

Jefferson Leads Blugolds To Win In Opener

Posted: Friday, November 19, 2004

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa - **Will Jefferson** (Sr. -Wausau/East) scored a career-high 23 points on 9-of-12 from the floor in leading the UW-Eau Claire men's basketball team to a 77-72 win over Coe College (IA) here tonight in the Blugold's season opener at the Eby Fieldhouse.

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Eau Claire improves to 1-0 on the season while Coe falls to 0-1 on the year. Jefferson's previous career high was 20 points, set last season against UW-Platteville.

The Blugolds never trailed by more than two points in the game, though the game was tied nine times in the first half. Eau Claire jumped out to leads of 6-0 and 10-4, with Jefferson scoring four of the Blugolds' first six points. The Kohawks battled back to tie the game at 14 and neither team would lead by more than three points the remainder of the first half. Eau Claire and Coe went into the break at halftime in a 31-31 tie.

Dan Archambault (Sr.-Oshkosh/West) started a 10-2 Blugold run just 16 seconds into the second half, drilling a shot from downtown to regain the Eau Claire lead. Jefferson scored the Blugolds next seven points to give the Blugolds a 41-33 lead.

Again the Kowahwks battled back, pulling within two with 13:22 remaining in the game. The Blugolds used another decisive run, this one a 13-2 run over the next four minutes, to take a lead of 10 at 53-43.

Eau Claire went up by as much as 13 with less than five minutes remaining in the game and hit 9-of-10 from the free-throw line down the stretch to clinch the season-opening victory.

Archambault finished second on the Blugolds with 15 points while leading the team with five assists. He converted on all six of his free-throw attempts. **Casey Drake** (Sr.-Rhinelander) added 14 points and four assists in the victory.

Eau Claire shot 30-of-54 (55.6 percent) for the game, including 66.7 percent in the second half. The Blugolds were 13-of-15 (86.7 percent) from the free-throw line.

Nick Wilkins led the Kohawks with 14 points while Kyle Kuenstling added 13 and Seth Hamilton totaled 12. Kuenstling also grabbed a game-best seven rebounds.

The Blugolds will be back in action tomorrow night when they battle Buena Vista (IA) at 7:00 p.m. in Storm Lake, Iowa.

Eau Claire-Coe Box Score

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