## Women's Basketball Falls to Falcons in WIAC Quarterfinal

By: Kevin Meinholz, Sports Information Director Posted: Wednesday, February 23, 2011 at 10:37 PM

EAU CLAIRE, Wis. (UWECBlugolds.com) - The UW-Eau Claire women's basketball team had a tough time against UW-River Falls in the first round of the WIAC Tournament and fell 66-44 at Zorn Arena tonight.

River Falls improves to 16-10 on the season and will head to Stevens Point to take on the Pointers in a WIAC Semifinal game on Friday at 7 p.m. Eau Claire ends the season with a 15-11 mark.

The Blugolds fell behind right away as River Falls built a 9-1 lead over the first five minutes. The Falcons continued to build their lead throughout the half and were up by as much as 21 points with just over a minute before halftime. River Falls took a 19-point lead into the locker room.

In the first half, the Blugolds managed just two field goals, one from **Nicole Christianson** (*Jr.-Chetek, Wis.*) and another from **Ellen Plendl** (*Jr.-Chippewa Falls, Wis./McDonell*), while scoring nine points at the free throw line. Eau Claire scored only 13 points in the opening half while River Falls had 32.

Eau Claire opened the second half with a three-pointer from **Laura Olson** (*Jr.-Osseo, Wis./Osseo-Fairchild*) to cut the lead to 16 which began a 9-4 run. Over the first five minutes of the second half, Eau Claire cut the Falcons' lead to 14 but it was as close as the Blugolds would get. In the final 13 minutes, River Falls outscored the Blugolds 30-22 to win by 22 points.

The Blugolds struggled shooting, going 13-for-42 (31 percent) from the field. River Falls finished shooting 43.6 percent (24-for-55). The Falcons also outrebounded the Blugolds 43-26 and scored 19 points off 17 Blugold turnovers while Eau Claire managed just four points off 12 Falcon turnovers.

Christianson and **Sarah Bingea** (*So.-Delano, Minn.*) led the Blugolds with 10 points each and **Hannah Mesick** (*Sr.-Chatfield, Minn.*) led the team with seven rebounds while coming away with nine points. Plendl recorded five blocks and now has 145 in her career, the third best mark in program history.

Mesick was the lone senior on this year's squad and finished her career high in a number of statistical categories. After leading the WIAC in scoring this season, she finished her career with 1,443 points, ranked fourth on the Blugolds' all-time scoring list. She was also third in free throws made, seventh in rebounding, sixth in blocked shots and second in games started.