

# Football Comes Up Short In Conference Opener

*Posted: Saturday, September 13, 2008*

EAU CLAIRE, Wis. - The UW-Eau Claire football team opened up its 2008 Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference slate today, falling short to defending national champion UW-Whitewater 16-14 at Carson Park.

While the Blugolds fell behind early in the game, they turned it up a notch in the second half to give the Warhawks a run for their money. Whitewater put points on the board with a field goal in each of the first two quarters, making the halftime score 6-0.

The Blugolds came out strong in the third quarter, picking off a Whitewater pass on the second play of the quarter. **Craig Polifka** (Sr.-Kewaunee, Wis.) intercepted the ball at the Whitewater 35 and ran it back to the Warhawks' five. Three plays later **Cory Sartorelli** (Jr.-Appleton, Wis./North) dove into the end zone to give the Blugolds' their first lead of the contest.

Whitewater then took the lead back three drives later. The Blugolds were mounting another scoring drive after recovering a fumble on the Warhawks' 42 yard line. They drove down to the five but turned over the ball with fumble. Whitewater then took the ball 95 yards to take the lead back at 13-7.

On Whitewater's first drive of the fourth, the Warhawks scored again to make it 16-7. Eau Claire then drove 74 yards on the following possession to score its second touchdown of the contest. After Whitewater punted the ball on its next possession, the Blugolds had an opportunity for a comeback, as they started on their own 43. However, a penalty pushed them back and that followed with an interception to put the game in the bag for Whitewater.

The Warhawks put up 361 total yards of offense while the Blugolds had 257. Whitewater ran for 227 yards and passed for 135. The Warhawks' Levell Coppage carried the ball 42 times for 220 yards. Jeff Donovan had 134 yards on 17-for-28 passing, while Aaron Rusch led the team in receiving with eight catches for 53 yards.

The Blugolds accumulated 112 rushing yards and 135 passing yards. Sartorelli led the team with 113 yards on 24 carries while **Spencer Kehoe** (Jr.-Clear Lake, Wis./Winona State) led the Blugolds in receiving with 47 yards on three catches. **Tyler Moy** (Sr.-Mondovi, Wis.) and **Paul Mirr** (Sr.-Eau Claire, Wis./Regis) also pulled down three catches apiece for the Blugolds, totaling 31 and 28 yards, respectively. **Kyle Paulson** (Jr.-Amery, Wis.) finished with 131 yards on 14-for-30 passing, one touchdown pass and an interception.

On the defensive side of the ball, **Dave Wicklund** (Sr.-Kewaskum, Wis./Bemidji St.) had a very good day for Eau Claire with 15 solo tackles and an assist. **Andy Smisek** (Sr.-Northfield, Minn.) had a sack for Eau Claire, while seven other Blugolds also picked up tackles for losses. Jace Rindahl led the Warhawks with eight tackles (seven solos, one assist) and Justin Ankley had a sack.

The Blugolds fall to 1-1 on the season and 0-1 in the WIAC, while Whitewater improved to 1-0 in the WIAC and 2-0 overall.

Up next, Hope College (Mich.) comes to Carson Park for a showdown with the Blugolds. Kickoff is set for 11 a.m. Saturday.

Eau Claire-Whitewater Box Score

Game Slideshow

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