

# Football's Playoff Run Ends In Loss To Bethel

*Posted: Saturday, November 24, 2007*

ST. PAUL, Minn. - The UW-Eau Claire football team's second appearance ever in the national playoffs concluded today in 21-12 loss to Bethel University (MN).

Both teams featured the running attack, with the Blugolds doing so because concussions from the season kept starting quarterback **Mitch Schaeuble** (*Sr.-Wrightstown*) out of the game. Fourth-string quarterback **Tony Hull** (*Sr.-Blaine, MN/Spring Lake Park*), usually a receiver, was called to duty but did a lot more rushing than passing. No. 17 Eau Claire had 171 yards on the ground to 37 in the air on five completions. The ninth-ranked Royals had four catches and gained 24 yards on them compared to 224 rushing.

The game got off to a bad start for the Blugolds when Tony Hull fumbled the ball away on the second play. Bethel's John Edwards picked it up and gained 18 yards on the way to Eau Claire's 20. The Royals then rushed their way to a score, with fullback Dusty Wahl going in from the 3.

Two Blugold drives later, Eau Claire would tie it up. The team started on Bethel's 42 and relied on **Cory Sartorelli** (*So.-Appleton/North*). The running back gained 28 yards, including 5 during a fourth-and-1 from Bethel's 23. Sartorelli scored on a 1-yard burst during the 12th play of the drive.

Eau Claire would take the lead on the first drive of the second quarter. The 53-yard, 11-play drive made it to the 2 before stalling. **Matt Olson** (*Fr.-Stratford*) picked up a crucial fourth-and-1 on the Royals' 38 and he also got the team to the 3 on a first-down run. The Blugolds couldn't find the end zone and **Craig Kolb** (*So.-Marshfield*) came out to nail a 22-yard field goal, giving him 18 in his career and moving him to fourth all-time by himself.

The ensuing kickoff gave Bethel very good field position, as Tim Cornish returned it 46 yards to Eau Claire's 40. An unsportsmanlike conduct penalty added 15 and the Royals found themselves at the Blugolds' 25 to start the series. It nearly ended on a fourth-and-1 at the 16, but Wahl turned it into a big play as he scampered to the 1. Ben Wetzell took a quarterback keeper into the end zone as Bethel went back on top 14-10 with 8:44 to play in the half.

The special teams would give the Blugolds a chance to retake the lead after the fifth blocked punt of the year. However, Eau Claire couldn't capitalize on the 34-yard field and had to punt. Bethel then took the ball at its 20 and ran its way into Eau Claire territory, making it to the 26 before **Craig Polifka** (*Jr.-Kewaunee*) grabbed his team-high seventh pick. His interception helped keep the score 14-10 at half.

The third quarter was quiet, with Eau Claire having the only serious threat on a drive that started at Bethel's 32. It ended on downs, however.

Eau Claire's special teams would be the next to score. On the third play of the fourth quarter, the Blugolds blocked a punt that Bethel recovered in its own end zone. The safety cut the lead to 14-12.

The Royals gave themselves a comfortable lead again on a drive that began at 7:53 on Bethel's 26. Twelve plays and more than five minutes later, Wahl ran in from the 11 to make for the 21-12 score.

The last Eau Claire drive made it to Bethel's 27 before the Blugolds gave it up on downs.

The Royals outgained Eau Claire 248-to-208 in the game with the majority for each side coming on the ground. Each team made a turnover.

Individually, the Blugolds spread the yardage around. Tony Hull had 67 rushing yards while Sartorelli totaled 55 and Olson managed 38. Tony Hull also went 5-of-19 passing for 37 yards.

**Tom Dohr** (*Jr.-Neeenah*) and his 12 tackles led the defense and Polifka had the pick.

The 9-3 record is the best since 1998's 10-3 mark and the nine wins is tied for second-most in school history. Bethel will now face third-ranked Central College (IA).

Eau Claire-Bethel Box Score

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