Men's Hockey Opens 2008 With Home & Away Contests

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EAU CLAIRE, Wis. - The UW-Eau Claire men's hockey team will open up 2008 with two non-conference games, hosting Lawrence University on Friday, and traveling to Minneapolis, Minn. to take on Augsburg College on Saturday.

The Blugolds head into the weekend with a 6-7-0 overall record and a 3-3-0 record in Northern Collegiate Hockey Association (NCHA) play. Eau Claire will look to get back to .500 at home, as they have gone 2-3 to this point, losing the last two games they played at Hobbs.

Eau Claire is led by senior **Sean Garrity** *(North St. Paul, Minn./North)* who has six goals and nine assists (15 points) this season. He is tied for 15th in the NCHA in average points per game with 1.15. **Andrew Johnson** *(Jr.-Andover, Minn./Anoka)* leads the team with seven goals and also has three assists for 10 points. Johnson's seven goals is tied for 11th most in the NCHA.

In goal, **Tyler Brigl** *(So.-Eagan, Minn.)* has seen all the playing time so far with almost 776 minutes. He has allowed 34 goals and stopped 281 shots, an 89.3 save percentage.

Opponents have outscored the Blugolds 34-32 this season. Eau Claire has a total of 95 penalties compared to 92 and is fourth in the conference with an average of 17.38 minutes of penalties per game. Eau Claire is 13-for-67 on power plays, fifth in the NCHA.

The Blugolds opponent on Friday night, Lawrence University, is 3-6-1 on the season. After picking up their first win of the season in the second game they played, the Vikings went on a three-game losing streak followed by a tie and then another two-game losing streak. Coming into this weekend, Lawrence is on a two-game winning streak after defeating Northland College twice in early December. The Vikings have been outscored by opponents 36-24 so far.

Marc Howe leads the Vikings with 11 points (five goals and six assists) on the season. Nick Jennette also has four goals and five assists, while Josh Peterson leads the team with eight assists. Three different goalies have seen playing time for Lawrence, with Evan Johnson seeing the most at just under 400 minutes. He is averaging 4.39 goals against per game and has a save percentage of 87.6%. Lawrence has only nine power play goals on 67 attempts this season.

The Blugolds have only faced the Vikings twice in program history and have never lost. The last time the teams met was in 2000 when the Blugolds picked up a 7-2 victory. The only other game was in 1978, and Eau Claire won by forfeit.

On Saturday, the Blugolds travel to Augsburg College. The Auggies have not won yet this season, going into the weekend 0-10-2. The have played in three overtime games this season, with two of them ending in ties. Augsburg's non-winning streak dates back to February 24, 2007 when the Auggies took a 9-2 victory over Hamline University. The Auggies have been outscored by opponents 55-21 so far this season.

Augsburg is led by Dan Carlson who has seven points coming on four goals and three assists. Three other Auggies have six points on the season. Andrew Kent has seen the most playing time in goal for Augsburg, playing more than 417 minutes, but two others have also seen playing time, including Adam Hendel who has just over 303 minutes. Augsburg has only 75 penalties on the season compared to 88 for opponents. The Auggies have also scored eight power play goals while opponents have scored 16.

Eau Claire is 4-11 all-time against Augsburg, though the Blugolds have taken wins the last two times the teams met in 2003 and 2004.

The puck is set to drop at Hobbs Ice Center on Friday night at 7 p.m. Eau Claire is also slated to face Augsburg at 7 p.m. in Minnesota on Saturday. The Blugolds will also face Augsburg next Friday at Hobbs.

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