

Men's Hockey Falls in First Game of NCHA Quarterfinal

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RIVER FALLS, Wis. (UWECBlugolds.com) - The UW-Eau Claire men's hockey team allowed two early goals and could not recover as it fell 3-1 to 15th-ranked UW-River Falls in a Northern Collegiate Hockey Association (NCHA) Quarterfinal game at Hunt Arena tonight.

The Falcons, who have not lost to the Blugolds in five straight meetings, scored even-strength goals at 2:02 and 4:58 in the first period as they outshot the Blugolds 8-5.

Eau Claire fought back in the second period to close the gap to just one when **Brant Marple** (*Sr.-Apple Valley, Minn./Eastview*) scored a power-play goal at 10:38 with assists from **Bryce Wilcox** (*Fr.-Roschester, Minn./Century*) and **D.J. Clark** (*Sr.-Blaine, Minn./Spring Lake Park*). Marple now has six goals on the season, three of which have come against River Falls as he scored twice in a 6-3 loss to the Falcons on Feb. 6.

While the Blugolds were down by just one after two periods, River Falls' Ben Beaudoin added another even-strength goal at 3:48 in the third to give the Blugolds less hope of a win. The Blugolds outshot the Falcons 11-9 in the third, but the Falcons held on for the win.

Eau Claire, which has outshot its opponents in nearly 65 percent of games this year, finished with 25 shots to the Falcons' 27 tonight.

The teams played a fairly clean game as they combined for just eight penalties, three of which were against Eau Claire to tie a season-low.

Brandon Stephenson (*Fr.-Saline, Mich.*) picked up the loss in the net for Eau Claire as he stopped 24 shots and allowed three goals. River Falls' Bo Storozuk was given the win as he stopped 24 shots and allowed one goal.

The Blugolds will try to even out the series and force a 20-minute mini-game tomorrow against the Falcons, beginning at 7:05 p.m. The quarterfinal winner will move on to the NCHA Semifinal game next Saturday.