

# No. 6 Lehigh pounds American 36-2 in return to Grace Hall

BETHLEHEM, Pa. – No. 6 Lehigh returned to Leeman-Turner Arena at Grace Hall for the first time in nearly two months, and after dropping the opening bout against American, stormed through the final nine to claim a 36-2 win over the Eagles Friday night. Five of Lehigh's nine victories produced bonus points, including back-to-back pins by senior Darian Cruz and freshman Nick Farro at 125 and 133, respectively.

The Mountain Hawks closed out the dual with three straight major decisions to improve to 7-1 on the dual season, 5-0 against EIWA opponents and now 8-0 all-time against the Eagles.

"It was really nice to get back in this gym and wrestle in front of the home crowd," Lehigh head coach Pat Santoro said. "It has been a long time, but I'm proud of the way the guys fought tonight. Everybody kept wrestling and trying to score points the whole match. Looked like they were having fun too."

The dual began at 197 with American's 12th-ranked Jeric Kasunic breaking a 1-1 deadlock with a third period takedown to edge freshman Jake Jakobsen 3-1.

Lehigh took over from there. Freshman heavyweight Jordan Wood pulled the Mountain Hawks even, scoring a takedown in each period to beat Brett Dempsey 8-1.

"Jordan was a little cleaner with his finishes," Santoro said. "Last time (at the Journeymen Classic), I don't think there were any takedowns. It went to overtime. He just kept battling. He has been working hard trying to finish on some of those bigger guys and he's been getting better every week."

The falls for Cruz and Farro then staked Lehigh to a 15-3 advantage. Cruz built a 15-6 lead on Gage Curry at 125 then faked cutting Curry loose before hitting a cement mixer to secure the fall at 4:56. With the win, Cruz moves into a tie for 10th place on Lehigh's career wins list with Dave Esposito '01 with 105.

With top-10 wrestlers Scott Parker of Lehigh and Josh Terao of American both out of the lineup, Farro built a 6-2 lead on Garrett Clifford in the 133-pound bout. Like Cruz, Farro faked cutting Clifford loose, but instead of a cement mixer, Farro locked up a cradle to pick up a pin at 3:41 in his Grace Hall debut.

"Nick did a really nice job," Santoro said. "He's probably one of the best technical wrestlers on our team. He has an array of attacks and it was good to see him go out there and wrestle to score points. He got better as the match went on."

At 141, freshman Luke Karam received a stiff challenge from Kizhan Clarke. Karam fought out of quality shots in the first and third periods. The match went to tiebreakers, where Karam rode out the first half, then benefitted from a second stall call against Clarke in the second half to claim a 2-1 win and give Lehigh an 18-3 lead at intermission. American was docked a team point following this bout

tor control of the mat area.

Lehigh kept things rolling into the second half of the dual. Junior Cortlandt Schuyler improved to 3-0 in his career versus American's 18th-ranked Michael Sprague, claiming a 16-12 decision at 149. Sprague scored the first takedown before Schuyler answered with the next four and added a reversal and another takedown in the third period.

Junior Ian Brown made it six straight wins for Lehigh, using a second period escape and a takedown in the same frame to defeat Eric Hong 3-1 at 157.

The final three bouts all produced major decisions, with Mountain Hawk wrestlers scoring double-digit points. Junior Gordon Wolf totaled five takedowns and added a first period four point near fall to defeat Anthony Wokasch 17-6 at 165. Sophomore Jordan Kutler put on a clinic, with nine takedowns and nearly four minutes of riding time in a 20-7 major over Michael Eckhart at 174.

With fourth-ranked Ryan Preisch still sidelined at 184, sophomore Andrew Price got the nod and closed out the dual with a 13-3 major decision over Prince Hyeamang. Price led 5-0 after two before piling on three more takedowns in the final period.

The Mountain Hawks will be back in Leeman-Turner Arena at Grace Hall on Sunday to face longtime EIWA rival Navy in the annual Billy Sheridan Memorial Dual. Match time is set for 2 p.m. Tickets are still available and can be purchased online at [LehighTickets.com](http://LehighTickets.com) or at Grace Hall on Sunday prior to the match.

No. 6 Lehigh 36, American 2

197 – Jeric Kasunic (AU) dec. Jake Jakobsen (Lehigh) 3-1

285 – Jordan Wood (Lehigh) dec. Brett Dempsey (AU) 8-1

125 – Darian Cruz (Lehigh) Fall Gage Curry (AU) 4:56

133 – Nick Farro (Lehigh) Fall Garrett Clifford (AU) 3:41

141 – Luke Karam (Lehigh) dec. Kizhan Clarke (AU) 2-1, tb\*

149 – Cortlandt Schuyler (Lehigh) dec. Michael Sprague (AU) 16-12

157 – Ian Brown (Lehigh) dec. Eric Hong (AU) 3-1

165 – Gordon Wolf (Lehigh) major dec. Anthony Wokasch (AU) 17-6

174 – Jordan Kutler (Lehigh) major dec. Michael Eckhart (AU) 20-7

184 – Andrew Price (Lehigh) major dec. Prince Hyeamang (AU) 13-3

\* - American docked a team point for unsportsmanlike conduct following 141 bout

Attendance – 1,323

Official – Rey Santiago

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Steve Lomangino  
Director of Sports Communications - Lehigh University Athletics  
[sl304@lehigh.edu](mailto:sl304@lehigh.edu)  
610-758-3174