

Late Runs Boost Softball Past Muskingum

Posted: Saturday, May 17, 2008

SALEM, Va. - Down 1-0 after the first inning, the UW-Eau Claire softball team fought its way back into the game and came out on the winning end, taking a 5-1 victory over Muskingum College (Ohio) on the second day of the 2008 NCAA Division III Championship at the James I. Moyer Sports Complex.

Eau Claire head coach Leslie Huntington did have some concerns early in the game but was a little happier with her team's performance later.

"The way the first inning started out I was a little bit concerned that we might be in a little bit of trouble. They (Muskingum) came out swinging the bat aggressively," Huntington said. "We're fortunate to have come out of that. We did a good job late in the game with our patience at the plate, while resulted in a few more runs for us."

The Blugolds fought their way back into the game in the fifth, scoring two runs with only one out. With **Tamara Zeman** (So.-Lodi, Wis.) and **Tessa Pecha** (Sr.-Eau Claire, Wis./North) on second a third Muskingum's Heather Martin came in to pitch for Amy Mattin. Martin gave up a single to right field, facing her first batter, **Michelle Butkus** (Sr.-Medford, Wis.), allowing the base runners to score to take a 2-1 lead. Butkus was thrown out at second on the play and **Jenny Ross** (Fr.-Mendota Heights, Minn./Henry Sibley) popped one to third base for the third out, but the damage was done.

Muskingum was unable to get anything going the rest of the way and helped the Blugolds push their lead to four in the final inning. Again with one out, Zeman placed a bunt perfectly between the pitcher and third baseman and was able to get on base. **Jill Janke** (Sr.-Black River Falls, Wis.) followed with a single to left. A pitching change ensued but did the Muskies no good. Mattin came back in and walked Butkus right away to load the bases. Ross then struck out and there were two away in the inning. Three runs would score, however, as Mattin hit **Jessie Flood** (So.-Madison, Wis./La Follette) with a pitch, and walked both **Bekki Kidnie** (So.-St. Paul, Minn./Johnson) and **Betsy Kettinger** (Jr.-Bloomington, Minn./Jefferson) before she struck out **Katie Stalker** (So.-Madison, Wis./La Follette). In the bottom of the seventh Muskingum started off with a single but was unable to capitalize, allowing the Blugolds to take home the 5-1 victory.

Butkus led the game with two hits on two at-bats and also with two RBIs. She was one of four Blugolds to score a run. Zeman had two runs to lead the game. Janke and **Kristi Doucette** (Jr.-Green Bay, Wis./Ashwaubenon) each had two hits on the day as well, going 2-for-4 and 2-for-3, respectively. Muskingum's Randi Dance led her team going 2-for-3, while Kelli Mann scored the Muskies' lone run.

Ross (25-2) pitched the complete game for Eau Claire, allowing four hits and one earned run, while striking out four batters. Mattin (29-7) was credited with the loss after pitching five innings. She struck out five batters but allowed five hits and three earned runs. Martin pitched two innings for Muskingum, allowing four hits and two earned runs while striking out two.

Eau Claire will now prepare to face top-seeded Louisiana College (44-5). The game is set to take place Sunday at 5 p.m. (EDT).

Eau Claire-Muskingum Box Score

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