

Men's Basketball Plays Winona in Exhibition Game

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WINONA, Minn. (UWECBlugolds.com) - In its first test of the 2009-10 season, the UW-Eau Claire men's basketball team played well in an exhibition contest against NCAA Division II Winona State University despite a 69-55 loss at McCown Gymnasium tonight.

Eau Claire stuck with the Warriors, who won Division II national titles in 2006 and 2008, for most of the first period and part of the second before Winona began to pull away.

In the first period, the Blugolds held the Warriors to a single-digit lead for the entire half besides the final score before the buzzer that left Winona up by 10. The Warriors were up by just three with just over two minutes to go in the half before going on a 7-0 run to take the 10-point lead. The score was tied three times in the first period as the Blugolds led the Warriors in shooting from the field 45.8 percent to 41.9 percent.

Eau Claire hit a three-pointer to open the second half which closed the gap to just seven. Winona then went on to steadily increase its lead, getting up by as much as 16 points with just over two minutes to go in the game.

For the game the Blugolds had a better field goal percentage as they shot 42.6 percent (23-for-54) while Winona shot 41.4 percent (24-for-58).

The main differences came from the free throw line and in points off turnovers. Winona came away with 14 points and Eau Claire had five from the charity stripe as the Blugolds committed 18 fouls while Winona had 11. The Warriors were also able to capitalize on turnovers as they scored 24 points from them while the Blugolds had just eight. Eau Claire had 22 turnovers while Winona had 11.

Colin Boone (Sr.-Eau Claire, Wis./Memorial) led the Blugolds in scoring tonight with 15 points while **Nick Bartlett** (So.-Arden Hills, Minn./Mounds View) and **Amadou Fofana** (Jr.-Appleton, Wis./West) each added 14. Fofana also had a game-high eight rebounds while **Josh Prince** (So.-Chippewa Falls, Wis./Chi-Hi) had five assists to lead Eau Claire.

Eau Claire last played Winona State on December 11, 1996, and the Warriors came away with a 115-110 in triple overtime. Prior to that game, the Blugolds won 12 straight contests, dating back to December 11, 1954. The Blugolds lead the all-time series 38-20. Winona State transitioned to NCAA Division II in 1995.

The Blugolds will kick off the regular season November 15 when they travel to Duluth, Minn. for a game against the College of St. Scholastica. Action will get underway at 3 p.m.