

Women's Basketball Wins Home Opener

Posted: Tuesday, November 25, 2008

EAU CLAIRE, Wis. - The 18th ranked UW-Eau Claire women's basketball team began its three-game home stand this evening against 16th ranked St. Norbert College with a 66-57 win at Zorn Arena.

With the win, the Blugolds improve to 3-0 on the season, while the Green Knights fall to 2-1.

The game was fast paced from the get-go, with both teams featuring heavy ball pressure and aggressive play. The Blugolds jumped out to an early 4-0 lead, with a bucket in the paint by **Hannah Mesick** (So.-Chatfield, Minn.) and a steal and score by **Heidi Arciszewski** (Sr.-Thorp, Wis.). Dropping into a two-three zone, Eau Claire was able to contain the Green Knight offense, forcing them to settle for contested outside shots.

"We saw when [St. Norbert] played Stout they got to the free throw line over 30 times," said Blugold Head Coach **Tonja Englund**. "Because they are so quick off the dribble we wanted to make them take perimeter shots."

Eau Claire would later find itself in a scoring drought for five minutes in the first half, allowing the Green Knights to tie the game at 10. The Blugolds eventually found its rhythm, pushing the ball up the court and producing transition layups, regaining the lead at 26-18 with 4:39 to go in the half.

The Green Knights would go on a scoring rally in the waning minutes of the half, reducing the Blugold lead to 26-24. However, with eight seconds left Eau Claire would take momentum with it into the locker room at halftime on a **Missy Fremstad** (Sr.-Osseo, Wis./Osseo-Fairchild) three for a 29-24 lead at intermission.

It didn't take long for Eau Claire to further extend its lead, thanks in large part to the scrappy play of **Heather Witt** (Sr.-Kendall, Wis./Royall). After two Green Knight layups, Witt made four steals in a matter of five minutes, helping the Blugolds take a 10 point lead, 45-35.

"Coach always talks about ?D? creating ?O? and since we started off slow on offense, we knew we needed to step it up on defense to create points," said Witt.

Eau Claire led by as many as 13 points in the second half, and was able to fight off several St. Norbert rallies to hang on to the victory.

Witt led the Blugolds with 15 points to go along with a game-high five steals and three assists. Arciszewski also recorded 15 points and four rebounds, and Mesick scored 13 despite getting into foul trouble early.

Next up for the Blugolds is the annual Thanksgiving Showcase at Zorn Arena. Eau Claire will take on St. Olaf (Minn.) on Friday evening at 8 p.m. The consolation game of the tournament will take place on Saturday at 6 p.m. with the championship immediately following at 8 p.m.

Eau Claire-St. Norbert Box Score

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