

## Women's Basketball Falls in Season Opener

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EAU CLAIRE, Wis. (UWECBlugolds.com) - While the UW-Eau Claire women's basketball team won the battle in the paint, the 24th-ranked College of St. Benedict (Minn.) came out on top 74-67 in both teams' season opener at Zorn Arena tonight.

The Blugolds controlled the action down low as they finished with 32 points in the paint and outrebounded the Blazers 43-28. St. Benedict had 14 points in the paint.

However, strong play by the Blazers on the outside, combined with 16 Blugold turnovers, helped the Blazers to victory. St. Benedict was 10-for-25 from beyond the arc and scored 15 points off 16 Blugold turnovers. Eau Claire came away with just four three-pointers and only five points off Blazer turnovers. The Blugolds made a late push and scored three of their four three-points with less than three minutes left in the game.

St. Benedict went up right away with a jumper but the Blugolds answered back to tie it up. The Blazers then went back up after a three-pointer and never looked back. The Blugolds kept the Blazers' lead to single digits until another three-pointer by St. Benedict at 8:38 lifted them to a 12-point lead. They continued to build their lead to 16 at the half.

In the second half, the Blugolds cut the lead back to single digits four times before the Blazers reached their largest lead of the game, 17 points four times. The Blugolds then began to chip away at St. Benedict's lead and found themselves down by just six with six seconds to go, but that was as close as they would get.

**Hannah Mesick** (*Jr.-Chatfield, Minn.*) picked up a double-double as she led the Blugolds in scoring and rebounding with 20 points and 15 boards. **Laura Olson** (*So.-Osseo, Wis./Osseo-Fairchild*) also added 12 points while **Ellen Plendl** (*So.-Chippewa Falls, Wis./McDonell*) came away with 10 rebounds. As a team, the Blugolds shot 40 percent (26-for-65) and were 84.6 percent (11-for-13) from the charity stripe.

St. Benedict's Amy Stifter led all scorers with 28 points and Heather Gillund added 10 as the Blazers finished shooting 43.1 percent (22-for-51) from the floor. St. Benedict was also hot from the free throw line as they shot 87 percent (20-for-23).

Up next, the Blugolds will travel to De Pere for a game against St. Norbert College next Tuesday. Action is set to get underway at 7 p.m.