

# Men's Basketball Set For Playoffs

*Posted: Sunday, February 24, 2008*

EAU CLAIRE, Wis. - The seventh-seeded UW-Eau Claire men's basketball team prepares for its conference quarterfinal matchup against second-seeded UW-Platteville, scheduled for 7 p.m. in Platteville on Monday.

The Blugolds ended the season at 5-11 in the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) and 11-14 overall. The 23rd-ranked Pioneers are 19-6 overall on the year and 12-4 in conference games. They are on a two-game winning streak coming into the postseason while the Blugolds are on a three-game losing skid.

Eau Claire faced off against Platteville just this past week and fell 75-58, mainly due to a 19-2 Pioneer run at the end of the first half. On Dec. 5, however, the Blugolds prevailed with a 77-69 win in overtime as four players hit double-figures in points.

The team averages 72.3 points per game while allowing 73.6. All season long they shot better from the floor, outdoing opponents 50.1 percent-to-46.1 percent. Opponents have them in free throws (71.5 percent-to-65.8 percent) and from long range (38.4 percent-to-32.1 percent). The Blugolds pull down 1.6 more boards per game but give the ball away 1.4 more times. Eau Claire's 15.00 assists per game are second in the conference standings.

**Dan Beyer** (*Sr.-Waukesha/Catholic Memorial*) is the leading scorer in the WIAC at 19.0 points per game. The Blugolds have not had a scoring title-holder in at least nine seasons. His 7.5 boards per game are Eau Claire's best and rank third in the conference. He shot 61.6 percent from the floor during the season, also third among WIAC shooters.

**Ryan Shea** (*Fr.-Duluth, MN/East*) and **Geoff Probst** (*So.-Moose Lake, MN*) contributed on both ends of the court. Shea averaged 13.3 points while Probst put up 10.6. Shea's 52 steals (2.1 per game) and his 17 blocks (0.7 per game) were tops for the Blugolds. The steals mark is second in the conference. He also fed the ball with a team-leading 77 assists (3.1 per game).

The Pioneers outscored teams by an impressive 10.4 points. They lit up the scoreboard with an average of 74.5 points per game while opponents totaled 64.1. That makes for the second-best defense in the conference. Not surprisingly, they outshot opponents from the floor (a WIAC-best 51.5 percent-to-45.1 percent), from the line (75.5 percent-to-67.3 percent) and from three-point range (43.7 percent-to- 32.0 percent). The Pioneers shoot the best in the conference on threes and hold opponents to the worst percentage. Platteville's 75.5 percent on free throws is good for second among WIAC teams.

Like Eau Claire, they win the rebounding battle by 6.4 but lose the turnover margin by 1.2. They pull down a WIAC-leading 24.9 boards per game on defense and the 6.4 is the second-best mark in the conference.

Four Pioneers score in double-figures, with Curt Hanson's 15.4 barely leading the way. Jeff Skemp averages 15.0 and Mike Shaw tallies 10.5. Charlie Lohoff is the final member of the group with 10.2. Skemp pulls down the boards with a team-best 8.0 per game, which ranks second among WIAC competitors. His 6.16 boards per game on defense are the most in the WIAC. Skemp also makes 65.1 percent of his shots, which leads the conference. Hanson shoots out the lights from long range, sinking half his threes and ranking second in the WIAC.

Skemp also easily leads his team in blocks with 33 (1.3 per game), second in the conference. Hanson also comes up big on the defensive end, getting away with 38 steals (1.5 per game). Lohoff finds the open man with 83 assists (3.3 per game), tying for third in the conference.

The season split makes the all-time record 61-44. Eau Claire has never faced the Pioneers in the playoffs. The Blugolds have not gotten past the first round since 2003, when they beat UW-River Falls before losing in the semifinals.

This year's postseason begins at 7 p.m. in Platteville on Monday.