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## Penn Outlasts Leopards, Wins 76-73

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EASTON, Pa. - In a game that featured 10 ties and 15 lead changes, Penn outlasted Lafayette 78-73 on Wednesday evening at Kirby Sports Center. Jim Mower's 20 points and Ryan Willen's second double-double of the season were not enough for the Leopards, who lost their third consecutive game.

Willen finished with 19 points and 10 rebounds as he and Mower each were a perfect 7-for-7 from the free throw line, part of an 18-for-20 team effort from the stripe.

Penn took a 13-7 lead out of the gate prior to Lafayette scoring seven straight points to take a 14-13 lead at 10:45. The spurt included a lay-in in traffic by Les Smith and a three-point play by Willen on a jumper from just inside the arc. Zack Rosen's trey ended the mini-run and put the Quakers back ahead 16-14 with 10:13 showing.

A backdoor feed from Smith to Mower and his reverse lay-in pulled Lafayette within one at 20-19 before Rosen scored five consecutive points to put the Quakers up 25-19 at the 8:44 mark. Steve Rennard's steal and layup gave Penn its largest first-half lead (27-19). Five free throws from Mower, who scored 10 in the first 20 minutes, cut the deficit to three with just under five minutes remaining in the half. Rosen led all first-half scorers with 13 points.

Penn's Tyler Bernardini knocked down two three's surrounding Joey Ptasinski's triple and Penn held a 33-27 lead with 2:58 on the first-half clock. Bernardini was one of four players in double figures, finishing with 17.

Lafayette ripped off a 9-0 run to end the half sparked by Seth Hinrichs' top of the key long ball and back-to-back three's from Ptasinski, giving Lafayette a 36-33 halftime advantage.

The visitors scored the first six out of the break to go up 39-36 but then Lafayette went on an 11-2 run, forcing a Penn timeout 4:09 into the second half. Willen connected on two corner threes to ignite the stretch, while Mower netted the next five on a baseline jumper and wing three putting Lafayette up 47-41.

Fourteen of the next 16 points came from the free throw line, 11 from the visitors, tying the score at 52. Both teams reached the bonus at the 13:44 mark of the half.

Lafayette regained the lead 54-52 on Willen's off balance bucket in the lane, but Miles Cartwright hit a corner three on the next Penn possession to go back up 55-54 at 9:10. Dan Trist then used a spin move and pump fake for two as Lafayette went back in front by one, 56-55.

The teams traded baskets until Rosen's three-pointer broke the 59-59 deadlock. Rosen netted a game-high 24 on four three-pointers and added four assists that made him Penn's all-time assist leader, surpassing his head coach Jerome Allen.

Two Rob Delaney free throws cut it to one at 6:04 when both teams were in the double-bonus. Consecutive Rob Belcore layups gave the Quakers a five-point edge before two successful trips to the line for Willen made it 66-65 at 4:17. Two three's from Bernardini and Cartwright provided Penn its biggest lead since the 6:02 mark of the opening half.

Trailing 72-65 with the shot clock at two, Mower rattled home a fadeaway corner three to close the gap to four with 1:55 remaining. A Penn traveling violation gave the ball back to Lafayette with 44 seconds to play and Nick Petkovich drained a three to cut the deficit to 72-71 with 29.1 on the clock.

Two free throws from Rosen, a quick Delaney layup and two more Rosen freebies made the score 76-73 with 28 seconds left. Mower misfired on two contested three-point attempts on the final possession as Lafayette dropped its third consecutive game.

Lafayette opens Patriot League play at 7 p.m. on Saturday at Navy. The game can be seen on GoLeopards.com.

NOTES: Lafayette shot 18-of-20 (90%) from the line, its best effort of the season. Freshman Dan Trist started his fifth game of the season, scoring seven points in 18

minutes.

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