

Badgers take down the Bulls in Bono's coaching debut

Brown pin, Christensen tech fall lead Badgers to 25-12 win

MADISON, Wis. – The first dual for the No. 19 Wisconsin wrestling team under head coach Chris Bono ended in victory, as the Badgers (1-0-0) defeated Buffalo (0-1-0), 25-12, in front of a raucous crowd at the UW Field House tonight.

"What a great night," head coach Chris Bono said after the match. "The crowd really showed up, and I think it was an entertaining match, and I'm excited for our guys. It's been a long seven months, and I think that they performed really well. I love these guys, they fight hard, and by March we're going to be a really strong team."

The Field House got rocking early as sophomore Connor Brown made a statement with his debut at 125 pounds, pinning Buffalo's Kyle Akins in 4:40 to start the night off strong. Brown capped his performance with a strong celebration that got the crowd on their feet.

"It means a lot to me and I hope it means a lot to Coach Bono, Reader, McDonough and the fans," Brown said. "We're trying to start a culture here and I think that helped. My celebration was a little unorthodox, but you've got to let it fly, I guess."

Senior Ryan Christensen dominated his bout at 174 pounds, securing the tech fall with a 16-0 victory over Jake Lanning in 4:32.

Sophomore Evan Wick picked up right where he left off last year, narrowly missing the tech fall against Troy Keller, securing the 14-1 major decision at 165 pounds. Wick's match came with the score tied 9-9, and Wick tipped the scales back in Wisconsin's favor.

"It was a bit concerning, I felt that we definitely lost a lot of momentum," Wick said after the score was tied up. "I really just tried to stay calm. It's the first match of the season, and I think that was tough for a lot of guys. I found myself in class, and even a little bit before this match psyching myself out. I just had faith in my ability and my ability to get to attacks."

A pair of new Badger starters also took home victories. Junior Mason Reinhardt pummeled Logan Rill in the 184 match, defeating him 9-0 for the major decision. Making his competitive debut for the Badgers, freshman Trent Hillger toppled No. 18 ranked Jake Gunning of Buffalo in a grudge match, holding on for the 2-0 victory.

After winning the competition at 149 pounds, junior Cole Martin finished off Kyle Todrank with a takedown in the last 10 seconds to win 3-1.

The four Badgers who didn't win their matches, senior Jens Lantz, junior Tristan Moran, sophomore Zander Wick, and sophomore Brady Wetter, all fell by decision, preventing Buffalo from making any dent in the Badgers' lead.

In his first dual at the Field House and in front of the Badgers fans, Bono felt the

atmosphere right away.

"This place is unbelievable," Bono said. "The fans want to see us do well. That's all I heard about since the day I got here. They're going to show up and they're going to support us. Well, they showed up. We have a good product, we're going to wrestle hard, and we're going to make this place exciting. I thanked the crowd and we're going to make this place one of the toughest places to wrestle."

Next up, the Badgers will travel to Ames, Iowa for the Cyclone Open this Saturday, where every member of the team is expected to wrestle.

Results:

125: Connor Brown (WISC) over Kyle Akins (BUF) (Fall 4:40)
133: Derek Spann (BUF) over Jens Lantz (WISC) (Dec 7-4)
141: Bryan Lantry (BUF) over Tristan Moran (WISC) (Dec 7-3)
149: Cole Martin (WISC) over Kyle Todrank (BUF) (Dec 3-1)
157: Alex Smythe (BUF) over Zander Wick (WISC) (13-7)
165: Evan Wick (WISC) over Troy Keller (BUF) (MD 14-1)
174: Ryan Christensen (WISC) over Jake Lanning (BUF) (TF 16-0 4:32)
184: Mason Reinhardt (WISC) over Logan Rill (BUF) (MD 9-0)
197: Sam Schuyler (BUF) over Brady Wetter (WISC) (Dec 12-6)
285: Trent Hillger (WISC) over Jake Gunning (BUF) (Dec 2-0)

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