

Women's Basketball Upsets Ranked Team in Home Opener

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EAU CLAIRE, Wis. (UWECBlugolds.com) - The UW-Eau Claire women's basketball team built a big lead in the first half and never looked back as it beat 21st-ranked St. Norbert College 73-56 at Zorn Arena tonight.

While the Green Knights (2-1) scored the opening basket at 19:37, they would hit no more shots from the floor until there was less than five minutes to play in the opening half. Between the baskets they scored just five points from free throws and the Blugolds (2-2) built a 24-9 lead. St. Norbert was just 1-for-17 (5.9 percent) from the floor before its second field goal.

The Blugolds continued the half strong and outscored their opponent 13-7 over the final five minutes to take a 39-18 lead into the locker room.

Eau Claire continued its dominating performance in the second half and opened with a 10-4 run to get up by 27 points, the largest lead of the game, less than three minutes into the half.

The closest the Green Knights could get the rest of the night was 16 points with less than 10 minutes remaining. The Blugolds then used a 9-0 run to get back up by 25 (68-43) but St. Norbert outscored the Blugolds 13-5 the rest of the way.

Eau Claire finished outrebounding St. Norbert 42-28 and outshot the Green Knights 49.1 percent (27-for-55) to 33.9 percent (19-for-56).

Hannah Mesick (Sr.-Chatfield, Minn.) and **Sarah Bingea** (So.-Delano, Minn.) each nearly reached double-doubles but came up one rebound shy. Mesick led the game with 23 points while Bingea had 10. Both had nine rebounds to lead the game. Mesick went 9-for-9 from the free throw line, tying a school record for best free throw percentage in a game.

Nicole Christianson (Jr.-Chetek, Wis.) finished the night with a game-high six assists while she added nine points.

Leading the way for St. Norbert was Krista Pelky with 14 points while Amy Brunner added 11. Brunner also had a team-high seven rebounds.

The Blugolds will be back home Saturday for a game against NCAA Division II Minnesota State University-Mankato. Tipoff at Zorn Arena is set for 7 p.m.