

Softball Stumbles In Final Spring Break Games

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TUCSON, Ariz. - After winning nine straight games on its spring break trip, the UW-Eau Claire softball team fell twice today at the Tucson Invitational Games to wrap up the 12-game trip.

In the first game of the day, the Blugolds fell 6-4 to Central College (Iowa), a team they beat 7-2 on their first day of competition last Saturday. Eau Claire then came up short 11-10 to Denison University (Ohio), a team they beat 12-5 yesterday. The Blugolds are now 9-3 on the season.

Against Central, the Blugolds had control of the game until the final two innings. After a scoreless first inning from both teams, Eau Claire posted the first run when **Bekki Kidnie** (Jr.-St. Paul, Minn./Johnson) led off the inning with her first home run of the season. Eau Claire held Central scoreless through the next three innings, while scoring three runs of its own in the fourth and fifth innings. **Kristi Doucette** (Sr.-Green Bay, Wis./Ashwaubenon) singled in **Tamara Zeman** (Jr.-Lodi, Wis.) with one out in the fourth, giving the Blugolds a 2-0 lead. In the fifth, **Meghan O'Hearn** (So.-Woodbury, Minn.) scored on a **Aleisha Harper** (Mondovi, Wis./Eau Claire North) triple to right field, and Harper would later score on an error by the pitcher.

With a 4-0 lead heading into the bottom of the sixth inning, Eau Claire lost grip on its lead. Central rallied with six runs on six hits to shift momentum and take control with a 6-4 lead heading into the final frame. The Blugolds would threaten in the top of the seventh, loading the bases with one out. However, a fly out to left and a line out to center dashed Eau Claire's hope for a last-minute comeback.

Jenny Ross (So.-Mendota Heights, Minn./Henry Sibley) was tagged with her first loss of the year, falling to 4-1 on the season. Ross allowed 10 hits and six earned runs while striking out five. O'Hearn paced the offense, going 2-for-3 with a run scored, while Harper and Kidnie each went 2-for-4.

In the final game of spring break, the Blugolds found themselves with a 3-0 deficit after the first inning. Both teams were unable to score until Eau Claire evened the score at 3-3 in the bottom of the third inning. **Jess Freagon** (Fr.-Chippewa Falls, Wis./McDonell) scored on an **Ainsley Klar** (Jr.-La Crosse, Wis./Aquinas) single, and three batters later Kidnie drove in Klar and **Katie Stalker** (Jr.-Madison, Wis./LaFollette).

Each team exchanged blows in the final three innings, and Eau Claire found itself down 11-7 heading into the bottom of the seventh. After reaching base on an error to begin the inning, **Sara Baumgartner** (So.-Arcadia, Wis.) scored two batter later on a Harper single to left. With two runners on, Zeman scored on a Klar single to cut Denison's lead to two. With two outs and two runners on, O'Hearn kept the Blugolds' hopes alive with a run-scoring single to left, scoring Harper from third. After Kidnie was hit by a pitch to load the bases, **Nikki Brommelkamp** (Fr.-Zumbrota, Minn./Zumbrota-Mazeppa) flew out to right field to end the game.

Ashley Meinen (Fr.-Chippewa Falls, Wis./McDonell) took the loss in a game in which four Eau Claire pitchers saw time in the circle. Meinen pitched four innings, giving up six runs (three unearned). Eau Claire struggled in the field, surrendering a season-high six errors. Four Blugolds had multiple hits in the contest, with Kidnie going 2-for-3 with four RBI's and Klar going 2-for-4 with 2 RBI's to lead the way.

Next up the Blugolds will compete at the Washington University (Mo.) Tournament next Saturday and Sunday. They will play four games over the weekend.

Eau Claire-Central Box Score

Eau Claire-Denison Box Score

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