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## Team effort propels Lehigh to second straight EIWA team title

VESTAL, N.Y. – Powered by a total team effort, the Lehigh wrestling team battled through a competitive team race to claim its second straight EIWA championship Saturday at Binghamton’s Events Center. The Mountain Hawks trailed Cornell by 20 points at one point during Saturday’s morning session but came back to win their second straight team title and league-best 36th overall.

Led by three individual champions: freshman Josh Humphreys (157), junior Jordan Kutler (174) and sophomore Jordan Wood (285), Lehigh scored 153 points to top the Big Red by 14. Nine wrestlers placed in the two-day tournament, with all nine finishing in the top six. The Mountain Hawks went 6-3 in Saturday’s final session and locked up the title when Cornell failed to get a fall in the 184 finals.

In all, Lehigh qualified eight wrestlers for the upcoming NCAA Championships in Pittsburgh.

“I’m proud of our team,” Lehigh head coach Pat Santoro said. “They competed really hard and that’s all I could really ask of them. We have a lot of great competitors on our team and they came out on top. We just wanted to wrestle well, and we did.”

Humphreys helped turn the tide in Lehigh’s favor Saturday on the way to becoming Lehigh’s first true freshman EIWA Champion since Randy Cruz in 2013. Cornell placed three in the finals at the first three weight classes, while Lehigh dropped its first two semifinals as the Big Red led by 20 after the 149 semifinals. Humphreys locked up Lehigh’s first finals berth using a strong start and strong top work to beat Princeton’s Quincy Monday 13-8.

Wrestling in Lehigh’s first finals bout of the final session, Humphreys looked to avenge a loss by fall to Bucknell’s Zach Hartman, and did just that with a pair of first period takedowns and a four-point near fall where he nearly stuck the Bison freshman for a fall. Reversals in the second and third periods gave Humphreys a 12-6 decision and Lehigh its first champion of the tournament.

“Josh wrestled a really tough opponent in Hartman so that was a really good win for him,” Santoro said. “The three freshmen in that weight class (Humphreys, Hartman, Monday) are going to have great careers. It will be exciting to watch those guys moving forward. Josh competes really hard. He’s good in all positions, and he’s dangerous.”

Humphreys received the Sheridan Trophy after the finals for the most falls in the championship bracket in the fastest time, racking up two falls on Friday in 3:50.

Following an 8-1 decision over Navy’s Spencer Carey in the semifinals, Kutler claimed his second straight EIWA title with a 3-1 decision over Cornell’s Brandon Womack. A late second period takedown was the difference for Kutler, who helped Lehigh inch closer to clinching the team title.

Wood had to do the least to win his second straight title. After beating Ben Sullivan 6-2 in the semifinals, Wood received a win by medical forfeit over Brown's Ian Butterbrodt in the heavyweight final.

Senior Ryan Preisch was Lehigh's fourth finalist, earning a spot in the finals by rallying for a 5-3 win over Binghamton's Lou DePrez in the semifinals at 184. Preisch trailed 3-2 in the third before scoring a takedown and then riding out to win. Preisch met Cornell's Max Dean in a rematch of last year's final, won by Preisch by fall, but Dean turned the tables, using a strong ride, a stalling point and an escape to win 3-0. Ultimately, Dean's inability to secure a pin clinched the team title for the Brown and White.

"Cornell did a good job game-planning for those two head-to-head finals matches," Santoro said. "It gives us something to work on when we get back. We need to open up a little more on both guys parts, so we'll work on that over the next two weeks."

Preisch did earn the Fletcher Award, given to the wrestler who scores the most team points at the EIWA Tournament in his career. Preisch scored 74.5 points placing 3-2-1-2 in four tournaments. He becomes the sixth wrestler to win all three major tournament awards (Fletcher, Sheridan and Coaches' Trophy for Outstanding Wrestler), having won the latter two last year. The previous five to accomplish the trifecta were Lehigh's Mark Lieberman, Gene Mills from Syracuse, Harvard's Jesse Jantzen and Kyle Dake and Gabe Dean from Cornell.

Sophomore Brandon Paetzell bounced back from a semifinal loss to American's Josh Terao to claim third place at 133. Paetzell rallied for a 5-2 win over Penn's Doug Zapf and then topped Zack Trampe of Binghamton 7-1 in the third place match.

Senior Gordon Wolf won three matches on Saturday to wrestle back for third at 165, highlighted by a first period fall against Princeton's Leonard Merkin.

A 1-0 win over Army's P.J. Ogunsanya vaulted senior Cortlandt Schuyler into the third place match at 149. Schuyler ran into top seed Matt Kolodzik of Princeton, who posted a 13-3 major decision.

Consolation semifinal victories for Paetzell, Wolf and Schuyler clinched NCAA Tournament berths for all three.

Lehigh's eighth NCAA qualifier is sophomore Jake Jakobsen who wrestled back from a quarterfinal loss to take fifth at 197. Jakobsen rode out the third period to defeat Army's Rocco Caywood 2-0 in the consolation quarterfinals to punch his ticket and capped his tournament with a 4-2 win over Army's Drew Phipps.

At 141, junior Ryan Pomrinca clinched top six by scoring a takedown in the second sudden victory period to beat Princeton's Marshall Keller 4-2, but then dropped his next two matches to finish in sixth place.

"Any time you win this tournament, it has to be a total team effort," Santoro said. "It's not just a few stars. Everybody won matches. Eight guys are going to nationals right now. It was a great team effort.

"If you asked me in December if we could do this when we were 0-7..." Santoro continued. "The guys got better. We never focused on a win after that. It kind of put things in perspective for everybody, and everybody got better. That was the key."

Lehigh's eight automatic qualifiers will now move on to the NCAA Championships, March 21-23 at PPG Paints Arena in Pittsburgh. At-large qualifiers will be announced Tuesday, while the seeds and brackets will be unveiled Wednesday.

The 2018-19 Lehigh wrestling season is presented by the Historic Hotel Bethlehem.

Top Five Team Scores

1. Lehigh 153
2. Cornell 139
3. Princeton 122.5
4. Army 106.5
5. Navy 92.5

125 – Luke Resnick – Eliminated Friday

First round: L by dec. No. 4 Trey Chalifoux (Army) 6-4

First round consolation: dec. Nolan Hellickson (Harvard) 6-2

Second round consolation: L by dec. Antonio Mininno (Drexel) 8-4

133 – No. 3 Brandon Paetzell – 3rd place

First round: major dec. Geo Barzona (Bucknell) 14-2

Quarterfinals: major dec. No. 6 Matt Kazimir (Columbia) 12-4

Semifinals: L by major dec. No. 2 Josh Terao (American) 14-3

Consolation semifinals: dec. No. 8 Doug Zapf (Penn) 5-2

Third place match: dec. No. 7 Zack Trampe (Binghamton) 7-1

141 – No. 3 Ryan Pomrinca – 6th place

First round: dec. Danny Fongaro (Columbia) 3-2

Quarterfinals: L by dec. No. 6 Corey Shie (Army) 3-3, tb2, rt

Second round consolation: major dec. Noah Levett (Bucknell) 14-5

Consolation quarterfinals: dec. No. 7 Marshall Keller (Princeton) 4-2, sv2

Consolation semifinals: L by dec. No. 5 Anthony Sparacio (Binghamton) 6-3

Fifth place match: L by dec. No. 8 Wil Gil (F&M) 9-8, tb

149 – No. 3 Cortlandt Schuyler – 4th place

First round: Fall Matt Kolonia (Bucknell) 0:54

Quarterfinals: dec. No. 6 Parker Kropman (Drexel) 16-10

Semifinals: L by dec. No. 2 Anthony Artalona (Penn) 6-3

Consolation semifinals: dec. PJ Ogunsanya (Army) 1-0

Third place match: L by major dec. No. 1 Matt Kolodzik (Princeton) 13-3

157 – No. 2 Josh Humphreys – 1st place

First round: Fall Chris Mauriello (Hofstra) 0:59

Quarterfinals: Fall No. 10 Joe Oliva (Penn) 2:51

Semifinals: dec. No. 3 Quincy Monday (Princeton) 13-8

Finals: dec. No. 1 Zach Hartman (Bucknell) 12-6

165 – No. 5 Gordon Wolf – 3rd place

First round: Fall Matt Swanson (Binghamton) 3:36

Quarterfinals: L by dec. No. 4 Cael McCormick 16-13

Second round consolation: dec. Evan DeLuise (Penn) 7-3

Consolation quarterfinals: dec. No. 9 Andrew Berreyesa (Cornell) 6-5

Consolation semifinals: Fall No. 10 Leonard Merkin (Princeton) 2:42

Third place match: dec. No. 1 Ebed Jarrell (Drexel) 13-11

174 – No. 1 Jordan Kutler – 1st place

First round: W by DQ Anthony Falbo (Sacred Heart) 4:47

Quarterfinals: dec. No. 9 Ricky Stamm (Hofstra) 9-4

Semifinals: dec. No. 4 Spencer Carey (Navy) 8-1

Finals: dec. No. 2 Brandon Womack (Cornell) 3-1

184 – No. 3 Ryan Preisch – 2nd place

First round: Fall Robert Ng (Penn) 2:19

Quarterfinals: major dec. No. 6 Tanner Harvey (American) 16-5

Semifinals: dec. No. 2 Lou DePrez (Binghamton) 5-3

Finals: L by dec. No. 1 Max Dean (Cornell) 3-0

197 – No. 7 Jake Jakobsen – 5th place

First round: Fall Tucker Ziegler (Brown) 7:00

Quarterfinals: L by dec. No. 2 Ben Honis (Cornell) 5-1

Second round consolation: W by injury default No. 8 Phil Robilotto (F&M) 2:51

Consolation quarterfinals: dec. No. 3 Rocco Caywood (Army) 2-0

Consolation semifinals: L by major dec. No. 4 Stephen Loiseau (Drexel) 13-3

Fifth place match: dec. No. 6 Drew Phipps (Bucknell) 4-2

285 – No. 1 Jordan Wood – 1st place

First round: Fall Brandon Stokes (Bucknell) 1:44

Quarterfinals: major dec. No. 9 Joe Doyle (Binghamton) 13-2

Semifinals: dec. No. 4 Ben Sullivan (Army) 6-2

Finals: W by medical forfeit No. 6 Ian Butterbrodt (Brown)

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