

Women's Hockey Prepares For Two Non-Conference Games this Weekend

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EAU CLAIRE, Wis. - The UW-Eau Claire women's hockey team will host two non-conference opponents this weekend when St. Thomas (Minn.) comes to town Friday night and St. Mary's (Minn.) on Saturday night. This will be a golden opportunity for Blugolds to test their talent against two of the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference's (MIAC) top five teams according to a recent MIAC Coaches Poll.

The Blugolds will enter the weekend with a 1-1 record after Splitting a home and home series with Bethel last weekend in which both teams claimed victories on their home ice. Bethel was ranked seventh in the preseason MIAC Coaches Poll.

After one weekend of play the Blugolds are averaging two goals for and 1.5 goals against per game. In the first weekend of play, the Blugolds did a phenomenal job on the penalty kill allowing only one goal on 12 attempts. However, they will look to improve their power play as they went 1-7 with the skater advantage. **Kristen Faber** (*Fr.-Austin, MN*) was responsible for the Blugolds only power play goal last weekend, and she was assisted by teammates **Christine Knop** (*Fr.-Coon Rapids, MN*) and **Lauren Havard** (*Jr.-San Angelo, TX/Arapahoe*).

So far this season, the Blugolds scoring attack has been a team effort with four different players lighting the lamp. Faber, **Beth Dittrich** (*So.-Roseville, MN*), **Christine Dickinson** (*Fr.-Layton, UT/Shattuck St. Mary's*), and **Maddi Hammer** (*Fr.-Owatonna, MN*) all contributed with goals in the opening weekend. Dittrich and Hammer also tallied assist last weekend to lead the team in points with two apiece.

In net, **Danika Porter** (*Rosemount, MN/South St. Paul*) stopped 20 of the 23 shots she faced last weekend for a save percentage of .869. Porter and the Blugolds have not allowed a goal in the first period in their first two games.

St. Thomas, the Blugolds opponent on Friday night, has yet to play a game this season. However, under first year head coach Tom Palkowski, the Tommies return five All-MIAC selections from last year's team. They include goalie Lauren Bradel, forward Jackie Carroll, forward Jill Kobow, forward Ashley Reinhardt, and defenseman Jenny Schnaible. Bradel, who will start in net for the Tommies, was 6-0 in her freshman season with a GAA of 2.33 and a save percentage of .913. Of the key returning forwards Carroll has a career total of 66 points, Kobow has a career total of 27 points, and Reinhardt has a career total of 74 points. Carroll is a junior, Kobow is a sophomore, and Reinhardt is a senior. On the blue line, Schnaible had 12 assist and 3 goals in her freshman campaign. The Blugolds are 1-3 all-time against St. Thomas.

St. Mary's, the opponent on Saturday night, has not played an official game yet this season as well. The Cardinal team is young after graduating ten seniors last spring. When the Cardinals lost those ten seniors, they lost 46 of the 55 goals the team scored last season. However, the Cardinal coaching staff is very confident in their captains Val Rodriguez, Hadley Swaggert, and Sara Eisenhauer. Rodriguez ended last season with zero goals and six assist, and fellow captains Swaggert and Eisenhauer each had a total of two points on the season. In the net the Cardinals are just as young after graduating two goalies. However, there is no sense of panic in the Cardinal coaching staff as they are very confident in the returning players and the incoming freshmen.

The action will start at 7p.m. on both Friday and Saturday at Hobbs Ice Arena. In addition to their regularly scheduled game on Saturday evening, the UW-Eau Claire women's hockey team will be hosting an Alumni game. The alumni game will be played at 4 p.m. on Saturday at Hobbs Ice Arena.

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