Volleyball Heads To Elmhurst Tourney this Weekend

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EAU CLAIRE, Wis. - This weekend the UW-Eau Claire volleyball team will compete in its fifth tournament of the year and its last action before the conference tournament.

Eau Claire is 18-7 overall and has taken second in each of its tournaments. This past week, Eau Claire beat 13th-ranked St. Thomas (MN) 3-2 and 17th-ranked UW-La Crosse 3-0 to run its winning streak to a season-high five matches. The successful string of contests has moved Eau Claire back onto the poll at 25th.

This weekend's scheduled opponents are Marian College and Wheaton College (IL) on Friday, with the first match at 6 p.m. and the second at 8. Friday's action will determine Saturday's opponents in the Elmhurst Tournament, hosted by Elmhurst College (IL).

Abby Freiborg *(Jr.-Sacred Heart, MN/Renville County West)* leads Eau Claire in kills per game with 3.51 and **Nikki Peterson** *(Sr.-North St. Paul, MN/North)* is second at 2.94. **Emily Haese** *(Jr.-Mishicot)* feeds them the ball with 12.16 assists per game. Freiborg also has 64 service aces.

On defense, **Heather Harnell** *(Sr.-Minnetonka, MN)* contributes 4.67 digs per game while Freiborg adds 4.11. At the front of the net, **Katie Fox** *(Jr.-Chippewa Falls/Chi-hi)* has totaled 71.0 blocks, most for the Blugolds.

The Marian Sabres are 3-22 this season and have lost 11 straight matches coming into this weekend. Eau Claire has never faced the Sabres.

Heather Alft and Kelsey Westerveld are the offensive leaders with 2.56 and 2.46 kills per game. The top assist mark is Courtney Leiteritz's 4.84 per game. Katrina Costello averages 4.38 digs per game on defense and Alft has blocked 70.0 this season.

Wheaton has a 19-8 mark and is riding a three-match winning streak. Eau Claire is 3-0 all-time versus the Thunder with the last match coming in 1991.

For the offense, Mallory Sullivan notches 3.56 kills per game and Annie Himmelhaver provides 9.86 assists per game. Leah Whitley-Rupp and Himmelhaver have smashed 50 and 46 aces, respectively. Whitley-Rupp and Sullivan contribute 5.82 and 4.88 digs per game on the other side of the ball while Hannah McGinnis and Kelli Miller have blocked 79.0 and 78.0.

The Elmhurst Tournament begins on Friday with Eau Claire's opening match against Marian starting at 6 p.m. The Wheaton match is at 8 and Saturday's teams will be determined during Friday's matches. The conference tournament begins on Oct. 30.