

## Men's Hockey Opens Conference Play At Home this Weekend

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EAU CLAIRE - Carrying an impressive six game win streak, the UW-Eau Claire men's hockey team will open both Northern Collegiate Hockey Association and Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference play this weekend, when they host No. 5 UW-River Falls on Friday and UW-Stout on Saturday.

Both games are set for 7:05 p.m. at Hobbs Ice Arena, where the Blugolds are 3-1-0 on the season.

Eau Claire brings in an impressive 7-3-0 record. After starting the season just 1-3-0, the Blugolds have since reeled off six straight victories, including a two-game series sweep over Finlandia (MI) last weekend. The first four wins of the streak came against Gustavus, St. Olaf, Augsburg, and Concordia-Moorhead, all of the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

This season the Blugolds have outscored their opponents 42-27, averaging a healthy 4.2 goals per game. The team is collectively making nearly one-third of its' shot attempts. Leading the Eau Claire offense has been **Rob Ouimette** (*Sr.-Iron Bridge, ONT/Leamington District*) with a team-best 10 goals and 17 points. His 10 tallies have come on just 14 shots. Not far behind Ouimette is the duo of **Phil Cherneski** (*Sr.-Thompson, MAN/RDPC*) and **Chip Dunleavy** (*Jr.-Littleton, CO/Columbine*). Cherneski has eight goals and four assists while Dunleavy has six goals and six assists for 12 points apiece. Both had incredible performances in last weekend's series sweep over Finlandia, as Dunleavy had a goal and four assists while Cherneski tallied four goals and two assists, prompting head coach Jean Laforest to nominate him as the conference player of the week.

The Blugolds will put their win streak on the line Friday against a very tough River Falls team that has a record of 5-1-2 on the season and is currently ranked fifth in the USCHO Division III poll. The Falcons are averaging 4.1 goals per game, but have averaged 37.8 shots per game. Garrett Larson leads the team with 13 points on seven goals and six assists. He is the only Falcon with double-digit points.

Eau Claire has had very little success against River Falls in the past, accumulating a record of just 25-70-3 against the Falcons since 1979. The Blugolds upended then-ranked No. 4 River Falls last season only to drop the first two games of a three-game series to the Falcons in the NCHA Quarterfinals.

Less than 24 hours after their match up with River Falls, the Blugolds will be back in action against the Stout Blue Devils, who are receiving votes in the latest USCHO poll. The Blue Devils come in at 7-3-1 on the season but just 2-2-0 on the road. Justin Huth leads Stout with 14 points and seven goals and seven assists, while Andrew Stearns leads the team with eight goals.

Eau Claire has had some success against the Blue Devils, tallying a 24-17-1 record, dating back to 1978. The Blugolds split a pair of games last season with Stout, winning 2-1 in Menomonie but falling 4-2 at home in the regular season finale.

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