

Free throws Achilles Heel In Men's Basketball Loss

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EAU CLAIRE, Wis. - The UW-Eau Claire men's basketball team was dealt a 69-63 loss by Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) opponent UW-Whitewater at W.L. Zorn Arena this evening.

The loss drops the Blugolds to 8-6 overall and 2-3 in the WIAC while Whitewater, which is ranked 15th in the latest D3hoops.com poll, improves to 12-2 overall and 5-1 in the conference. The win is Whitewater's fifth in a row. Oshkosh has been the only WIAC able to defeat the Warhawks so far this season.

The Blugolds were able to stay in the game throughout, never allowing the Warhawks a larger lead than seven, but Whitewater's 27-for-32 shooting from the free throw lined proved to be the advantage tonight. Both Matt Goodwin and Rob Perry had double digit point totals off free throws, with Goodwin going 11-for-12 and Rob Perry going 10-for-10 from the line. The Blugolds were only able to score six points on 11 free throws.

While the Blugolds took the lead twice and tied it up three times in the first period, they were able to stay in-step with the Warhawks the entire way. Eau Claire never trailed by more than seven and closed the gap to four by the end of the first period.

After a 6-0 run towards the beginning of the second period, Eau Claire found itself down by only one. Whitewater was able to push their lead back to five a minute and a half later. The Blugolds would allow the Warhawks to get back up by seven after Matt Goodwin hit four consecutive free throws. Eau Claire spent the rest of the game chipping away at the deficit and closed the gap to two points with 0:26 seconds remaining. Two more Goodwin free throws and a bucket proved to be enough for the Warhawks victory, however.

Leading the way for the Blugolds was **Dan Beyer** (*Sr.-Waukesha, Wis./Catholic Memorial*) with a game-high 26 points. Beyer also had nine boards, tying Whitewater's Kori Vernon for a game-high. **Ryan Shea** (*Fr.-Duluth, Minn./East*) reached double figures for the Blugolds as well with 11 points and had a team-high three steals. He also tied with **Geoff Probst** (*So.-Moose Lake, Minn.*) for second on the team with five rebounds.

The Warhawks had two players with 20+ points tonight. Goodwin, who leads Whitewater averaging 16.5 points per game, led the Warhawks with 23 while Perry contributed 22. Perry is second on the team with this season with 15.0 points per game.

The Blugolds will be back at Zorn Arena on Wednesday when they take on UW-Oshkosh at 7 p.m.

Eau Claire-Whitewater Box Score

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