

## Blugolds Unable To Upend Second Ranked St. John's

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COLLEGEVILLE, Minn. - The UW-Eau Claire football team totaled 323 yards of total offense but it was not enough as they fell to No. 2 ranked St. John's 24-10 here today at Clemens Stadium.

The Blugolds fall to 1-1 overall and begin conference action next Saturday. St. John's improves to 2-0 for the season and is currently ranked second in the D3football.com Top 25.

The Johnnies got the scoring started when quarterback Ryan Keating hooked up with Lee Clintsman for a 33-yard touchdown pass with 7:06 left in the first quarter to give St. John's a 7-0 lead. The Johnnies added a field goal on their next possession to take a 10-0 lead at the end of the first quarter.

The Blugolds mounted a solid drive early in the second quarter highlighted by a 20-yard pass from **Nels Fredrickson** (*Jr.-Burnsville, MN*) to **Don Kahl** (*Jr.-Brookfield/East*). Eau Claire drove to the St. John's 19-yard line but Mike Zauhar intercepted a Fredrickson pass in the end zone to squash the drive.

The Blugolds responded after the turnover just two plays into the ensuing Johnnies drive when **Jared Roeker** (*So.-Mauston*) picked off a Ryan Keating pass at the St. John's 40 to give the Blugolds possession once again. Fredrickson made sure the drive did not go wasted this time as he completed a 32-yard pass to **Matt Evensen** (*So.-Junction City/Auburndale*) to bring the ball to the 11-yard line with just 32 seconds remaining in the half. After a Blugold timeout, **Joe Gast** (*So.-Wauconia, MN*) made the score 10-7 with an 11-yard touchdown run.

The second half started out with the Johnnies in possession of the ball but it was Roeker again giving the ball back to the Blugolds as he grabbed his second interception of the game to give Eau Claire the ball on the St. John's 36-yard line. The Blugolds were unable to convert on a third and two but **Nick Diciaula** (*Sr.-Brookfield/Central*) hit a career-high 45-yard field goal to tie the game at 10.

The Johnnies responded on the following drive, going 80 yards in 4:34 to regain the lead 17-10. Blake Elliot recorded the score with an 11-yard touchdown reception from Keating.

Both teams punted on each of their next two possessions, giving Eau Claire the ball late in the third quarter. The Blugolds gained back-to-back first downs bringing the drive to the St. John's 35-yard line and into the fourth quarter. On the first play of the final quarter Fredrickson hit Evensen for a 22-yard gain to give Eau Claire a first and goal from the six-yard line. After two plays, it was third and goal from the one. Fredrickson tried a quarterback sneak on third but gained nothing and on fourth and goal Blugold head coach Todd Hoffner opted to go for it but the St. John's defense stepped up big, holding the Blugolds and gaining possession on the two yard line.

The Johnnies turned seven potential Eau Claire points into seven points of their own, driving 98 yards in just over three minutes to pad the lead to 24-10. Two big plays highlighted the drive: a 45-yard pass completion to Jake Theis and a 23-yard touchdown pass to Jed Riegelman. The drive left the Blugolds in a two touchdown hole with less than 10 minutes to remaining.

Eau Claire wasn't ready to give up yet however, as quarterback **Jeremy Darnell** (*Jr.-Owen-Withee*) mounted a Blugold drive into Johnnies territory with a 31-yard completion to Evensen. The drive was killed on the St. John's 18-yard line when Darnell's pass was intercepted by Cam McCambridge. St. John's next drive chewed up nearly the rest of the time on the clock to seal the victory at 24-10.

Fredrickson finished 14 for 29 for 181 yards but Johnnie quarterback Ryan Keating stole the spotlight as he went 34 for 48 with 387 yards and three touchdowns. His 34 completions is a new St. John's record.

Evensen had a great game for the Blugolds as he caught six passes for 105 yards. **Brian Mitchell** (*So.-Carol Stream, IL*) was the leading rusher for Eau Claire.