

## Blugolds Down Finlandia In Rematch

*Posted: Wednesday, December 22, 2004*

RHINELANDER - Less than a month removed from a heartbreaking 94-93 loss to Finlandia University (MI), the UW-Eau Claire men's basketball team dominated the Lions in the rematch, winning by a score of 86-70 here tonight in Rhinelander.

The Blugolds improve to 6-3 on the season with the victory while Finlandia falls to 5-6 overall.

The high-scoring Lions jumped out to an early lead via an 11-4 run but Eau Claire responded with a 14-0 run of their own and never trailed the rest of the way. **Tyler Birkel** (*Jr.-Spring Valley*) jump-started the run with a pair of free throws and **Casey Drake** (*Sr.-Rhinelander*) culminated the run with a pair of baskets in front of his hometown crowd.

After the run, the Blugolds built the lead to as much as 12 points but the Lions kept their deficit around 10 points for the rest of the half. Eau Claire headed into the locker room at the break with a 39-29 advantage.

The Lions charged back in the second half, using a 16-8 run to open the half and tie the game at 47. Much like they did in the first half, Eau Claire used a run of its own to put the game away. **Dan Archambault** (*Sr.-Oshkosh/West*) and **Will Jefferson** (*Sr.-Wausau/East*) drained three-point shots as part of a 12-0 run. The Lions would not come within single digits for the remainder of the contest and the Blugolds left the neutral-court home contest with an 86-70 victory.

Both teams shot well from the floor, with Eau Claire hitting 34-of-66 (51.5 percent) from the floor and Finlandia connecting on 29-of-62 (46.8 percent) of its shots. The Blugolds were 7-of-17 (41.2 percent) from downtown.

Drake and Archambault paced Eau Claire with 18 points apiece while combining for 11 assists. Drake tallied six assists and three rebounds while Archambault finished with five assists and three rebounds. Jefferson scored 15 points in the win while Birkel added 12 points and four rebounds.

Tyler Lloyd led the Lions with 22 points and 10 rebounds while Mike Nowaczyk scored 16 and Ryan Artley added 14 in the loss.

The Blugolds will take a week off for the holidays and return to action next Wednesday and Thursday when they will host the 36th annual Holiday Classic Tournament at W.L. Zorn Arena. This year's invites are St. Olaf (MN), Luther (IA) and Lakeland. The tournament begins with St. Olaf battling Lakeland at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday followed by the Blugolds and Luther at 8:00 p.m. The third place game will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday and will be followed by the championship game at 8:00 p.m.

Eau Claire-Finlandia Box Score

- DN -