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Mountain Hawks Impress In 26-9 Home-Opening Win Over No. 15 Pitt

BETHLEHEM, Pa. – Lehigh welcomed back fans into Leeman-Turner Arena at Grace Hall for a dual meet for the first time in 21 months and treated the home fans to an impressive performance as the Mountain Hawks took down No. 15 Pitt 26-9 Sunday afternoon. The Mountain Hawks won seven bouts, scoring bonus points in three, and knocked off two top five-ranked Panthers to emerge victorious in their home opener.

“It was really a great day,” Lehigh head coach Pat Santoro said. “It is what we have seen out of our team all spring and summer. We hadn’t been opening up, but today we were gritty and that was the difference in the match. Our coaches had a great game plan. It was just a really good day. We had two top-10 wins, which is really big.”

Junior Jaret Lane opened the dual with a 4-1 win over Colton Camacho at 125, but the first real fireworks of the day came at 133 as freshman Malyke Hines scored a defensive pin against fifth-ranked Micky Phillippi in the final seconds of their bout. Hines scored a takedown in the first period and then led 4-2 in the third period following a reversal. Phillippi escaped and then scored a takedown of his own to go up 5-4 late, but Hines went headhunting late in the bout and was able to hold Phillippi down with referee Scott Bricker calling the fall at 6:57.

“Malyke felt confident,” Santoro said. “We tell our guys that we have a game plan but if they feel something different, then you change it up, and he did. Malyke did a great job. I thought he was going to put him on his back, but the headhunting worked too. That’s a big win and it will be important for him down the road.”

Pitt picked up its first win at 141 as Cole Matthews beat junior Dan Moran 7-4.

At 149, freshman Manzona Bryant IV started an impressive four-match run for the Mountain Hawks with a 16-5 major decision over Luke Kemerer. Bryant scored four takedowns in the opening period and added a four point near fall to lead 12-3 after one, and never looked back.

Junior Josh Humphreys used a second period ride out and third period escape to defeat Elijah Cleary 2-0 at 157, giving Lehigh a 16-3 lead at the halfway point.

Sophomore Brian Meyer came out of intermission with the biggest win of his career, knocking off fourth ranked, and returning NCAA finalist Jake Wentzel 4-3 at 165. Meyer scored a first period takedown off a strong low single leg shot. The bout was tied 2-2 in the third when Meyer countered a Wentzel throw attempt and secured the Panther’s legs for two. Wentzel escaped to get back within a point but Meyer was able to hold on for the victory.

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Every year he keeps getting a little bit better, Santoro said of Meyer. If you do that over time you can get really, really good. That was a great win for him today and should give him a lot of momentum.

Freshman Jake Logan also used a strong third period to pick up his first dual win of the season. Trailing Hunter Kernan 3-1 early in the third, Logan scored two takedowns, the second with about 10 seconds remaining, and rode out from there to rally for a 5-4 decision, which put the Mountain Hawks up 22-3.

The Panthers picked up wins by decision from Gregg Harvey at 184 and second ranked Nino Bonaccorsi at 197 before senior heavyweight Jordan Wood capped the victory with a 13-3 major decision over Jake Slinger. Wood gave up the first takedown but then took control of the match with 12 unanswered points.

“We hadn’t been in here with fans in a couple of years, but it felt like old Grace Hall,” Santoro said. “It helps when your guys go out there and get some really big wins early. It got the crowd behind us and the momentum just kept going our way.”

Both teams stand at 2-1 on the season. Lehigh’s win snaps a two-dual winning streak for Pitt in the series, which the Mountain Hawks now lead 45-19-2.

The Mountain Hawks will be off over Thanksgiving weekend and will return to action at Lock Haven on Saturday, Dec. 4 at 1 p.m. The following day, Lehigh heads to No. 2 Penn State for the 109th edition of its most-contested dual series.

The 2021-22 Lehigh wrestling season is presented by the Historic Hotel Bethlehem.

Lehigh 26, No. 15 Pitt 9

125 – Jaret Lane (Lehigh) dec. Colton Camacho (Pitt) 4-1

133 – Malyke Hines (Lehigh) Fall Micky Phillippi (Pitt) 6:57

141 – Cole Matthews (Pitt) dec. Dan Moran (Lehigh) 7-4

149 – Manzona Bryant IV (Lehigh) major dec. Luke Kemerer (Pitt) 16-5

157 – Josh Humphreys (Lehigh) dec. Elijah Cleary (Pitt) 2-0

165 – Brian Meyer (Lehigh) dec. Jake Wentzel (Pitt) 4-3

174 – Jake Logan (Lehigh) dec. Hunter Kernan (Pitt) 5-4

184 – Gregg Harvey (Pitt) dec. AJ Burkhart (Lehigh) 5-2

197 – Nino Bonaccorsi (Pitt) dec. JT Davis (Lehigh) 10-4

285 – Jordan Wood (Lehigh) major dec. Jake Slinger (Pitt) 13-3

Attendance – 1,433

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