

## Blugold Defense Shines In Win Over La Crosse

*Posted: Saturday, October 16, 2004*

LA CROSSE - The 15th-ranked UW-Eau Claire football team forced four turnovers in the second half leading to all 20 Blugold points in defeating 3rd-ranked UW-La Crosse 20-10 here today at Veterans Memorial Stadium.

The win was the second consecutive win over the Eagles for Eau Claire and snapped La Crosse's 10-game home winning streak. The Blugolds defeated La Crosse last year 24-21 while the Eagles were ranked third in the nation in Division III football.

The Blugold win was a tale of two halves. La Crosse dominated the first half out gaining Eau Claire 205-44. The Eagles took the opening kickoff and used up over half the first quarter on the possession. La Crosse concluded the 17-play drive with a 1-yard scoring plunge from Andrew Lehman.

Eau Claire held the Eagles on their next three possessions including **Brent Tieri's** (*Jr.-Buffalo, MN/Rockford*) first interception of the year. On the final drive of the first half La Crosse chewed up seven minutes on the clock and connected on a 24-yard field goal with five seconds remaining in the half to send the game to halftime with Eau Claire trailing 10-0.

The Blugolds forced their second turnover of the game on La Crosse's opening possession of the second half. **Derek Sikora** (*Jr.-Neillsville*) recovered a Tieri-forced fumble at midfield.

**Nels Fredrickson** (*Sr.-Burnsville, MN*) completed passes to **Tony Hull** (*Fr.-Blaine, MN/Spring Lake Park*) and **Don Kahl** (*Sr.-Brookfield/East*) down to the Eagle 14-yard line. **Joe Gast** (*Jr.-Waconia, MN*) ran down to the four-yard line before finishing off the drive with a 4-yard touchdown score.

After two scoreless possessions for each team the Eau Claire defense forced another Eagle turnover when Sikora recovered another fumble setting up the Blugold offense on La Crosse's 31-yard line. Gast ran six times on the ensuing drive giving Eau Claire their first lead with a 1-yard scoring run for his conference-best tenth touchdown.

On the Eagles next possession the Blugolds forced Eagles quarterback Steve Tennes into his second interception of the game. **Brent Weber** (*So.-Rice Lake*) gave the offense good field possession at the La Crosse 30-yard line with his first pick of the year.

Eau Claire drove down inside the Eagle 10-yard line and finished off the drive when Fredrickson found **Mike Hennessey** (*Jr.-Somerset*) from four yards out on third-and-goal to go up 20-10.

La Crosse took their next possession down to the Eau Claire 3-yard line but the Blugold defense stepped up again. Sikora sacked Tennes on third-and-goal forcing the Eagles to attempt a field goal. The 32-yard attempt was wide right and Eau Claire kept the game at 20-10. The Blugold defense would force their fifth turnover on the next Eagle possession on **Zach Paul's** (*So.-Edgar*) second interception of the year.

Gast led the Blugold attack with 96 yards rushing narrowly missing his third consecutive 100-yard day. Fredrickson completed 8 of 16 passes for 63 yards while Kahl led in catches with three for 21 yards and Hull in yards with 33 on two catches.

Sikora had a strong performance defensively leading Eau Claire with 13 tackles with two fumble recoveries, two tackles for loss and a sack. Tieri added 10 tackles, a forced fumble, an interception, a tackle for loss and a pass defended.

The win improves the Blugolds to 3-1 in conference and 5-1 overall. Eau Claire is tied with UW-Whitewater atop the standings in the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

Eau Claire will be in action next weekend against non-conference opponent Gustavus Adolphus. The game is scheduled to begin at 1 p.m. in St. Peter, Minn.

Eau Claire-La Crosse Box Score

