

Football Falls for the First Time This Season

By: Kevin Meinholz, Sports Information Director

Posted: Saturday, September 25, 2010 at 5:12 PM

NAPERVILLE, Ill. (UWECBlugolds.com) - The 17th-ranked UW-Eau Claire football team fell for the first time this season, 20-6 to 11th-ranked North Central College (Ill.) at Benedetti-Wehrli Stadium today.

The Blugolds (2-1) and Cardinals (3-0) played back and forth in the first quarter and the teams remained scoreless after the opening period. The Blugolds made a big stop on North Central's opening drive. After the Cardinals were down to the Blugolds' 12 yard line, **Dan Kinsella** (*Jr.-Stevens Point, Wis./SPASH/Univ. of Minn.*) forced a fumble and the Blugolds recovered to stop the driving Cardinals.

In the second quarter, North Central drove 68 yards to score a touchdown and after the extra point it was 7-0. The Cardinals scored on a field goal with 15 seconds left to go before the end of the half to make it 10-0.

The Blugolds had trouble in the first half as they never got out of their own territory and finished with just 79 yards of total offense in the half.

Despite opening the game slow, the Blugolds got themselves on the board with 1:10 left in the third quarter after a **Brandon Raciborski** (*Sr.-Eau Claire, Wis./Memorial*) field goal (30 yards) to cut the Cardinal lead to seven. North Central answered on its next drive, however, to make push its lead to 14.

On the Blugolds' very next possession, a fumble by **Joel Sweeney** (*Fr.-Tomah, Wis.*) gave the ball back to North Central and the Cardinals kicked an 18-yard field goal to make the score 20-3. Raciborski answered with a 23-yard field goal for the Blugolds two possessions later but the Blugolds would get no closer. The drive that set up the final field goal was started after Kinsella returned a fumble 63 yards to the North Central 12 yard line. The fumble return was the fourth-longest in school history.

Eau Claire had a tough day all the way around, accumulating just 186 yards of total offense. Blugold quarterback **Austin Neu** (*So.-Iron Ridge, Wis./Hustisford*) was sacked five times and finished with 173 passing yards (20-for-31) while throwing one interception. North Central shut down the Blugolds on the ground as they finished with just 13 yards. Sweeney led the rushing game with 28 yards but Neu had minus 16. **David Goodman** (*Jr.-Neehah, Wis.*) led the receivers with 74 yards on eight catches.

On defense, **Andy Neumann** (*Jr.-Germantown, Wis.*) and **Rick Drews** (*So.-Stratford, Wis.*) led the Blugolds with six tackles each, with both coming away with four solos and two assists. **Nate Johnson** (*So.-Madison, Wis./LaFollette*) had one sack while **Chad Samuelson** (*Jr.-St. Paul, Minn./Cretin-Derham Hall*) and Kinsella each forced a fumble.

One bright spot for the Blugolds was the fact they only allowed North Central to score 20 points. The last time the Cardinals scored 20 or fewer points was the opening game in 2009 (Ohio Northern 28, North Central 19). The Blugolds also held the Cardinals to 354 yards of total offense, North Central's lowest total since October 31, 2009.

The Blugolds will try to get back on track next weekend when they are back at Carson Park for Homecoming. Eau Claire will face UW-Stevens Point at 1 p.m. The Blugolds have won their last six homecoming games and eight of the last nine.