Softball Advances To National Championship With Shutout Win

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EAU CLAIRE, Wis. - With a 6-0 blanking, the sixth-seeded UW-Eau Claire softball team defeated second-seeded UW-Oshkosh to win the regional and move on to the NCAA Division III Championship in Salem, Va.

This the second straight year No. 25 Eau Claire has advanced to the NCAA DIII Championship and the second year it has defeated 14th-ranked Oshkosh in the regional to do so. Eau Claire won last year with a 6-3 game in eight innings and a7-3 contest. The two squads also battled each other in the conference championship two of the past three years with the Blugolds winning both times.

The scoring in today's game started in the bottom of the first when **Casey Leisgang** *(Sr.-Seymour, Wis.)* led off with a homer. With the leadoff blast, Leisgang tied the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC) career home run record with 38 round-trippers. She leads the WIAC in career runs (182) and walks (88). Leisgang also has the school record for single-season batting average with .478. It was the 11th blast of the year, which ties her own single-season program mark from two years ago.

In the third the Blugolds notched another tally when **Jill Janke** *(Sr.-Black River Falls, Wis.)* scored on a wild pitch with two outs. Janke had singled to lead off and moved up on a sacrifice and a groundout.

Janke also got the Blugolds going in the fifth when they scored a pair. She singled to lead off again and got to third due to a passed ball and then a wild pitch. **Michelle Butkus** *(Sr.-Medford, Wis.)* followed with a walk and got to second on a groundout. **Bekki Kidnie** *(So.-St. Paul, Minn./Johnson)* singled in both runners with two out.

The sixth also saw a duo of Blugold runs. **Katie Stalker** *(So.-Madison, Wis./La Follette)* led off and got to second on a two-base error by the second baseman. Leisgang would knock her in with a single while Janke in turn hit Leisgang in with a single.

The 6-0 score would stand as **Jenny Ross** *(Fr.-Mendota Heights, Minn./Henry Sibley)* got her 23rd win, third-most in a single season for a Blugold. She went all seven and allowed five hits with no walks and five strikeouts. Titan starter Amy Sullivan took the loss as she gave up four runs in five innings. The Blugolds had seven hits and three walks off her while striking out six times. Overall, the Blugolds outhit the Titans 10-to-5.

Janke had a perfect 4-for-4 day at the plate with an RBI and two runs. Leisgang also had multiple hits with a 2-for-2 game. She scored twice and knocked in two runners. Amie Heinzelman was the only Titan with two hits as she went 2-for-3.

Seven members of the All-Tournament Team were in the game today, including Kidnie, Janke, Leisgang and Ross for Eau Claire. Oshkosh's representatives included Kayla Kodet, Heinzelman and Ronessa Stampfli.

The game was the fifth meeting between these two schools on the year. The two had split the previous four games. With the rubber match win, Eau Claire head coach Leslie Huntington moved to 201 career victories, which is fifth all-time in the WIAC.

The National Championship starts on Friday in Salem, Va.

Eau Claire-Oshkosh Box Score

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