

## Men's Hockey Opens NCHA Playoffs with Win over Pointers

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STEVENS POINT, Wis. (UWECBlugolds.com) - The UW-Eau Claire men's hockey team came away with a big win in the opening round of the Northern Collegiate Hockey Association playoffs, defeating UW-Stevens Point 4-2 at K.B. Willett Arena tonight.

The Blugolds and Pointers will play again Saturday at 7 p.m. to determine which team will advance to the NCHA Semifinals. Eau Claire needs to win or tie tomorrow while Stevens Point would need to win Saturday's game and then also win a minigame that would be played right after the first game.

The win tonight for Eau Claire was the first at K.B. Willett Arena since January 14, 1995. In fact, it was just the 10th time the Blugolds have ever won on the road against the Pointers. They won six times in the 1980s and three times in the 1990s.

The victory was also the first over Stevens Point in the NCHA playoffs. Eau Claire previously played the Pointers in two games in 1999 and fell both times. It was also just the third time the Blugolds won an NCHA playoff game, and they are now 3-36-3 all-time. See Blugolds' complete NCHA playoff history

While Eau Claire seemed to control the game early, Stevens Point made it interesting in the second period.

**Travis Peckskamp** (So.-Sauk Rapids, Minn.) got the Blugolds on the board at 3:10 in the opening period, scoring a power-play goal. **Bryce Wilcox** (So.-Rochester, Minn./Century) added another to give Eau Claire a 2-0 lead at 6:26 in the second period. But Stevens Point scored at 11:58 and again at 15:47 in the second to tie the game at 2-2.

However, the Blugolds didn't give up and **Andrew Wilcox** (Jr.-Rochester, Minn./Century) scored an unassisted goal just 49 seconds in the final period to give Eau Claire the 3-2 lead. **Andrew McCabe** (So.-Eau Claire, Wis./Memorial) then scored an empty-netter with only 50 seconds left in the game to give the Blugolds a two-goal cushion.

Eau Claire finished outshooting Stevens Point 25-15 and **Brandon Stephenson** (So.-Saline, Mich.) played all 60 minutes at goalie, making 13 saves.

The teams combined for 27 penalties tonight. A total of 23 penalties were handed out in the second period, 12 of which came at the 10:47 mark.

Eau Claire is now 15-10-1 overall while Stevens Point is 12-13-1.