

## Women's Basketball Defeats Ranked Division II Opponent

By: Kevin Meinholz, Sports Information Director

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EAU CLAIRE, Wis. (UWECBlugolds.com) - Despite a close game in the first half, the UW-Eau Claire women's basketball team was able to pull away in the second to defeat NCAA Division II Minnesota State University-Mankato 66-54 at Zorn Arena tonight.

The Blugolds have won two in a row, both at Zorn, and improve to 3-2 on the season. Mankato, ranked 25th in Division II, was handed its first loss of the season, falling to 3-1. The meeting was the first ever between the two teams.

While Mankato opened the game with the lead and built it to five points just under four minutes into the contest, the Blugolds took their first lead after a 7-0 run that started with a **Nicole Christianson** (*Jr.-Chetek, Wis.*) layup.

The teams traded leads a few times the rest of the first half and Mankato scored its largest lead at 4:13 (six points). But another run of 8-0 over the next two minutes gave the Blugolds a two-point lead and while Mankato held the advantage at halftime, 30-29, the Blugolds came on strong in the second half.

Eau Claire opened the second half on a 9-2 run, holding Mankato scoreless for the first three and a half minutes. The Blugolds continued to increase their lead and reached their largest lead of 12 points three times in the final minute of play.

**Hannah Mesick** (*Sr.-Chatfield, Minn.*) recorded her second double-double of the season as she finished with 24 points and 10 rebounds, both of which led the game.

Christianson nearly reached a triple-double as she finished with 11 points, eight assists and seven rebounds.

**Sarah Bingea** (*So.-Delano, Minn.*) finished with 10 points and **Ellen Plendl** (*Jr.-Chippewa Falls, Wis./McDonell*) had eight rebounds and nine points.

Eau Claire outshot Mankato 44.7 percent to 28.8 percent and outrebounded the Mavericks 42-35.

The Blugolds will open conference play Wednesday with a game at UW-Oshkosh. Tipoff is set for 7 p.m.