

Men's Basketball Starts WIAC Play With Win

Posted: Saturday, December 1, 2007

MENOMONIE, Wis. - The UW-Eau Claire men's basketball team ran its win streak to four in a 72-63 conference opener over UW-Stout tonight.

The Blugolds improve to 4-2 while the Blue Devils drop to .500 at 3-3. It was also their first Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) game of the year.

The game was close early, with the biggest lead of the first 10 minutes being four for Eau Claire at 15:45. Despite four ties in that time span, Eau Claire held the lead most of the way. At 8:54, Stout took a one-point lead, but Eau Claire went on a run.

Ryan Shea (*Fr.-Duluth, MN/East*) hit a three to go back up and start a 9-0 spurt that gave Eau Claire some breathing room. **Geoff Probst** (*So.-Moose Lake, MN*) had five of those points on a three and a pair of free throws. By 4:30, the Blugolds held a 23-15 lead. It would stay above five for the rest of the half and even hit eight again after **Dan Mullen** (*Jr.- St. Paul, MN/Tartan*) knocked down a trey. The teams went to the locker rooms with a 28-22 Eau Claire lead.

Both teams shot exactly 33.3 percent in the half with Eau Claire making 10 baskets and Stout hitting eight. Eau Claire went 5-of-16 on threes and the Blue Devils made 2-of-9.

Stout made the first two baskets of the second half to get within two, but the Blugolds maintained their slim lead and a **Dan Beyer** (*Sr. ?Waukesha/Catholic Memorial*) jumper at 15:20 built it to eight. Stout then went on a 10-0 run, aided by two three-pointers, to take a 41-39 lead at 12:39. Shea and Mullen struck back with Blugold threes to take back a four-point margin at 11:06.

By 8:33, Eau Claire's lead was 54-44, with Beyer and **Zack Ryan** (*Sr.-Lake Elmo, MN/Tartan*) each contributing a three to reach the double-digit lead. Five Stout free throws helped cut that lead in half three minutes later. By 3:34, it was a 10-point lead again and, after Beyer laid one in, it was 12 points at 2:48. Eau Claire kept the sizable lead and secured the win as Stout fouled Eau Claire in the closing minutes.

Both teams improved their shooting in the second half, with Eau Claire going 15-of-26 (57.7 percent) and Stout making 14-of-23 (60.9 percent). For the game, the Blugolds made 25-of-56 for 44.6 percent. The Blue Devils edged them with 46.8 percent off a 22-of-47 performance. Eau Claire took advantage of the long-range shots, putting in a season-most 10-of-28 for 35.7 percent. Mullen made three of the treys. Stout went 6-of-17 for 35.3 percent. Both teams attempted 17 free throws, with Eau Claire making 12 and Stout hitting 13.

Beyer led Eau Claire in points with 20 and in assists with six. Shea added 17 to the scoreboard while Mullen contributed 11. Probst's nine boards were most for Eau Claire as the team evened Stout's 31. The Blugolds did take the turnover battle 12-to-6, though.

With the win, Eau Claire snaps a seven-game losing streak to the Blue Devils. The last win was a 62-58 game in 2003 while the last road win over Stout was the year before that during an 80-74 contest. Eau Claire leads the all-time series 109-62-1.

Eau Claire stays in the conference this upcoming week with a Wednesday game against UW-Platteville. The 7 p.m. home game ends a run of six straight road contests for Eau Claire.

Eau Claire-Stout Box Score

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