

Men's Hockey Uses Big Third Period To Down Lawrence

Posted: Friday, January 4, 2008

EAU CLAIRE, Wis. - Scoring three times in a 76-second span, the UW-Eau Claire men's hockey team erased a 3-1 third-period deficit en route to a 6-3 non-conference triumph over Lawrence University at the Hobbs Ice Center Friday.

Playing in only his third game of the season, sophomore **Nate Smith** (*Clayton*) scored two goals and added an assist as the Blugolds evened their season record at 7-7. The decision ended Lawrence's two-game win streak and dropped the Vikings to 3-7-1 on the year.

Blugold interim head coach Matt Loen said the Blugolds were "patient" and "stuck to it" when their shots would not draw net in the first two periods. He said the Blugolds gave Lawrence "a chance to be in the game" early in the contest. After a scoreless and whistle-free first 14 minutes of play, the Blugolds hit the scoreboard on Smith's first goal at 14:29. But then Eau Claire was whistled for two penalties in the final five minutes of the period and Lawrence converted on both power play opportunities (Matt Jacobs and Billy Siers) to take a 2-1 lead at the break.

Despite outshooting the Vikings, 17-5, in the second period, the Blugolds could not score and still trailed 2-1 to start the third period.

The Vikings seemed to gain momentum when they grabbed a 3-1 lead on Nick Jennette's goal with 17:10 remaining in the contest. But that's when the Blugolds took over. Outshooting Lawrence, 25-4, in the final 20 minutes, Eau Claire got goals from **Andrew Johnson** (*Jr.-Andover, MN/Anoka*) at 3:40, **Ben Bosworth** (*Jr.-Hudson*) at 4:43 and Smith at 4:56 to build a 4-3 advantage. **Sean Garrity's** (*Sr.-North St. Paul, MN*) goal at 15:33 gave the Blugolds some breathing room and **Sam Bauler** (*Jr.-Apple Valley, MN/Eastview*) put the final nail in the coffin with an empty net goal at 19:28.

For the game, the Blugolds outshot Lawrence, 50-17. **Tyler Brigl** (*So.-Eagan, MN*) made 14 saves in the nets for Eau Claire while Jim Ryan stopped 44 Blugold attempts.

While it appeared the Blugolds might have been a bit rusty from the holiday layoff, Loen said "It's a lot more fun to win ugly than to lose ugly." Besides the play of Smith, he credited the line of Bauler, **Tony Janssen** (*So.-Superior*) and Bosworth for playing well. That line scored the tying goal in the third period.

The game was the first home contest for the Blugolds in exactly one month. They will travel to Minneapolis Saturday for a non-conference matchup against winless Augsburg College before returning home next weekend for games against Augsburg and Hamline.

Friday's contest had some interesting overtones as brothers Bob and Ernie Thorp were assistant coaches on opposite benches. Lawrence head coach Mike Szkodzinski was certainly familiar with Hobbs as he spent one year as a Blugold assistant under Marlin Muylaert in 2001-02.

Eau Claire-Lawrence Box Score

- TP -