

Men's Basketball Prepares For Ranked Conference Opponent

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EAU CLAIRE, Wis. - When No. 11 UW-Stevens Point rolls into Zorn Arena on Wednesday, the UW-Eau Claire men's basketball team hopes it can take its second straight game over a conference foe.

This weekend, the team handled UW-River Falls while **Dan Beyer** (*Sr.-Waukesha/Catholic Memorial*) recorded his career-high in rebounds during a double-double. It moved Eau Claire to .500 overall at 11-11 and also to 5-8 in the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC). The Pointers are on a three-game win streak and are 17-4 overall with a 9-3 conference record. They sit at fourth in the WIAC, one spot above the Blugolds.

The blowout over the Falcons moved the Blugolds to the plus side in the scoring margin. They beat teams by nearly a point a game now. As it has been all year, Eau Claire wins games from the floor, outshooting opponents 50.9 percent-to-44.8 percent. Opponents have them in free throws (71.5 percent-to-65.5 percent) and on threes (36.7 percent-to-33.6 percent). Eau Claire takes down nearly two more rebounds per game but gives it away just over one more time. The team's 15.55 assists per game are second behind only Stevens Point.

Beyer's fantastic season has been leading the team in points (18.5 per game) and rebounds (7.3 per game). He also leads the WIAC in points and is third in boards. His 62.1 shooting percentage is also third.

Ryan Shea (*Fr.-Duluth, MN/East*) and **Geoff Probst** (*So.-Moose Lake, MN*) average 13.9 and 10.9 points per game. Shea has been pivotal in many areas, including assists (3.0 per game), steals (2.2 per game) and blocks (0.7 per game). He leads the Blugolds in each and is second in the conference for steals.

The Pointers have really taken down opponents this year, beating them by an average of nearly 15 per game. Stevens Point averages 77.0 per contest and holds opponents to a WIAC-best 62.1. Eau Claire averages 73.5. They outdo teams from the floor (50.1 percent-to-42.0 percent) and from long range (38.1 percent-to-33.7 percent). They barely come up short on free throws 72.4 percent-to-71.8 percent. Stevens Point edges opponents by 0.6 boards per game.

The Pointers lead the conference in blocked shots (3.33 per game), assists (15.62 per game), turnover margin (+4.62), assist-to-turnover ratio (1.53) and treys made (8.48 per game). Their scoring ranks second, as does their scoring margin, shooting defense (42.0 percent) and steals (7.95 per game).

Steve Hicklin leads the Pointers, who have won eight of the past nine. He has 12.5 points per game while Pete Rortvedt averages 11.8 per game. Bryan Beamish's 4.5 boards are most in that category. Khalifa El-Amin's 3.43 assists per game are third in the WIAC while his 3.13 assist-to-turnover ratio leads.

Eau Claire struggled offensively in the previous meeting between the two, losing 57-44. It was the lowest output of the season and brought the all-time record to 76-80.

The Blugolds hope to even up the season series when they host Stevens Point at 7 p.m. on Wednesday.