

Men's Basketball To Host 37th Annual Holiday Classic

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EAU CLAIRE - The UW-Eau Claire men's basketball team will host Finlandia University, Northland College, and St. Mary's University in the 37th annual Holiday classic to be held in Zorn Arena Thursday, December 29th and Friday, December 30th.

The action gets underway Thursday night at 6 p.m. when Northland College goes up against Finlandia University. The Blugolds will face St. Mary's University at approximately 8 p.m. following the first contest.

The Blugolds are the defending champions of the Holiday Classic and have won six consecutive Classics.

The Blugolds will come into this year's Holiday Classic on a roll having won three straight games and have an overall record of 6-3. The Blugolds have outscored their opponents in the last two games 174-130. Leading the Blugolds in scoring so far this season is **Jared Bardon** (*So.-DeForest*), who is averaging 15.1 points per game.

Prior to the three-game winning streak, Bardon had led the team in scoring in five of the previous six games. During the three-game winning streak, however, the Blugolds have had three different high scorers. The Blugolds are second in conference in assists per game, averaging 14.5 a game and continue to be at the top in perimeter defense allowing opponents to shoot just 29% from three.

Northland College will come into the Holiday Classic winless with a record of 0-6. Their first round match-up with Finlandia will be a rematch from earlier this season. Finlandia won that game in overtime 80-76. Northland, so far this season has lost to three Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Opponents (WIAC) opponents. The Blugolds have a lifetime record of 21-2 against Northland and have won 18-straight.

Finlandia will come into the Holiday Classic with a record of 4-7 having lost three straight games. Finlandia has played both Northland College and UWEC so far this season. They beat the Northland in overtime and lost to the Blugolds in Eau Claire 98-70. This will be Finlandia's second appearance in the Classic.

St. Mary's has a record of 3-3 this season and is coming off of a loss to Concordia-Moorhead by a score of 70-58. The Blugolds have a record of 13-5 all-time against St. Mary's and have won the last meetings. Leading St. Mary's in scoring this season is Michael Batterman, who is averaging 14.3 points per game.

The Classic gets underway at 6 p.m. Thursday night when Northland faces Finlandia. The Blugolds will face St. Mary's at approximately 8 p.m. The losers of each contest will play at 6 p.m. on Friday night. The championship game will follow that contest. All of the action will take place in Zorn Arena.

Holiday Classic Web Site