

## Softball Opens Season With Split

Posted: Saturday, March 14, 2009

TUCSON, Ariz. - The UW-Eau Claire softball team kicked off the season today at the 2009 Tucson Invitational Games with a win and a loss.

Eau Claire came up short in its season opener 2-1 against the University of La Verne (Calif.) but bounced back with a 7-2 victory over Central College (Iowa). The Blugolds are now 1-1 on the season. La Verne went to 13-8 overall with the win while Central dropped to 2-1 this season.

While the Blugolds came out swinging in game one, it took until the seventh inning for the Blugolds to score their run. In the first inning the Blugolds jumped out to load the bases with only one out. But with a strikeout and a fly out, all three runners were left stranded on base. Eau Claire had problems getting runners home the rest of the game and left a total of 10 runners on bases in the game.

La Verne scored its two runs in the second inning, both unearned. The Blugolds tried to fight their way back into the game and scored an unearned run in the seventh inning with two outs. Another Blugold strikeout left the tying runner stranded on second and handed La Verne its 13th win of the year.

Freshman **Aleisha Harper** (*Mondovi, Wis./Eau Claire North*) scored the Blugolds' only run in the game, the first of her collegiate career, while **Katie Stalker** (*Jr.-Madison, Wis./La Follette*) led the team with two hits. **Bri Sturm** (*Sr.-Zumbrota, Minn./Zumbrota-Mazeppa*) led the Blugolds on the mound and allowed four hits while striking out three in six innings after facing 24 batters.

Eau Claire was able to carry its momentum from the seventh inning in the first game to the second game. The team scored runs in each of the first four innings of game two on its way to defeating Central 7-2.

In the bottom of the first inning, **Kristi Doucette** (*Sr.-Green Bay, Wis./Ashwaubenon*) struck first after getting on base with a double to left center. **Jess Freagon** (*Fr.-Chippewa Falls, Wis./McDonell*) drove in the run with a double of her own to left center.

Central answered back in the top of the second but **Sara Baumgartner** (*So.-Arcadia, Wis.*) put the Blugolds back in the lead in the bottom of the inning with a home run to center field, the first of her collegiate career.

The Blugolds turned it up a notch in the third and fourth innings, scoring two and three runs, respectively. Harper and **Meghan O'Hearn** (*So.-Woodbury, Minn.*) picked up runs in the third, while Stalker, Harper and **Emily Pierce** (*So.-Onalaska, Wis./Holmen*) recorded runs in the fourth. Central added a run in the top of the seventh but was unable to catch the Blugolds.

Harper led the Blugolds with two runs and tied Doucette and Freagon with two hits. Freagon led the team with two RBIs while Harper, Zeman, Baumgartner and **Bekki Kidnie** (*Jr.-St. Paul, Minn./Johnson*) each had one. Five Blugolds also picked up extra-base hits in the game.

**Jenny Ross** (*So.-Mendota Heights, Minn./Henry Sibley*) recorded the win in the circle for the Blugolds after pitching five innings. Facing 17 batters, she struck out five while allowing three hits and one earned run. **Ashley Meinen** (*Fr.-Chippewa Falls, Wis./McDonell*) also pitched for the Blugolds and finished with two innings, facing seven batters. She allowed one run and a hit while walking two.

Sunday the Blugolds will play two more games. They are scheduled to face Edgewood College at 1 p.m. and Marian University at 3:30 p.m.

Eau Claire-La Verne Box Score

Eau Claire-Central Box Score

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