

Lehigh kicks off season with Brown and White Wrestle-offs

BETHLEHEM, Pa. – Lehigh held its annual Brown and White Wrestle-offs Thursday inside Leeman-Turner Arena at Grace Hall with fans treated to a little bit of everything at the annual intrasquad matches. Twelve bouts were contested, including four that produced bonus point wins while several others were tightly contested in the annual unofficial kickoff to wrestling season.

“It’s great to kick off another season,” Lehigh head coach Pat Santoro said. “This is the best venue to wrestle in the country, so it’s good to be back in Grace Hall.”

All three returning EIWA champions who competed produced victories, while five true freshmen made their Grace Hall debuts.

Surprisingly, the night featured zero overtime matches, which tend to happen during wrestle-off matches where teammates know each other so well.

“Obviously, first time out, so we have a lot to work on,” Santoro said. “The guys know each other so well. They’re battling. Some guys got a little frustrated. Some guys need to get their weight under control a little better, but that’s why we do this. We have a lot of good wrestlers but we’ve got to get healthy, stay healthy and get ready for the competitions we have coming up.”

Among the returning EIWA champions, junior Jordan Kutler and senior Ryan Preisch posted back-to-back major decision victories at 174 and 184. Kutler, the returning All-American, racked up five takedowns in a 13-4 major decision over junior Chase Gallik, while Preisch, the Outstanding Wrestler at last year’s EIWA Tournament, broke open a 4-0 match with three third period takedowns to win an 11-2 major over junior Andrew Prince.

The only bout not to go the full seven minutes followed Preisch and Price in the second bout at 184. And did didn’t even make it a quarter of a minute. Deferred freshman Eli Grape hit a quick cement job and scored a fall over true freshman Andrew Shedleski in a mere 11 seconds. Had it been an official match, the 11-second fall would have tied the school record for a fastest fall, set by Bob Sloand in 1974.

The other bonus-point win came from sophomore Joe Lobeck, who hit an early cement job for six points and went on to post a 12-0 major decision over freshman Brock Herring in the second of two matches at 141.

The first bout of the night at 141 was the closest of the night. Freshman Dan Moran was aggressive through seven minutes, but a first period takedown from junior Ryan Pomrinca stood up in a 3-2 decision.

Expected tight matches between veterans at 165 and 197 lived up to the billing. The scoring may have been lower than expected by junior Cole Walter used a third period takedown to edge senior Gordon

Wolf 4-2 at 165. Sophomores Jake Jakobsen and Kyle Gentile were tied 1-1 late in the third period, before Gentile scored a takedown late to win 3-1.

The first two bouts of the night were both decided by 9-5 scores, with sophomore Nick Farro topping freshman Jaret Lane at 125 and sophomore Brandon Paetzell besting freshman Mitchell Polito at 133.

In the only match pitting two true freshmen against one another, Josh Humphreys rode a pair of first period takedowns to a 7-3 decision over Brian Meyer at 157.

Sophomore Trey Cornish had an impressive five takedown performance in a 13-6 decision over junior Tyler Casamenti in the second bout at 165, while sophomore EIWA champion Jordan Wood closed out the night with an 8-1 win over freshman Victor Lacombe at 285.

“It was good to get down to weight and wrestle in front of a crowd,” Santoro said. “We had a pretty good turnout. It’s November 1 so nothing is completely decided with our lineup. Some weight classes are so competitive. We’re going to let it play out. We’re going to let guys get into open competition and see who does best. That’s going to be important. There’s a lot of wrestling to do before March.”

Lehigh will send a contingent of attached and unattached wrestlers to the Princeton Open, Sunday in New Jersey. The first official regular season date will be the Journeymen Collegiate Classic, Nov. 11 in Troy, N.Y. while the first dual meet will be at Michigan on Nov. 16. The Mountain Hawks’ home opener will be against Princeton on Friday, Nov. 30.

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

Wrestle-off Results

125 – Nick Farro dec. Jaret Lane 9-5
133 – Brandon Paetzell dec. Mitchell Polito 9-5
141 – Ryan Pomrinca dec. Dan Moran 3-2
141 – Joe Lobeck major dec. Brock Herring 12-0
157 – Josh Humphreys dec. Brian Meyer 7-3
165 – Cole Walter dec. Gordon Wolf 4-2
165 – Trey Cornish dec. Tyler Casamenti 13-6
174 – Jordan Kutler major dec. Chase Gallik 13-4
184 – Ryan Preisch major dec. Andrew Price 11-2
184 – Eli Grape Fall Andrew Shedleski 0:11
197 – Kyle Gentile dec. Jake Jakobsen 3-1
285 – Jordan Wood dec. Victor Lacombe 8-1
Attendance – 1,148
Official – Craig Salvatore

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