Women's Basketball One Point Shy of Dramatic Comeback

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EAU CLAIRE, Wis. (UWECBlugolds.com) - The UW-Eau Claire women's basketball team made a dramatic second period resurgence, but came up heartbreakingly short in the end, falling 71-70 to No. 12 UW-Whitewater tonight at Zorn Arena.

Sarah Bingea *(So.-Delano, Minn.)* got the Blugolds on the board early with a layup only four seconds into play, but the game soon escalated out of Eau Claire's control. Whitewater gained the lead then built it up to first 10, then 20 points with just over seven minutes remaining in the period. **Nicole Christianson** *(Jr.-Chetek, Wis.)*, **Laura Olson** *(Jr.-Osseo, Wis./Osseo-Fairchild)* and **Ellen Plendl** *(Jr.-Chippewa Falls, Wis./McDonell)* combined for 10 unanswered points to bring the vast lead back to within reason, but the Blugolds still faced a challenging 12 point deficit heading into the final 20 minutes.

Halfway through the second, **Kelli Schramm** *(Fr.-Roseville, Minn./Mounds View)* scored on a fast break to bring the Blugolds back under the double digit barrier for the final time of the evening. As the clock ticked down, the Blugolds heated up. With just over a minute on the clock, the Blugolds drew within one point of the tie.

With exactly one minute remaining, Christianson swiped the ball away from the Warhawks, setting the stage for the **Hannah Mesick** *(Sr.-Chatfield, Minn.)* layup for the lead, the Blugolds' first since the early minutes of the game. Free throws built the advantage to three points, but the Warhawks didn't give in. A fast break layup made it an even game, and with just six seconds remaining, Whitewater nailed a free throw to go up by one. The Blugolds also had one final opportunity for the win after Whitewater turned the ball over but a **Leah Rempert** *(So.-Lake Geneva, Wis./Badger)* shot at the buzzer went in and out.

In the heartbreaker, Christianson and Mesick led the Blugolds with 17 points apiece, and Bingea followed with another 15. Plendl and Mesick each brought down a team-high six rebounds. Overall, the Blugolds completed 44.4 percent (20-for-45) of their shots, just outshooting Whitewater's 39.7 percent (25-for-63).

The loss drops the Blugolds to 10-6 overall and 4-3 in the WIAC. Whitewater has just one conference loss in its seven WIAC events.

Wednesday night, the Blugolds will return to Zorn Arena for a 7 p.m. game against WIAC opponent UW-Stevens Point.