

Men's Basketball Comes Away with Loss at Oshkosh

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Posted: Wednesday, January 26, 2011 at 10:00 PM

OSHKOSH, Wis. (UWECBlugolds.com) - The UW-Eau Claire men's basketball team had a tough time at UW-Oshkosh tonight, as the Blugolds lost 83-58 to the Titans at Kolf Sports Center.

The Blugolds actually defeated the Titans early last December by 13 points, but Eau Claire couldn't find the same magic tonight. Oshkosh jumped out in front of the Blugolds almost immediately, opening the game with an 11-1 point run in the first three minutes of play. Aided by free throws – Oshkosh racked up 29 points from penalties during the game – the Titans marched to a 17-point advantage near the end of the first period.

But the Eau Claire offense kicked into gear in the final five minutes before the half. **Dustin Kalien** (So.-Chippewa Falls, Wis./Chi-Hi) nailed a three pointer to kick off a 9-0 run. By the end of the first 20 minutes, the Blugolds were again within nine points of the lead.

The second half closely mirrored the progression of the first period; the Titans skyrocketed ahead again at the start, extending their advantage to as much as 29 points by the middle of the period. Soon it was the Blugolds' turn to fight back. **Amadou Fofana** (Sr.-Appleton, Wis./West), **Jordan Petersen** (So.-Strum, Wis./Eleva-Strum) and **Nick Craggs** (So.-Kimberly, Wis./Kimberly/UW-Whitewater) combined for eight unanswered points with six minutes on the clock. Before long, the Blugolds closed to within 20 points with just over four minutes remaining. However, Eau Claire's comeback attempt came up short. Oshkosh put up three more free throws and two dunks in the final minutes to end the game 83-58.

Craggs led the Blugolds in tonight's effort, putting up a team-high 17 points. Petersen scored another 14 points. Kalien and Petersen led the Blugold rebound count, bringing down six apiece.

Remarkably, the Blugolds and Titans both made 44.4 percent of their shots from the field. However, Eau Claire took fewer shots (20-for-45) than Oshkosh (24-for-54). Also, the Titans made an astounding 96.7 percent (29-for-30) of their free throw attempts, missing just a single free throw late in the game.

The Blugolds' conference record has taken a heavy toll in recent weeks, as this is the fourth straight WIAC loss. Eau Claire is now 8-10 overall and 3-7 in the conference. Oshkosh is now just a step ahead at 4-6 in WIAC play.

This Saturday, the Blugolds will take a break from conference action with a game against Finlandia University (Mich.). Game time is set for 1 p.m. (Eastern) in Hancock, Mich.