Women's Basketball Prevails in Low-Scoring Competition

By: Ashley Hofer, Sports Information Student
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RIVER FALLS, Wis. (UWECBlugolds.com) - Points were scarce, but the UW-Eau Claire women's basketball team played tough defense to claim victory over UW-River Falls tonight with a final result of 45-32.

River Falls' 32 points ties the Blugolds for 15th on the list of fewest points allowed. Ironically, Eau Claire also limited the Falcons to just 32 points in February 2006. The Blugolds' score of 45 is also the sixth-lowest total Eau Claire has scored and still managed to win.

Points were hard to find even in the early stages of the game. River Falls nailed a layup 33 seconds into play, but the Blugold defense shutdown the Falcons. Eau Claire didn't allow another Falcon score from the field over the next nine minutes. **Ellen Plendl** *(Jr.-Chippewa Falls, Wis./McDonell)* blocked seven of River Falls' shots in the first period – she accumulated a school record 10 by the end of the game – and helped the Blugold defense in limiting the Falcons to just 13 first-half points.

Meanwhile, Eau Claire slowly tallied points with free throws and well-distributed field goals.

The Blugolds scored six unanswered points within the first minutes of the second period to grasp a comfortable lead over the Falcons. **Nicole Christianson** *(Jr.-Chetek, Wis.)* stole the ball at the at the 17:29 mark, clearing the way for a **Sarah Bingea** *(So.-Delano, Minn.)* jumper to break into the double digit lead for the first time of the evening.

Though **Hannah Mesick's** *(Sr.-Chatfield, Minn.)* layup at 8:58 was the Blugolds' last score from the field, Eau Claire continued adding points through 11 additional free throws. **Laura Olson** *(Jr.-Osseo, Wis./Osseo-Fairchild)* nailed all six of her attempts – all in the final three minutes of play - and helped push the Blugolds to the 45-32 win.

Only one player, River Falls' Tiffany Gregorich, scored double digit points. Olson and Mesick, who both nailed all their free throw attempts, led the way for the Blugolds with nine points apiece. Mesick and Plendl nabbed the most rebounds for Eau Claire, each tallying eight.

Though the final scores were low, it wasn't for a lack of shots. Eau Claire made 30.4 percent (14-for-46) of its shots from the field. River Falls took a significantly higher 62 attempts, but only made 17.7 percent (11-for-62).

The win boosts the Blugolds to 12-8 overall and 6-5 in the WIAC. River Falls drops to an even 6-6 in conference play and 14-7 overall.

Looking ahead, Eau Claire will host UW-Platteville this Saturday in Zorn Arena. Game time is set for 5 p.m.