

## Blugold Comeback Falls Just Short at UW-Stout

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MENOMONIE, Wis. (UWECBlugolds.com) - Just when it looked like UW-Stout would easily handle the UW-Eau Claire women's basketball team, a late push by the Blugolds challenged the Blue Devils at Johnson Fieldhouse today.

With the Blugolds (9-16, 8-8 WIAC) down by 22 points seven minutes into the second half, they started a push to close the gap to just one point with 11 seconds remaining. However, the Blue Devils (15-10, 10-6 WIAC) hit two free throws at the end to take the 65-62 win.

The teams played back and forth to start but Stout took a lead it would never give up just over eight minutes into the first half.

Holding the Blugolds scoreless for almost six minutes, from 12:09 to 6:11, the Blue Devils scored 15 straight points to take a 27-12 lead. The closest Eau Claire could get the rest of the first half was 11 points as Stout took a 15-point lead into the locker room.

Strong free throw shooting and rebounding in the second half helped get the Blugolds back into the game. They pulled down 28 of their 50 rebounds, tying a season-high, in the second while hitting 20 of the game's 24 shots from the charity stripe.

The Blugolds hurt themselves, however, committing a total of 30 turnovers, the second most in a game this year and the most since December 10 when they turned the ball over 34 times at UW-River Falls. Stout capitalized with 30 points off the miscues.

Three Blugolds finished with double-doubles. **Sarah Bingea** (*Fr.-Delano, Minn.*) scored a career and game-high 19 points with **Hannah Mesick** (*Jr.-Chatfield, Minn.*) also picking up 19. **Ellen Plendl** (*So.-Chippewa Falls, Wis./McDonell*) scored 12 points while Mesick led the game with 11 rebounds and Bingea and Plendl each added 10.

The Blugolds will now compete in the WIAC Tournament, which begins Tuesday. After taking the No. 6 seed in the tournament, the Blugolds will have to face the No. 3 seed, UW-La Crosse, at 6 p.m. in La Crosse. The Blugolds beat La Crosse twice this season, with the last win coming on January 23 in La Crosse (68-62), and have won eight straight over the Eagles.