

Softball Stays Alive With Split

Posted: Thursday, May 7, 2009

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.- After dropping its first game of the 2009 NCAA Softball Regional tournament to Coe College (Iowa) 4-1, the UW-Eau Claire softball team avoided elimination by beating WIAC rival UW-Whitewater 5-1.

With the split, the Blugolds move to 28-15 on the season and will now play on Saturday against an undetermined opponent at 10 a.m. or noon.

Against the 17th-ranked Kohawks, Eau Claire's bats were silenced by an Ashlee Simon pitching gem. She surrendered just two Blugold hits and struck out 10 batters in the process. On the defensive end, the Blugolds again struggled in the field, recording three errors leading to three unearned runs. **Bri Sturm** (Sr.-Zumbrota, Minn./Zumbrota-Mazeppa) and **Ashley Meinen** (Fr.-Chippewa Falls, Wis./McDonnel) shared the pitching duties for Eau Claire. Sturm started the game, going four innings giving up five hits and one earned run, and Meinen threw two innings of relief, giving up two hits. Sturm took the loss, giving her a 7-8 record. **Aleisha Harper** (Fr.-Mondovi, Wis./Eau Claire North) and **Kristi Doucette** (Sr.-Green Bay, Wis./Ashwaubenon) recorded the two Blugold hits, while the team went a combine 2-for-22 at the plate (.090 average).

Against the 13th-ranked Warhawks, Eau Claire shook off the rust from earlier in the day and avenged three losses earlier in the season to Whitewater. Using the same pitching platoon as the first game, Sturm picked up the win this time, her eighth of the year, going five innings and surrendering the lone Warhawk run on five hits. Meinen worked two shutout innings, giving up three hits and securing the win. Eau Claire wasted little time, jumping all over Warhawk hurler and WIAC Pitcher of the Year, Jessica Stang. After **Katie Stalker** (Jr.-Madison, Wis./LaFollette) and Harper led the game off with back-to-back singles, **Bekki Kidnie** (Jr.-St. Paul, Minn./Johnson) cleared the bases with her fourth home run of the year. With the blast, Kidnie now has a team-high 33 RBI's on the season and put the Blugolds up 3-0. Eau Claire extended its lead to 5-0 in the top of the third inning when Harper scored from third on a wild pitch, and **Ainsley Klar** (Jr.-La Crosse, Wis./Aquinas) plated pinch runner **Heidi Arciszewski** (Jr.-Thorp, Wis.) on a ground out to second.

Eau Claire surrendered the Warhawks' lone run in the bottom of the fifth, but clamped down on the high-powered offense to hang on for the win. Entering today's action, Whitewater batted .359 as a team, and the pitching staff had a 1.71 earned run average.

Coe-Eau Claire Box Score

Eau Claire-Whitewater Box Score

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