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Wisconsin narrowly defeated by Rutgers

Badgers drop a 17-16 match by tiebreaker criteria

PISCATAWAY, N.J. – The No. 10 Wisconsin wrestling team almost left New Jersey with another Big Ten win, but just couldn't pull it out. The match ended in a tie, but No. 24 Rutgers took the tiebreaker criteria by total points to win the dual, 17-16.

It was a tight and back-and-forth affair all night between the two Big Ten opponents. Sophomore No. 16 Connor Brown got the Badgers (6-2, 1-2 B1G) off on the right foot as he earned an 8-2 decision over Shane Metzler at 125 pounds.

Rutgers (7-2, 1-1 B1G) took their first lead of the night in the next match at 133 pounds, as undefeated No. 2 Nick Suriano took down Wisconsin senior Jens Lantz with a 14-5 major decision.

But the Badgers jumped back in front after the next match. Junior No. 16 Tristan Moran trailed for most of his match against Peter Lipari at 141 pounds, but an escape and a clutch takedown in the third period propelled Moran to an 8-7 decision.

The flip-flopping ended as Rutgers strung together two consecutive victories at 149 and 157 pounds. At 149 pounds, No. 2 Anthony Ashnault of Rutgers defeated No. 13 junior Cole Martin, but only by a 12-6 decision after Martin secured a buzzer-beating takedown to prevent the major decision. At 157 pounds, No. 15 John Van Brill defeated UW freshman Devin Bahr by a 6-0 decision to extend Rutgers' lead.

After intermission, No. 3 sophomore Evan Wick got the Badgers back on track with a comfortable 14-4 major decision over Anthony Olivieri of Rutgers.

With the normal starter at 174 pounds, No. 10 senior Ryan Christensen, not traveling due to injury, the Badgers bumped up sophomore Patrick Spray, who normally competes at 157 this season, to face Joe Grello of Rutgers. Spray couldn't get much going, dropping a 5-0 decision, but admirably stepped in for the man-down Badgers to keep the score close.

The biggest upset of the night came at 184 pounds, when UW junior Mason Reinhardt knocked off No. 16 Nick Gravina with a 2-1 decision. Both wrestlers recorded an escape in the match to tie it at one late in the third. With four seconds left, the match was stopped for a quick injury timeout for Gravina. At the restart, Reinhardt chose down, and pulled off the fast escape to win at the buzzer.

Sophomore Beau Breske made his competitive debut for Wisconsin at 197 pounds, facing Matt Correnti of Rutgers. Breske hung strong through the first two periods, but a two point near fall and final takedown for Correnti gave him the 7-4 decision over Breske.

After nine matches, the Badgers found themselves trailing 16-13. No. 9 freshman Trent Hillger of Wisconsin faced Christian Colucci in the final match, and won by a 5-1 decision, tying the match at 16.

Ending in a tie, the dual then went to tiebreaker criteria. Rutgers took home the extra point and the win by virtue of scoring more total points on the night than Wisconsin.

Next up, Wisconsin travels to the home of No. 1-ranked Penn State (5-0, 1-0 B1G) this Sunday at 12 p.m.

Straight from the mat

Head Coach Chris Bono

On the team performance

"Very happy coming out here shorthanded and having our guys fighting their tails off. We got a bunch of fighters and a bunch of team players, guys moving up weight classes, guys filling in for people, and so I'm very happy with the team side of where we are at and where we are with each other.

On the top individual performances

"Very proud of Mason Reinhardt pulling off a big time upset against the No. 16 ranked wrestler in the country, and everybody else that did a great job for us. It's a tough place to wrestle, but I'm fired up about the effort and the hustle and the grit we showed."

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