

Women Blugolds Host No. 19 Millikin Wednesday

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EAU CLAIRE - The UW-Eau Claire women's basketball team welcomes a familiar rival to Zorn Arena on Wednesday, when the Blugolds host 19th-ranked Millikin (IL) at 7:00 p.m. for Youth Night. The Blugolds and Big Blue have met three times in the NCAA Tournament since 1996.

The two teams have battled four times in all, with the last contest coming in November of 2001, the first match up between the two teams that was not in the postseason. The Blugolds are a perfect 4-0 against the Big Blue, including a 74-64 victory in the last meeting.

The rivalry between Eau Claire and Millikin began in the 1996 NCAA Tournament, when the Blugolds earned a 90-71 victory over the Big Blue in the Central Sectional at Decatur, Illinois. Just more than a year later Millikin again stood in the postseason path of the Blugolds in Decatur, only this time a trip to the Final Four was on the line. Again Eau Claire came out victorious, but this time the score was a much closer 67-63. The third postseason battle between the teams turned out lopsided, as the Blugolds pounded the Big Blue 75-38 in the 2000 tournament at Zorn Arena.

Eau Claire comes into Wednesday's contest with a 9-3 overall record and a two-game win streak. The Blugolds defeated previously unbeaten Mary Washington last Thursday and SUNY-Potsdam last Friday at the Land of Magic Classic in Daytona Beach, Florida. Eau Claire allowed just 72 points in the two games combined. **Jessica Dickey** (*Sr.-White Bear Lake, MN/Cretin-Derham Hall*) led the Blugolds to victory in Florida, as she finished the event with 24 points, 10 rebounds, nine assists, and four steals.

Dickey and **Michelle Burns** (*Fr.-Eau Claire/North*) are currently tied for the team lead with 11.3 points per game while Burns leads the team with 6.8 rebounds per contest. Her 52.4 percent from the floor is also tops on the team.

Rachel Becker (*Jr.-Gilmanton*) has been an important piece to the Blugold puzzle this season, averaging 10.5 points per game while leading the team with 52 assists. She is also tied for second on the team with 5.7 rebounds per game, matching the total of **Becca Carstensen** (*Sr.-Eau Claire/Memorial*).

Four-year starter **Katie Murphy** (*Sr.-La Crosse/Aquinas*) continues to get the job done for the Blugolds and is fourth on the team with 8.4 points per game. She leads the team with 26 steals and is second on the roster with 45 assists. Murphy has hit 23-of-57 from three-point range, good for 40.4 percent.

The Big Blue come into Wednesday's match up with an 8-1 record and a four-game win streak. Millikin is currently ranked 19th in the country according to D3hoops.com. The only loss for the Big Blue came against DePauw University on December 4.

Lindsey Koehn leads Millikin with 13.0 points per game and was named to the D3hoops.com Team of the Week for the week of December 13-19. She leads the team with 32 steals and 30 assists and is fourth on the squad with 4.7 rebounds per game. Karin Olson is second on the team in scoring with 11.7 points per game and is second on the team with 6.9 rebounds per game. Joanna Conner is the Big Blue rebounding leader with 8.0 boards per game while also totaling 11.3 points per game.

Tip-off for the battle between Eau Claire and No. 19 Millikin is set for 7:00 p.m. Wednesday's game is also Youth Night at Zorn Arena, which means kids will be allowed to get autographs from both players and coaches at the conclusion of the game. Autograph cards featuring pictures of all players and coaches will be available at Zorn Arena.

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