

## Men's Basketball Hosts Lions In 2008 starter

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EAU CLAIRE, Wis. - After posting a solid 7-4 record in the 2007 portion of the season and claiming second in the annual Holiday Classic, the UW-Eau Claire men's basketball team kicks off the 2008 games with its third contest of the season versus Finlandia University (MI) on Monday.

The good record owes to a five-game winning streak from Nov. 23 to Dec. 5. The Blugolds have gone 2-2 since then and started off the season 0-2 before the hot streak.

On average, Eau Claire bests its opponents by 3.5 points and there are four games decided by five points or less or in overtime. The team beats foes on the floor, outshooting them 51.6 percent-to-43.3 percent. However, opposing squads have Eau Claire in free throw percentage (75.2 percent-to-64.7 percent) and in three-point shooting (36.5 percent-to-34.6 percent). Eau Claire has the edge in rebounding and turnovers by 0.2 in each.

The main threats for the Blugolds are **Dan Beyer** (*Sr.-Waukesha/Catholic Memorial*) and **Ryan Shea** (*Fr.-Duluth, MN/East*), with Beyer at 18.3 points per game and Shea at 17.5. Beyer's 6.5 boards per game also lead. He has 35 assists, but **Zack Ryan** (*Sr.-Lake Elmo, MN/Tartan*) sits right behind him at 34. Defensively, Shea's 22 total steals and nine total blocks are the most by far.

On Nov. 24, the Blugolds handled the Lions easily in an 81-60 game. However, Dec. 15 was a different story, as the game went down to the wire. The Blugolds prevailed 78-76 due to a clutch Beyer layup and a missed Finlandia free throw. In all games this season, Finlandia is 5-7, but 5-3 after a 0-4 start.

The Lions are outscored by 8.2 points per game and give up an average of 82.3. The team outperforms on the line (73.4 percent-to-65.5 percent), but not on the floor (44.1 percent-to-51.1 percent) or from long range (34.8 percent-to-43.5 percent). Finlandia commits 2.6 less turnovers per game than the other team, but opponents dominate the boards by 7.1 rebounds per matchup.

The Lions spread the ball around, with four players averaging double-digits. Ryan Artley, however, is tops with 21.6 and Tyler Gordon is second at 17.3. Tucker Thoreson and Erik Bresette manage 13.9 and 10.1, respectively. Bresette and Thoreson take in the boards, as well, with numbers of 6.6 rebounds per game and 6.4. Gordon and Artley are the assist kings at 33 and 32 for totals, while Gordon is also a force on defense, making away with 37 steals on the season.

The Blugolds are 9-1 all-time versus the Lions and have not lost to them since 2004.

Monday's game begins at 7 p.m. It is also Youth Night.