

Men's Hockey Wraps Up Regular Season At Home

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EAU CLAIRE, Wis. - As the playoffs loom ahead, the UW-Eau Claire men's hockey team will look at moving up in the Northern Collegiate Hockey Association (NCHA) standings this weekend against UW-Stevens Point.

The Blugolds are currently the sixth seed in the NCHA on a 5-7-1 record and 11 points. If the season ended today, they'd face the UW-River Falls Falcons, ranked ninth in the nation. A win over 5-5-3 Stevens Point would move Eau Claire to 13 points on a 6-7-1 NCHA record, which would tie Stevens Point's 13. However, Eau Claire would have more NCHA wins and take the tiebreaker. That would give them the fifth seed and they'd face the fourth seed.

It's also possible for Eau Claire to drop to the seventh seed if the team loses and St. Scholastica (MN) wins over UW-Superior. The seeds that Eau Claire could possibly play still have to be figured out as well, so everyone has to wait until the dusts settles to see what the playoff picture will be.

Eau Claire has been in some tight games recently, going to overtime against Superior and St. Scholastica. The Superior game was a loss and the other was a tie, making the overall record 9-14-1. The Blugolds score an average of 2.5 goals per game, second-worst in the NCHA. Opponents put in 2.8, which puts the Blugold defense at fifth in the NCHA. Strangely enough, both Eau Claire and its opponents have the exact same power-play conversion percentage at 17.2 percent (22-for-128). That ranks fifth for Eau Claire's power-play percentage and sixth for its power-play kills.

On the individual level, **Sean Garrity** (*Sr.-North St. Paul, MN/North*) leads the team with 23 points. His 13 assists are also tops. **Andrew Johnson** (*Jr.-Andover, MN/Anoka*) and **Greg Petersen** (*Jr.-Maple Grove, MN/Totino-Grace*) are next with 16 points. The 11 goals from Johnson edge out Garrity's 10 for most.

Between the pipes, **Tyler Brigl** (*So.-Eagan, MN*) has made 513 saves for a .900 save percentage. The 513 total is second in the conference. He has allowed 2.52 goals in the 23 games he has played, 22 of which he started. His record is 9-13-1.

The Pointers have seen more close games, with the last game decided by three or more goals being a Jan. 12 6-2 win. Since then they have gone 3-1-3 and are coming off a 2-2 tie versus Superior. Their overall record is 14-6-4. Stevens Point averages 3.2 goals per game and allows exactly 2.0. That puts the offense at fourth and the defense at third. On the advantage, Stevens Point converts 18.1 percent of the time while it kills power-plays at an 84.2 percent clip. This puts the offensive attack at fourth in the NCHA and the defense at third during power-plays.

Three Pointers have more than 20 points. They include Josh Calleja (24), Pat Lee (23) and Brett Beckfeld (21). Lee's 15 goals are tops while Calleja's 16 helpers lead. Lee has five game-winning goals, most among NCHA skaters.

Tom Speer has been the go-to goalie, starting and playing 20 games. He is 12-3-4 and holds a .945 save percentage. He allows an average of 1.45 goals per game, essentially third in the NCHA.

This is the third meeting between the teams this year, with the Pointers winning 5-0 on Dec. 11 and 2-1 on Jan. 18. The shutout was not a NCHA game. The all-time series is now 25-57-5.

Action starts at 7 p.m. in Hobbs Ice Center this Saturday.