

Men's Basketball Runner Up in Holiday Classic

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EAU CLAIRE, Wis. (UWECBlugolds.com) - In its 38th appearance in the Championship Game, the UW-Eau Claire Blugolds lost 69-58 to Northwestern College (Minn.) and took second place in its own 42nd annual Holiday Classic.

The Blugolds have won 28 Classics since the tournament's inception in 1969 – including the past two years – but it was a different story tonight. After claiming a small lead early in the game, the Eagles shut down the Blugold offense for over three minutes, going on a 7-0 run until near the middle of the first. For the rest of the period – and the game – the Blugolds were forced to play catch-up. With less than five minutes remaining until the half, **Amadou Fofana** (Sr.-Appleton, Wis./West) put up seven points during a minute-and-a-half stretch to help Eau Claire whittle the deficit down to just four points.

But in the second period, Northwestern kept its advantage hovering in the high single digits. Despite the efforts of the Blugolds, the Eagles tallied five more unanswered points in the final two minutes and finished off Eau Claire, ending the game with a final lead of 11 points.

Fofana led both teams in scoring, tallying 17 points – 15 of which came in the first period. **Marcus Ruh** (So.-Green Bay, Wis./Bay Port) followed with 11 points while **Ivan Franklin** (Sr.-Stillwater, Minn./Stillwater/UM-Duluth) and **Nick Craggs** (So.-Kimberly, Wis./Kimberly/UW-Whitewater) also broke the double-digit barrier with 10 points apiece. Fofana also led the team with seven rebounds. In the loss, Northwestern made 47.3 percent of its field goals (26-for-55) compared to the Blugolds' 41.5 percent (22-for-53).

Ruh and Fofana were two of five players selected to the All-Tournament team. Ruh, who earned the same honors in the 2009 tournament, racked up 25 points and five steals over the course of the tournament. Fofana put up 27 points and 11 rebounds during the Classic.

The Blugolds' first game of the new year is a matchup against rival UW-Stout, a game rescheduled from the snowed-out Dec. 11. Eau Claire will take the court at 6 p.m. this Sunday.