

Drake's Last Second Bucket Lifts Blugolds Over Warhawks

Posted: Tuesday, January 11, 2005

WHITEWATER - **Casey Drake** (Sr. -*Rhineland*) hit a lay-up at the buzzer to propel the UW-Eau Claire men's basketball team to a 77-76 win over Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference opponent UW-Whitewater here tonight at the Kachel Gym in the Williams Center.

It was one year and one day ago that the Drake did the same thing to the Warhawks. Drake hit a jumper in the lane with 1.3 seconds left in regulation to give Eau Claire an 80-79 victory Jan. 10, 2004.

The Blugold victory stops a seven-game winning streak for Whitewater. Eau Claire defeated Whitewater on their home court, something then top-ranked UW-Stevens Point couldn't do in Whitewater's 71-63 over the Pointers.

The win capped a great comeback effort from the Blugolds in which they scored 50 second half points on 54.3 percent shooting. Eau Claire erased an 11-point halftime deficit to improve to 4-2 in the WIAC and 10-4 overall.

The Blugolds held a four point lead with 2:15 left following two **Dan Archambault** (Sr.-*Oshkosh/West*) free throws. Whitewater's Angelo Griffin tied the game at 73 with four straight free throws on consecutive possessions.

Will Jefferson (Sr.-*Wausau/East*) put Eau Claire back in front hitting a lay-up with 1:09 remaining. Griffin once again came through for the Warhawks converting a three-point play to put Whitewater up 76-75 with 59 seconds left in regulation. Whitewater had a chance to ice the game but **Jesse Breidenbach** (Sr.-*Oregon*) forced a turnover with less than 10 seconds left. Breidenbach fed the ball underneath the hoop and Drake tipped in a **Chad Honl** (So.-*Eau Claire/Memorial*) miss to give Eau Claire the win.

Drake shared game scoring honors with Whitewater's Griffin with 23 points and a game-high six assists. Archambault and Jefferson each scored 16 while **Tyler Birkel** (Jr.-*Spring Valley*) added 10.

Birkel and **Kale Proksch** (Jr.-*Chaseburg/Westby*) each pulled down a game-high seven rebounds in leading the Blugolds to a 43-29 rebounding advantage. Eau Claire pulled down 17 offensive rebounds leading to 18 second chance points while holding Whitewater to only five second chance points.

The first half went back and forth with Eau Claire holding as much as a five point lead. The Warhawks ended the opening half on a 16-2 run to give Whitewater a 38-27 lead heading into halftime. Eau Claire slowly whittled down the Whitewater lead in the second half tying the game for the first time of the half on a Drake jumper with 10:24 left in the game.

The victory leaves Eau Claire alone in third place in the WIAC at 4-2. The Blugolds are a half-game back of UW-Oshkosh and a full game back of UW-Stout and Stevens Point.

Eau Claire will look to move into a tie with Stout when they travel to Menomonie to take on the Blue Devils Saturday. The game is scheduled to begin at 5 p.m.

Eau Claire-Whitewater Box Score

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