

PENN STATE PINS LEHIGH PSU 24 Lehigh 13

Penn State vs. Lehigh is a long-standing Eastern Rivalry and the dual meet at Penn State's Rec Hall on January 5, 2003 was full of excitement with lots of scrambling and pinning. The meet started at 125 and the strong start by the Penn State lightweights got the crowd of 2200 plus fired up.

In addition to the thousands who witnessed the action in Rec Hall, many more were able to watch the match from their home as it was televised live on FOX Sports Pittsburgh. I enjoyed doing the color commentary, and I worked hard to educate the public about our great sport.

Penn State 24 Lehigh 13

125: Adam Smith (PSU) dec. Mario Stuart, 3-1 OT - PSU 3 Lehigh 0

During regulation Smith worked to control the 2 on 1 and came close to a couple takedowns. Stuart shot a few doubles legs but could not finish. In OT Smith hit a high crotch and Stuart tried to counter with a flying cement job which proved to be his "sudden death" and "sudden victory" for Smith. When using the 2 on 1 control tie you must circle to side of the 2 on 1 and hang and pull hard on the arm to set-up scoring attacks and wear down your opponent.

133: Josh Moore (PSU) WBF over Terrence Clendenin - PSU 9 Lehigh 0

Josh Moore came out aggressively and locked up what I call a "Cruncher" – a Reverse Head Lock Sag Throw. Moore threw Clendenin to his back and as Clendenin bellied down, Moore put the legs in and scored with power half. He then finished the match with a power half and body scissors for a first period fall.

Although Clendenin was moved up a weight class to fill in for Cory Cooperman, who missed weight, I thought this would be a competitive match. Clendenin and Moore had wrestled close matches in the past. However, Moore had a good game plan and wasted no time taking charge.

Aggressive wrestling wins Championships! Legs are the best ways to ride, wear down, and turn a tough opponent. At high levels of competition, parallel legs with a power half is usually the most effective scoring technique used with legs.

141: Dewitt Driscoll (PSU) dec. Tristan Boyd, 6-5 - PSU 12 Lehigh 0

Redshirt freshman, Dewitt Driscoll, came out excited and scored with a textbook high crotch to a lift finish within the first 20 seconds. It looked like Driscoll was picking up where he left off at the Mat Town Tournament, where he won the OW Award defeating nationally ranked, Mike Maney and Scott Moore, on way to the Championship. However, Boyd was able to slow down the pace as both wrestlers attempted and almost finished a couple Fireman's Carries and dumps. In the 2nd period Driscoll later countered a poor shot with a snap and spin takedown. Boyd launched a comeback in the 3rd period, but fell short.

Most of the time the wrestler who comes out aggressively and scores the first takedown wins.

149: Scott Moore (PSU) WBF over Tom Rohn - PSU 18 Lehigh 0

Penn State weighed in both Moore and Driscoll at 141 and bumped Moore to 149 to face Rohn. The strategy worked. Rohn came out aggressively with a good high crotch and got to his feet but did not finish explosively like Driscoll had in the previous match. Moore neck wrenched Rohn to his back and when Rohn bellied down it was like déjà vu. Scott Moore threw in the legs like his twin brother had earlier and quickly cranked Rohn over with a power half for a first period fall.

When executing a high crotch and driving to your feet, you must finish across to a double quickly or execute a good lift. The longer you hesitate, the more opportunity your opponent has to defend and counter-attack with moves like the flying cement job and neck wrench.

157: Derek Zinck (Lehigh) dec. Nathan Galloway, 5-2 - PSU 18 Lehigh 3

Galloway weighed in at 149 but was bumped up to 157. Zinck used the over-under control tie to control the ties and tempo of the match. Zinck scored a counter takedown, escape, and stalling points to Galloway's two escapes.

Control ties are important. All wrestlers must learn to score from and clear out of control ties such as underhooks, over-under, 2 on 1's, and Front Headlock.

165: Troy Letters (Lehigh) maj. dec. Doc Vecchio, 10-2 - PSU 18 Lehigh 7

Letters wrestled a great match in all positions. He scored with a head pull sweep single in the first 15 seconds. He rode aggressively with a combination of a crab ride, legs, and 2 on 1 tilt attempts. Letters escaped quickly and kept the heat on Vecchio throughout the match. He used a Front Headlock Go Behind and Body Lock Trip to score two more takedowns. Letters was winning by 6 points with 10 seconds to go and he scored with a slide-by to secure a major decision. It was a very impressive performance by this redshirt freshman who is destined to achieve much success.

Great wrestlers are complete wrestlers who are good in all three positions – top, bottom and standing. They also have the ability to score from their feet in a variety of ways. Great wrestlers can score with leg attacks, upper body attacks and counter-attacks. Troy Letters was able to do all three of these things in his match against 2002 All-American, Doc Vecchio. It was an impressive performance.

174: Brad Dillon (Lehigh) dec. Dan Waters, 16-9 - PSU 18 Lehigh 10

Dillon came out aggressively scoring primarily with head inside sweep singles. As the match wore on Waters defended himself against the leg attacks, but Dillon was able to score with a couple of Front Headlock "Head in the Hole" techniques.

The head inside single is the #1 takedown at all levels of wrestling. Make sure you are spending time daily working to perfect your single leg set-ups and finishes. The Front Headlock is a very effective counter. Make sure you know how to use it and counter it.

184: Mark Becks (PSU) dec. Travis Frick, 7-2 - PSU 21 Lehigh 10

Becks used a low single to a sweep single to score his first takedown and then pulled away as the match wore on. The key to finishing the single leg is to get it in the air quickly or to cut the corner with good pressure across and attack the far leg with a "reach behind" technique. There are numerous subtleties and variations to finishing the single leg. You must spend time perfecting this position.

197: Jon Trence (Lehigh) dec. Ryan Cummins, 3-1 - PSU 21 Lehigh 13

Not much happened in this match. Trence scored with a high single leg and "dump" finish and escaped easily to earn his 3 points. The High Single is a very high percentage move that more wrestlers should use. It is not just for big guys. If more coaches spent more time drilling their wrestlers on high single legs, we would see more high leg attacks in competition. Many excellent coaches who have influenced my career have encouraged me to drill and perfect the high single.

HWT: Pat Cummins (PSU) dec. Joe Sahl, 5-2 - Final Score - PSU 24 Lehigh 13

Cummins scored with a high leg attack in second period, and then a go behind in the 3rd period when Sahl took a mediocre shot and got stopped underneath.

Heavyweight wrestlers need to work the head more and fight more to control ties to create more scoring opportunities. Aggressive, physical heavyweights should be able to score with drags, ducks, slide-bys, and throw-bys, as well as high leg attacks. Kerry McCoy is able to effectively execute all these techniques in addition to committing to traditional shots hitting his knees as needed. Quick heavyweights who create lots of motion like Tommy Rowlands should be able to cut the corner on sweep singles against slower opponents. Too few heavyweights take the time to move their opponent enough to set-up a good shot.

Note that one week after Penn State beat Lehigh at Rec Hall, Lehigh defeated Penn State at the Virginia Duals. Although I listened to it on the radio, I was not there so I cannot share technique tips from that great dual meet. The key difference the second time around was that Lehigh wrestled two different wrestlers at 125 and 133. Terrence Clendenin won a decision at 125, while Cory Cooperman defeated Scott Moore at 133.

Although I do not expect Lehigh or Penn State to be in the Top 5 at the NCAA Championships this season, we will have to wait until NCAA's to determine who the best team in Pennsylvania is this year. Lehigh has two PA greats in their line-up, Troy Letters and Jon Trence, who I believe will place very high at the NCAA Tournament, along with a couple of others who could place. Penn State has numerous individuals who can place at nationals and become All-Americans if they wrestle tough in the close matches. Here is one Penn State alum who is hoping that the Nittany Lions are able to rise to the occasion when it matters most at the Big Ten and NCAA Championships.

#22 Penn State 24, #8 Lehigh 13 PS L

125 Adam Smith (PS) dec. Mario Stuart (L), 3-1;sv 3 0
133 #7 Josh Moore (PS) fall over Terrance Clendenin (L), F;1:33 9 0
141 DeWitt Driscoll (PS) dec. Tristan Boyd (L), 6-5 12 0
149 #18 Scott Moore (PS) fall over Tommy Rohn (L), F;1:42 18 0
157 #9 Derek Zinck (L) dec. Nate Galloway (PS), 5-2 18 3
165 #6 Troy Letters (L) Maj. Dec. Doc Vecchio (PS), 10-2 18 7
174 #18 Brad Dillon (L) dec. Dan Waters (PS), 16-9 18 10
184 #7 Mark Becks (PS) dec. Travis Frick (L), 7-2 21 10
197 #2 Jon Trence (L) dec. Ryan Cummins (PS), 4-1 21 13
Hwt. #7 Pat Cummins (PS) dec. Joe Sahl (L), 5-2 24 13