

No. 17 Wrestling Outlasts No. 24 North Carolina, 18-17

Major decisions from Suriano, Lewis propel Rutgers to win by criteria over Tar Heels

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PISCATAWAY, N.J. (Jan. 12, 2018) – Behind five individual wins, including major decisions from No. 2 **Nick Suriano** (125) and No. 12 **Richie Lewis** (165), No. 17 Rutgers wrestling (4-3, 1-2) defeated No. 24 North Carolina (6-8, 0-0), 18-17, Friday night in front of 3,511 fans at the RAC.

No. 16 **Scott DelVecchio** (133) and **Michael Van Brill** (141) both picked up wins over ranked foes, while **Joseph Grello** (174) earned a 10-3 decision to help the Scarlet Knights claim their first dual victory at the RAC this season.

With the match tied 17-17, RU prevailed, 70-64, in criterion 3.15.3 - total match points scored only from decisions, major decisions and technical falls. It was the first win by criteria for Rutgers since it defeated No. 4 Nebraska, 17-16, on Dec. 12, 2015 in Piscataway.

“We thought it would be a five-five split, and sure enough it was,” said head coach **Scott Goodale**. “They were probably favored at 41, and we were probably favored at 84, so that’s why you wrestle the matches. Anything can happen. We pulled out a good team win and one we needed.

“Somebody always has a tough bout, so yeah, it’s building for March, but it’s also good to get out of here with wins. It is important, because you get back in the practice room on Monday and you are coming off a win and not a loss. I just think that’s what we’re doing and what we’re preaching to these guys.”

The dual started at 125, where Suriano picked up a 12-3 major decision over James Szymanski courtesy of three takedowns, a reversal and two near-fall points. The major decision was the second of his dual season, as Suriano has now outscored his opponents, 105-31, in his seven dual matches in 2017-18.

Back-to-back wins over ranked opponents followed for the Scarlet Knights, beginning with DelVecchio's 5-2 come-from behind decision over No. 20 Zach Sherman. With Sherman leading 2-1, DelVecchio collected four points on the near fall for a 5-1 lead. DelVecchio continued to return Sherman to the mat for the duration of the period to secure the win and give RU a 7-0 lead in the dual.

With Van Brill's match tied 5-5 with No. 17 A.C. Headlee, Van Brill notched a reversal at the 1:02 mark in the final period. The Mullica, New Jersey, native would hold on for his second win over a ranked foe this season, which gave Rutgers a 10-0 lead after its first three matches of the night.

A tight 4-1 loss from No. 12 **Eleazar Deluca** to No. 5 Troy Heilmann, followed by a 16-4 major decision from North Carolina's Kennedy Monday over No. 12 **John Van Brill** made it a 10-7 match in favor of RU at intermission.

With Rutgers in need of a spark, Lewis provided one. In his match with Josh McClure, the Toms River, New Jersey, native earned seven takedowns, including two in the final period. The riding time point gave Lewis a 15-5 major decision, his third of the season and first in dual action since moving up to 165 pounds.

"My mindset has just been to challenge myself," Lewis said. "I wanted to go out there with a tremendous effort. I trained well, and I think I have pretty good technique, so it's about putting it together out there."

Grello followed Lewis with an impressive performance against Adis Radoncic. Grello took an early 2-0 lead with a takedown in the first period. The Bergen Catholic product was close to securing a major decision over Radoncic after his fourth takedown of the night gave him a 9-2 lead with riding time locked up. But Radoncic's escape in the closing seconds made it a 10-3 final and a 17-7 lead on the Tar Heels.

No. 10 **Nicholas Gravina** (184), **Kevin Mulligan** (197) and **Razohnn Gross** (HWT) all suffered close losses to wrestlers with NCAA championships experience, as the three losses made it a 17-17 tie. Thanks to the bonus points secured by RU, however, the Scarlet Knights left the RAC with their fourth dual win of the season and first over a ranked opponent in 2017-18.

Rutgers returns to action on Friday, Dec. 19 when it hosts Hofstra at the RAC on BTN Plus. The Scarlet Knights then travel to No. 19 Nebraska for a Big Ten Conference Dual on Sunday, Dec. 21, in Lincoln. That match will start at 2 p.m. ET.

"Here's the reality; we're wrestling a really difficult schedule, not only in our conference, but out of conference," Goodale said. "We picked up Lock Haven and North Carolina who is nationally ranked and can beat anyone on any given night. We're wrestling a really difficult schedule and you just have to stay the course."

Knight Notes

- Rutgers improved its all-time record over North Carolina to 4-1, with all four wins coming under **Scott Goodale**. Rutgers has won four consecutive duals in the series.
- The 18-17 win over the No. 24 Tar Heels was the second victory over a ranked opponent this season. RU defeated then-No. 19 Oklahoma, 22-9, on Nov. 11, 2017 at the Northeast Journeymen Duals.
- Rutgers has now wrestled four ranked opponents this season. Lock Haven, who was receiving votes when the Scarlet Knights competed against them, is now No. 20 in the *USA Today/NWCA Coaches Poll*.
- **Michael Van Brill** is now 2-2 versus ranked *Intermat* foes this season, which also includes a 3-2 decision over then-No. 16 Mike Longo (Oklahoma)
- **Scott DelVecchio** picked up his first win over a *Intermat* ranked opponent this season with his 7-5 win over No. 20 Zach Sherman.
- **Nick Suriano** is now 16-0 this season with three tech falls, two major decisions and two decisions in his first seven dual matches as a Scarlet Knight. Suriano has outscored his opponents, 105-31, in dual

action this season and 216-54 overall in 2017-18.

- **Richie Lewis** earned his third consecutive win with his 15-5 major decision Friday night. His two previous victories came against then-No. 11 Te'Shan Campbell (Ohio State) and then-No. 13 Anthony Valencia (Arizona State). Lewis is 8-2 since his move to 165 pounds.
- **Joe Grello** picked up his first career dual victory in Big Ten action.
- The dual victory was the first by criteria since it defeated then-No. 4 Nebraska, 17-16, on Dec. 12, 2015. The Scarlet Knights outscored the Cornhuskers, 51-48, in its decisions, major decisions and tech falls that night.

No. 17 Rutgers (4-3, 1-2) 18, No. 24 North Carolina (6-8, 0-0) 17

Dual decided by criterion 3.15.3, 70-64

Dual started at 125 pounds

Location: Rutgers Athletic Center, Piscataway, N.J.

Official: Nick Grosso

Attendance: 3,511

125: No. 2/2/2 Nick Suriano (RU) major decision over James Szymanski (UNC), 12-3; RU leads, 4-0

133: No. 16/14/13 Scott DelVecchio (RU) decision over No. 20/19/16 Zach Sherman (UNC), 6-2; RU leads, 7-0

141: Michael Van Brill (RU) decision over No. 17/17/15 A.C. Headlee (UNC), 7-5; RU leads, 10-0

149: No. 5/5/5 Troy Heilmann (UNC) decision over No. 12/12/11 Eleazar DeLuca (RU), 4-1; RU leads, 10-3

157: Kennedy Monday (UNC) major decision over No. 12/18/10 John Van Brill (RU), 16-4; RU leads, 10-7

165: No. 12/12/11 Richie Lewis (RU) major decision over Josh McClure (UNC), 15-5; RU leads, 14-7

174: Joseph Grello (RU) decision over Adis Radoncic (UNC), 10-3; RU leads, 17-7

184: Chip Ness (UNC) decision over No. 10/11/12 Nicholas Gravina (RU), 4-3; RU leads, 17-10

197: No. 17/14/19 Danny Chaid (UNC) major decision over Kevin Mulligan (RU), 18-8; RU leads, 17-14

HWT: Cory Daniel (UNC) decision over Razohnn Gross (RU), 5-3; Dual tied, 17-17

Rutgers wins dual, 18-17, by criterion 3.15.3, 70-64

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