

Powerful Offense Launches Softball to Spring Break Victories

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Posted: Sunday, March 20, 2011 at 8:27 PM

TUCSON, Ariz. (UWECBlugolds.com) - The UW-Eau Claire softball team played just 10 innings, but put up a combined 28 runs in two games to defeat St. Catherine University (Minn.) and St. Olaf College (Minn.) on the first day of a spring break road trip.

The Blugolds first blanked St. Catherine 10-0, and then tore up St. Olaf with an 18-3 victory. The win over St. Olaf ties for 11th in school history for offensive production in a single game.

Eau Claire set the tone for the day with a six-run first inning against St. Catherine. The Blugolds tallied eight hits, starting with an **Aleisha Harper** (*Jr.-Mondovi, Wis./Eau Claire North*) double. After back-to-back singles presented Eau Claire with a 2-0 lead, **Jess Freagon** (*Jr.-Chippewa Falls, Wis./McDonell*) slammed a triple to left center and drove home **Sara Baumgartner** (*Sr.-Arcadia, Wis.*) for another score.

The Blugolds scored three additional runs in the first, and followed up the opening inning with two runs in the second and third. In the second inning, **Brittany Bergquist** (*So.-Stevens Point, Wis./SPASH*) tripled to right field and scored Freagon and **Emily Haluska** (*So.-Stevens Point, Wis./SPASH*). Baumgartner blasted a two-run home run in the third – her first of the season – to solidify the 10-0 win.

Despite making four errors, the Blugolds managed to shutout the Wildcats. **Ashley Meinen** (*Jr.-Chippewa Falls, Wis./McDonell*) pitched four innings, giving up just three hits and striking out three batters. Bergquist had one of the best showings at bat, going two-for-two, scoring a run and driving home three RBIs.

The Blugolds continued the strong offensive production in the competition against St. Olaf. The game got off to a slow start, as neither team crossed home plate in the first two innings. The Oles opened the third with two scores, but Eau Claire answered back with five runs. The Blugolds totaled four hits, but were really assisted by an error by the shortstop that scored **Jenny Hess** (*So.-Wisconsin Rapids, Wis./Lincoln*) and Harper.

In the fourth inning, the Oles put up another run to make it a 5-3 game, but Eau Claire overpowered St. Olaf with its offense in the bottom of the inning, scoring 13 runs. **Ashley Kenworthy** (*So.-Tomah, Wis.*) and Harper opened with back-to-back doubles – scoring Kenworthy – and a batter later, **Emily Muller** (*Jr.-Lancaster, Wis.*) tripled to center for another two runs. Late in the inning, **Kaitly Acker** (*Sr.-Cross Plains, Wis./Middleton*) doubled to right center and drove home three runs. Eight runs crossed home plate in the inning after the Blugolds already had two outs.

Lauren Carlson (*Fr.-Eagan, Minn.*) earned the win in the blowout, pitching two innings. She gave up three hits, one run and two walks. Three different Blugolds – Freagon, Harper and Hess – scored three runs. Freagon also went three-for-four and nailed two RBIs.

The pair of wins boosts the Blugolds to a 5-1 overall record. Eau Claire will face seven more opponents in eight games on the remainder of the trip. Tomorrow, the Blugolds will play in a 2 p.m. (Central) game against Hastings (Neb.) and a 4 p.m. (Central) competition against Calvin College (Mich.).