

Men's Basketball Takes On Eagles At Home

Posted: Thursday, January 24, 2008

EAU CLAIRE, Wis. - The UW-Eau Claire men's basketball team returns to Zorn Arena on Saturday looking to improve its 4-4 Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) record when it plays UW-La Crosse.

The 4-4 mark puts Eau Claire fifth in the conference while the Eagles are sixth at 3-5. The Blugolds are 10-7 overall and La Crosse is 8-9. Since starting the current WIAC stretch, Eau Claire is 2-3.

The Blugolds are 101-66 all-time versus the Eagles and have lost four of the past five, including a 64-49 contest on Dec. 8. It was the worst loss of the season for Eau Claire.

Despite the blowout to La Crosse, Eau Claire has been in some close games, going 4-1 in contests decided by five points or less. For the season, the Blugolds outscore opponents by an average of 1.8 points while scoring 73.0 per game. The team makes just over half of its shots at 50.2 percent compared to 44.0 percent for opponents. From the line, Eau Claire shoots 66.1 percent while opposing squads hit 75.0 percent. The Blugolds sink 33.9 percent from behind the arc.

Eau Claire holds the rebounding margin by 1.5 per game but loses the turnover battle by 0.9 per game. The wins have come in the opening half for the Blugolds, as they outscore opponents by 38 before halftime. It swings around for a 17-point deficit in the second half.

Dan Beyer (Sr.-Waukesha/Catholic Memorial) leads the team and averages 17.6 points per game, which is third in the WIAC. He also grabs a team-leading 6.9 boards per contest, once again third among WIAC competitors. **Ryan Shea** (Fr.-Duluth, MN/East) is behind Beyer in points with 15.5 and last week's WIAC Player of the Week, **Geoff Probst** (So.-Moose Lake, MN), is third at 10.6. Shea has a WIAC-leading 37 steals and a team-leading 13 blocks. **Zack Ryan** (Sr.-Lake Elmo, MN/Tartan) is tops for assists with 48, but Shea is right behind him. As a team, Eau Claire's 14.76 assists per game are second-most in the conference.

Like Eau Claire, La Crosse has experienced some tight games and has been outscored by an average of 1.2 points per contest. They outshoot opponents in all three phases - 43.9 percent from the floor, 36.1 percent on threes and 74.1 percent on free throws. Teams take down nearly four more boards per game, but give it up 1.5 times more.

Tony Mane is the big threat. He posts 16.9 points per game. The only other regular to see double-digits is Chris Fehrenbach with his 11.8. Brandon Brown averages 10.3, but has missed five games.

Down low, Billy Kegler nabs 4.6 boards per game, tops for La Crosse. His nine blocks are most and Brown contributes defensively with 33 steals. Brown's 44 total for assist are also most.

Tip-off will be 5 p.m. on Saturday in Zorn Arena.