

Blugolds Fall to Conference Leader and Ninth-Ranked Falcons

By: Kevin Meinholz, Sports Information Director

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EAU CLAIRE, Wis. (UWECBlugolds.com) - While the UW-Eau Claire men's basketball team stuck right with conference leader and ninth-ranked UW-River Falls in the first half, the Blugolds could not keep up in the second and eventually fell 76-70 at Zorn Arena tonight.

The Blugolds (9-11, 3-8 WIAC) and Falcons (19-2, 12-0 WIAC) played back and forth in the opening half with the score changing hands nine times while it was tied five other times.

Eau Claire led by as much as five points in the first half and led as late as the 5:31 mark. But over the last five and a half minutes, River Falls outscored the Blugolds 12-5 to take a six-point lead into halftime.

In the second half, **Nick Craggs** (So.-Kimberly, Wis./Kimberly/UW-Whitewater) hit a three-pointer to cut the Falcon lead in half but the game's momentum quickly shifted in River Falls' favor. Over a two minute stretch, ending at the 17:20 mark, the Falcons built their lead to 14 points after an 11-0 run as Aaron Anderson nailed three three-pointers.

The Blugolds made a great effort near the end but could not hold off the Falcons over the final two minutes. Eau Claire cut the lead to just one point after an **Amadou Fofana** (Sr.-Appleton, Wis./West) layup ended a 12-4 run with just over two minutes to play. In the last two minutes, however, the Falcons outscored the Blugolds 8-3 to secure the win.

James Pfitzinger (Jr.-West St. Paul, Minn./Academy Of Holy Angels/St. Norbert) finished with 17 points to lead the Blugolds. **Jordan Petersen** (So.-Strum, Wis./Eleva-Strum) and Craggs both added 13 points while **Ivan Franklin** (Sr.-Stillwater, Minn./Stillwater/UM-Duluth) had 12. Leading the Blugolds on the boards were Pfitzinger, Craggs and Fofana, who each finished with four rebounds.

Eau Claire came away with a higher shooting percentage, 50.8 percent (30-for-59) to 49.1 percent (27-for-55), but nine of the Falcons' shots came from beyond the arc compared to six for Eau Claire. River Falls held the advantage in rebounding with 41 to Eau Claire's 23.

The Blugolds will be home again Saturday for a game against UW-Platteville. Action is set to get underway at 3 p.m.