw a perfect pass to **Tony Hull** (Sr.-Blaine, MN/Spring Lake Park) in the back of the end zone for a 7-0 lead. Each team mostly stayed on its respective half for the rest of the quarter.

With 13:04 left in the second quarter, the Blugolds began a much longer scoring drive. A couple key third down plays fueled the drive, including a 24-yard pass to Tony Hull on one third down and a 28-yard reverse to Spencer Kehoe (So.-Clear Lake) on another. The team got to the Eagles' 17 and threw a toss to the end zone. A pass interference call then moved the ball to the 2 and **Cory Sartorelli** (So.-Appleton/North) burst in one play later to make it 14-0.

On the ensuing kickoff, Mike DeLong gave La Crosse good field position with a return to the Eagles' 47. Alex Seguin passed La Crosse to the Blugolds' 25 before Dan Hall had rushes of 11 and then 14, with the last one making it to pay dirt. **Chris Below** (Sr.-Antigo) blocked the extra point and the scoreboard read 14-6 with 8:09 left in the quarter.

Two La Crosse drives later, the Eagles started at their 22. After a 13-play series, they hit a 24-yard field goal just before half to make it 14-9. Hall had 30 of the yards on the ground.

On the second half kickoff, Tony Hull returned it to the Blugolds' 39 before fumbling. The Eagles recovered to set up a scoring opportunity. They made it within the red zone and even to the 7, but **Nate Jahn** (Sr.-Alma Center/Lincoln) sacked Seguin for a 13-yard loss. On the 37-yard Dylan Rude field goal, **Sam Cummings** (Sr.-Rochester, MN/John Marshall) got his hand on the ball and it rolled for a touchback.

Eau Claire then went on an 80-yard, 15-play drive to set up Sartorelli's second score of the day. Kehoe had another reverse for 16 yards and Schaeuble connected with Sartorelli for a 15-yard gain. Sartorelli ran for 31 of the yards and punched in a 3-yard touchdown on third down as Eau Claire went up 21-9.

La Crosse wouldn't strike until the fourth, but came back with a lot of points. However, Eau Claire scored first in their next drive after the Sartorelli score. The 60-yard drive ended on a 17-yard completion to Chris Hull.

With 12:31 left in the fourth, Seguin led La Crosse for an 80-yard drive. He had consecutive completions of 23, 11, 11, and 15 on the way to the 7. Eau Claire kept the Eagles from reaching the end zone for three plays, but La Crosse went for the score on fourth. A Tyler Keeney 6-yard snag got La Crosse one score closer with 9:07 to play.

Two plays into the ensuing Blugold drive, Schaeuble fumbled during a rush and La Crosse pounced on it to put it at the Eau Claire 23. Just four plays later, Hall carried it in from 10 yards out to close the margin to 28-23 with 7:14 left.

Eau Claire went three-and-out on their next drive and the Eagles took the punt to the La Crosse 27. The Eagles' series took 16 plays and 5:27, ending with a 1-yard touchdown from Mike Schmidt. There was a key fourth-and-1 during the drive that La Crosse converted. A run on the two-point conversion fell short as the Eagles took their first lead of the day at 29-28.

The Blugolds then had 1:10 to march from their 35 and take the game. The big play of the drive came two plays in with a 31-yard pass to Dillon. Dillon juggled the ball, but came up with a circus catch while falling down to bring Eau Claire to the Eagles'34. A 5-yard gain followed in the following plays and Kolb came on for the 46-yarder. He nailed it to send the homecoming crowd into a frenzy.

La Crosse got within Hail Mary range after a 27-yard grab during their last march. However, they could not come up with another long play and the Blugolds took the 31-29 upset.

The Eagles outgained Eau Claire 409-to-282. Despite the 5-1 record, Eau Claire has outgained its opponent just once. La Crosse put up 256 yards in the air to Eau Claire's 151 and managed 153 rushing yards over Eau Claire's 131. There were 27 first downs for the Eagles compared to 14 for the home team.

Sartorelli rushed for 63 yards off 23 carries along with two touchdowns. Schaeuble went 8-for-26 with 151 yards and two scores. Tony Hull led the receivers with three catches, 50 yards, and one touchdown.

The defense knocked down three kicks to make for six on the year. **Zach Paul** (*Sr.-Edgar*) and his 16 tackles led the team, but **Dave Wicklund** (*Jr.-Kewaskum*) was right behind with 15.

Eau Claire hits the road again next week. The team will face UW-River Falls at 1 p.m. on Saturday.

Eau Claire-La Crosse Box Score

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