

Softball Ends Trip to Florida with Two Losses

By: Kevin Meinholz, Sports Information Director

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PANAMA CITY BEACH, Fla. (UWECBlugolds.com) - The UW-Eau Claire softball team ended its trip to the National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) Leadoff Classic on a sour note, dropping its final two games at the Frank Brown Complex today.

The Blugolds (2-4) started the day with a 10-6 loss to 23rd-ranked Alma College (Mich.) which set up a match against Ramapo College (N.J.) in the third-place consolation game. Eau Claire fell just short 3-2 against Ramapo to take eighth place in the tournament's silver bracket.

In the first game, Alma took the lead with a run in the bottom of the first inning, but the Blugolds answered back with two in the top of the second. With two quick outs in the second, the Blugolds then went on to record three hits while **Katie Stalker** (Sr.-Madison, Wis./La Follette) and **Emily Muller** (So.-Lancaster, Wis.) both scored runs.

However, the bottom of the second proved to be the Scot's inning and the Blugolds were never able to recover after giving up six runs. The Blugolds had two errors in the inning.

Aleisha Harper (So.-Mondovi, Wis./Eau Claire North) and Stalker each picked up two more runs with each scoring in the fourth and sixth but Alma had three more runs the rest of the way to secure the win and avenge a 6-5 extra-inning loss suffered against the Blugolds on Friday.

The Blugolds managed nine hits while Alma had 12. **Jess Hegseth** (Fr.-Zumbrota, Minn./Zumbrota-Mazeppa) earned the loss in the circle after allowing seven runs, four of which were earned, to drop to 1-2 on the season. **Ashley Meinen** (So.-Chippewa Falls, Wis./McDonell) finished the game and struck out three batters while allowing three runs.

Against Ramapo, Stalker scored a run for Eau Claire in the top of the third but Ramapo tied the game back up in the bottom of the inning with one of its own.

Muller added another run for the Blugolds in the top of the seventh but Ramapo capitalized on a Blugold error and scored twice with one out to end the game with the win.

The Blugolds had five hits in the game, led by Stalker, who went 3-for-3.

All three pitchers, Hegseth, Meinen and **Kassie Krummel** (Fr.-Walcott, Iowa/Durant) saw time in the circle. Hegseth and Meinen both allowed four hits while Meinen struck out one batter.

At the conclusion of the tournament, Stalker was named to the All-Tournament team.

The Blugolds will be off next weekend and will next play on March 27 in a doubleheader at Central College (Iowa). The games will mark the first in a series of 10 in Iowa and Illinois for the Blugolds' spring break trip between March 27 and April 2.