

Football Suffers First Conference Loss of Season

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PLATTEVILLE, Wis. (UWECBlugolds.com) - The 17th-ranked UW-Eau Claire football team had a tough day at Ralph E. Davis Pioneer Stadium, falling 35-14 against UW-Platteville today.

The Blugolds (3-2, 1-1 WIAC) and Pioneers (3-2, 1-1 WIAC) hung right with each other in the first quarter but Platteville took a big lead in the second quarter after scoring three touchdowns.

While the Blugolds opened the game with the ball, the drive went only 28 yards in eight plays and the Blugolds were forced to punt. Platteville then scored on its opening possession, traveling 94 yards on 17 plays, for the seven-point lead.

The Blugolds got a little spark after the Pioneers fumbled a punt following the Blugolds' next possession and Eau Claire recovered on Platteville's 45 yard line. Three plays after the recovery, all rushes by **Joel Sweeney** (*Fr.-Tomah, Wis.*), the freshman found the end zone following a 19-yard run. **Brandon Raciborski** (*Sr.-Eau Claire, Wis./Memorial*) added the extra point to tie the game up at 7-7.

It was all Pioneers in the second quarter. Platteville scored on all three of its possessions to push the lead to 28-7 by the end of the quarter. The Blugolds had an opportunity to score just seconds before the half, but after the Blugolds were unable to get the ball into the end zone, Raciborski came in to attempt a 19-yard field goal. Unfortunately for the Blugolds, the kick went wide right to make the halftime score 28-7.

Platteville came out strong in the second half and scored on its opening drive. The touchdown was scored by Lee Vlasak, his fifth rushing touchdown of the game, tying for the second most in a game in conference history.

The Blugolds answered on their next possession after a Sweeney rushing touchdown from eight yards out and Raciborski again added the extra point to make the score 35-14. Neither team was able to score again the rest of the way.

While Sweeney had a good game rushing with 114 yards on 19 carries, the Blugolds' passing game struggled. **Austin Neu** (*So.-Iron Ridge, Wis./Hustisford*) finished with 152 yards on 15-for-31 passing but it was not until four minutes before halftime when the Blugolds completed their first pass. The Blugolds also struggled protecting their quarterback as Platteville recorded five sacks on the day.

On defense, **Andy Neumann** (*Jr.-Germantown, Wis.*) and **Brad Nierenhausen** (*Sr.-Cottage Grove, Minn./Park*) each recorded nine tackles (six solo and three assists) to lead the game. **Coltan Ellis** (*Fr.-Rice Lake, Wis.*) finished with a fumble recovery, which helped lead to the Blugolds' first touchdown.

The Blugolds will try to bounce back next Saturday when No. 1-ranked UW-Whitewater comes to Carson Park, where the Blugolds are undefeated this season. Action is set to get underway at 3 p.m.