

Defense Propels Football To Victory In Season Opener

Posted: Saturday, September 6, 2008

MCKENZIE, Tenn. - The UW-Eau Claire football team kicked off its 2008 season with an 11-6 victory over Bethel College (Tenn.) at Wildcat Stadium tonight.

The defense came up big to get the Blugolds on the board early. On Bethel's first two drives in the first quarter, the Blugolds sacked the Wildcats' quarterback Dallas Dixon in the end zone for two safeties to put the Blugolds up 4-0.

Neither team could get anything going the rest of the first half. Bethel did attempt a 38 yard field goal in the final seconds of the first half, but the Blugolds' **Dan Mahaffey** (*So.-Madison, Wis./Memorial*) got a hand on the ball to deflect it. The Blugolds took their 4-0 lead into halftime.

Near the end of the third quarter, Eau Claire scored a touchdown to go up 11-0. **David Goodman** (*Fr.-Neenah, Wis.*) scored the first touchdown of the season for the team, also the first of his career, on a nine-yard pass from **Kyle Paulson** (*Jr.-Amery, Wis.*).

On the next drive, Bethel tried to fight its way back into the game, with Justin Woodard scoring a touchdown on a nine yard run. The Wildcats then attempted a two-point conversion but were stuffed by the Blugold defense.

For the game, the Blugolds ended with 239 total yards, 123 coming on rushes and 116 on passes. The Wildcats had 250 total yards with 211 rushing and 39 passing yards. **Cory Sartorelli** (*Jr.-Appleton, Wis./North*) led the Blugolds with 101 yards on 24 attempts (3.8 yards per carry). Paulson led the Blugolds in passing going 13-for-26 for 116 yards and a touchdown, while Goodman led the team with 44 receiving yards on four receptions, one being a touchdown.

On the defensive side of the ball, **Ryan Leis** (*Jr.-Alma Center, Wis./Lincoln*) led the Blugolds with seven tackles (four solos, three assists). **Chris Below** (*Sr.-Antigo, Wis./Bemidji State*) and **Dave Wicklund** (*Sr.-Kewaskum, Wis./Bemidji St.*) both ended the game with six tackles. Below also had one solo sack, while Leis and **Brad Nierenhausen** (*Jr.-Cottage Grove, Minn./Park*) split a sack. Both sacks came on the Blugolds' safeties. Nierenhausen also picked up one fumble in the game.

Eau Claire-Bethel Box Score

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