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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# No. 17 Lehigh looks to open season Saturday at No. 13 Pitt

BETHLEHEM, Pa. - Following the cancellation of last week's opener against Hofstra, No. 17 Lehigh will open its 112th season of wrestling Saturday with a top-25 matchup against in-state rival No. 13 Pitt. Competing for the first time since hoisting its third straight EIWA team title trophy last March, Lehigh will battle a Pitt squad that opened its season last week with a come-from-behind win at Navy.

Saturday's dual will be followed by a series of extra matches which will count towards a wrestler's season record. The Mountain Hawks return half their lineup from last year's EIWA triumph but only two of the five are expected to compete against the Panthers.

## Lehigh Probable Starters

125 Jaret Lane (Jr., Catawissa, Pa.)  
OR Sheldon Seymour (Fr., Troy, Pa.)  
133 Malyke Hines (Fr., Kissimmee, Fla.)  
OR Satoshi Abe (Jr., Putnam Valley, N.Y.)  
141 Joe Lobeck (Sr., Lancaster, Pa.)  
OR Connor McGonagle (Fr., Danville, N.H.)  
149 Jimmy Hoffman (Jr., Drums, Pa.)  
OR Paul Watkins (Fr., Cumming, Ga.)  
157 JT Cooley (Jr., Gilbertsville, Pa.)  
OR Tyler Sung (Fr., New Canaan, Conn.)  
165 Thayne Lawrence (Fr., Perryopolis, Pa.)  
OR Connor Herceg (Fr., Nazareth, Pa.)  
174 Jake Logan (Fr., New Rochelle, N.Y.)  
OR Trey Cornish (Sr., Raleigh, N.C.)  
184 JT Davis (Fr., Smyrna, Del.)  
OR Caden Wright (Fr., Emmaus, Pa.)  
197 No. 15 Jake Jakobsen (Sr., Sciota, Pa.)  
OR Andrew Shedleski (So., Selinsgrove, Pa.)  
285 Victor Lacombe (Jr., Whitehouse Station, N.J.)  
OR Eli Jones (So., Perkiomenville, Pa.)

Lehigh's scheduled opening matches against Hofstra last weekend were canceled following a positive COVID-19 test among a member of the Pride's travel party, so the Mountain Hawks will open their 112th season of wrestling Saturday in Pittsburgh. The Mountain Hawks are 9-3 in dual meet openers under Pat Santoro and beat Oklahoma State in last year's dual opener.

With Lehigh unable to kick off its season last week there was minimal change in the rankings. Two Mountain Hawks appear in the latest InterMat rankings, led by senior Brandon Paetzell, who is ranked fourth at 125. Senior Jake Jakobsen is ranked 15th at 197. Three Mountain Hawks appear in rankings from both FloWrestling and Amateur Wrestling News. Lehigh has seven wrestlers ranked in the top 33 by The Open Mat and five by Trackwrestling. Various outlets rank two different Lehigh wrestlers at 141

by the Open Mat and live by Trackwrestling. Various outlets rank two different Lehigh wrestlers at 141, senior Luke Karam and freshman Connor McGonagle.

As many as 10 Mountain Hawks could wrestle their first official bouts in the brown and white against Pitt, a list that includes six of Lehigh's 13 true freshmen and four deferred freshmen. Of the 10 remaining wrestlers listed as probable starters, three: junior Satoshi Abe and sophomores Andrew Shedleski and Eli Jones, have not wrestled in a dual meet for the Mountain Hawks.

Lehigh head coach Pat Santoro wrestled for the Panthers from 1985-1989, under the guidance of the late Rande Stottlemeyer, who retired following the 2012-13 season. Pittsburgh's only four-time All-American, Santoro amassed a 167-13 record in four seasons for the Panthers, and won national titles at 142 in 1988 and 1989. A three-time EWL Champion, Santoro is also the Panthers' career leader with 43 falls and posted an incredible 97-3 record over his final two seasons. Pittsburgh assistant coach Drew Headlee returned to his alma mater in 2014 after two seasons as Lehigh's volunteer assistant coach. Fourth-year Panthers head coach Keith Gavin is also a Pitt graduate. After graduation, Gavin trained and competed in freestyle with the Lehigh Valley Athletic Club (now Lehigh Valley Wrestling Club) before moving on to coaching positions at Virginia and Oklahoma.

No. 13 Pitt opened its dual season with a come-from-behind 22-14 victory at Navy Sunday evening. The Panthers trailed 14-3 at the halfway point of the dual before rallying to win the final five weight classes.

Pitt finished 10-4 in duals last year and finished second at the ACC Championships. Seven Panthers qualified for the NCAA Championships, with four wrestlers recognized as NWCA All-Americans. Pitt returns three of those All-Americans in Micky Phillippi (133), Jake Wentzel (165) and Nino Bonaccorsi (184). Phillippi is ranked fourth by InterMat, while Wentzel comes in at No. 9. Bonaccorsi has moved up to 197 where he is currently ranked fifth. In all, five Panthers appear in the latest InterMat rankings. Keith Gavin is in his fourth season as head coach at his alma mater.

Pitt is Lehigh's sixth oldest rival with Saturday's dual marking the 65th meeting in a series that dates back to 1916. Lehigh leads the series 44-18-2. The Panthers' criteria victory last season snapped a four-dual Lehigh winning streak in the series. Pat Santoro is 9-3 in duals against his alma mater.

Saturday's dual begins at 5 p.m. from Fitzgerald Field House in Pittsburgh. The match will be broadcast on ACC Network Extra (link at top of story).

Lehigh will get its first look at an EIWA opponent next weekend when the Mountain Hawks battle Navy, Saturday Jan. 16 in Annapolis, Md. It will be the 101st meeting in Lehigh's second most contested series. The Mountain Hawks have won the last nine duals in the series. Lehigh then returns home to face Drexel on Jan. 24.

<b>Date:</b>	January 9, 2021
<b>Opponent:</b>	No. 13 Pitt Panthers
<b>First match:</b>	5 p.m.
<b>Arena:</b>	Fitzgerald Field House
<b>Location:</b>	Pittsburgh, Pa.
<b>Lehigh's record:</b>	0-0 overall, 0-0 EIWA
<b>Pitt's record:</b>	1-0 overall, 0-0 ACC
<b>Series:</b>	Lehigh leads 44-18-2
<b>Television:</b>	None
<b>Radio:</b>	None
<b>Internet broadcast:</b>	Video on ACC Network Extra (link at top of page)

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