

Softall Splits In Opening Day Of WIAC Tourney

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STEVENS POINT, Wis. - The third-seeded UW-Eau Claire softball team took its first game in the conference tournament but then lost in a rematch of last year's championship today.

The win for the 25th-ranked Blugolds came 11-6 over sixth-seeded UW-La Crosse in six innings. That set up a contest with second-seeded UW-Oshkosh, the team Eau Claire has beaten in the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) Tourney Championship each of the past two years. No. 14 Oshkosh got some measure of revenge with a 3-1 win.

In the first game, La Crosse kept it close until the sixth when Eau Claire exploded for six runs. The Blugolds started the game off with a lead when they scored three in the first. **Jill Janke** (Sr.-Black River Falls, Wis.) doubled in one of the runs while the other two came via a two-out error by the right fielder.

The Eagles put up single tallies in each of the next three frames to get their runs. The bottom of the second saw Eau Claire score two runs and take a 5-1 lead. **Tamara Zeman** (So.-Lodi, Wis.) notched both RBIs with a double to left.

Eau Claire went into the bottom of the sixth with a 5-3 lead, but the offense scored six runs off three hits, three walks and an error. A **Casey Leisgang** (Sr.-Seymour, Wis.) sac fly pushed across one run and two runs came during an error. Janke also had an RBI single. **Jenny Ross** (Fr.-Mendota Heights, Minn./Henry Sibley) had a double to bring in two and bring about the mercy-rule ending.

Ross also got the complete-game win. The three runs came off nine hits and a walk. She had six strikeouts. Janke had a 3-for-4 day with two RBIs and a run. Nine different Blugolds crossed the plate in the game.

Ross also pitched the entire second game and only allowed one hit with four walks and eight K's. Just one of the runs was on her as the other two came unearned.

The inning that did Eau Claire in was the fourth. Ross allowed a leadoff walk and then everyone was safe on a fielder's choice. A one-out single brought in one runner and another was able to go from first to home due to an error by the first baseman and the throw. With two outs, the third baseman committed an error to let the third run come across.

The Blugolds' best chance to score came in the sixth. The team did notch a single tally but also left two on. **Katie Stalker** (So.-Madison, Wis./La Follette) and Leisgang started the frame with consecutive singles. A one-out Janke single brought in Stalker. A fielder's choice put runners on the corners and a flyout to left stranded them.

Eau Claire could not come back in the last inning as it lost its first game of the tourney. It outhit Oshkosh 7-to-1 but three errors cost the squad. Both teams left five on base. Stalker was the only Blugold with multiple hits, going 2 for 3 and scoring the run.

The double-elimination tournament continues tomorrow with a game against fourth-seeded UW-Stevens Point, a team Eau Claire swept a week ago.

Eau Claire-La Crosse Box Score Eau Claire-Oshkosh Box Score

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