

Softball Carries No. 1 Seed Into WIAC Championships

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EAU CLAIRE - The 16th-ranked UW-Eau Claire softball team will bring its regular season conference title and No. 1 seed into the Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Championships this Friday and Saturday in Whitewater.

The Blugolds will kick off the double-elimination tournament against either eighth-seeded UW-Platteville or ninth-seeded UW-Whitewater. The two teams will play a play-in game Friday at 9:00 a.m. The game between Eau Claire and Platteville/Whitewater will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Friday. If the Blugolds win their first game they will play the winner of No. 4 Superior and No. 5 Stevens Point at 4:00 p.m. on Friday.

Eau Claire last saw action on Tuesday when they dropped both ends of a doubleheader to a tough St. Mary's (MN) team. The Blugolds dropped the first game 10-2 in six innings as they committed five errors that led to eight unearned runs. Eau Claire was held hitless through six innings in the second game of the doubleheader but broke through for three hits and two runs in the seventh. A three-run top of the seventh for the Cardinals did the Blugolds in, however, as they lost game two 4-2.

Eau Claire is currently 30-9 on the season and 13-3 in WIAC play. Two of the three conference losses have been at the hands of UW-Oshkosh, as the Titans earned a 2-1 victory in ten innings and a 3-1 win over the Blugolds. The only other conference loss for Eau Claire was a 3-0 defeat at the hands of Stevens Point.

Blugold pitching has led the way for the team's success all year as the staff has combined for a 1.11 ERA while allowing just a .201 opposing batting average. **Mallory McKinney** (So.-Brooklyn Park, MN/Champlin Park) and **Andrea Neuville** (Jr.-Green Bay/West) have seen the majority of the innings. McKinney is 14-5 with a 0.99 ERA and 108 strikeouts in 134 innings pitched and seven shutouts. She is the reigning WIAC Pitcher of the Week. Neuville is 14-4 this season with a 1.12 ERA with three shutouts.

The Blugold offense is led by the freshmen tandem of **Jill Janke** (Fr.-Black River Falls) and **Casey Leisgang** (Fr.-Seymour). Janke leads the team in hitting (.358), hits (43), RBI (31), and doubles (10) and is second on the team with five home runs. Leisgang is tops on the roster in home runs (8), runs (36), triples (20), total bases (69), on-base percentage (.433), and walks (19). She is hitting .321 with 23 RBI on the year.

McKinney has helped her own cause at the plate this season with a .319 batting average, two home runs and 22 runs driven in. She has eight doubles and 14 walks on the season.

The Blugolds will battle either Whitewater or Platteville Friday at 1:00 on Martha van Steenderen Field in Whitewater in the double elimination tournament.

WIAC Championships Web site

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