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Lafayette Falls To American 76-69

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Lafayette cut a 14-point halftime deficit to five on three occasions in the final minutes, but the comeback fell short on Saturday as American held on for a 76-69 win in the Patriot League regular-season finale.

Fifth-seeded Lafayette will now play fourth-seeded Holy Cross on Wednesday in the Patriot League Tournament Quarterfinal in Worcester, Mass. The teams split the season series with each team winning on the other's home court. The Crusaders were Lafayette's first-round opponent in the 2011 tournament when Lafayette advanced to the Patriot League championship game.

Ryan Willen had his third double-double of the season and seventh of his career, finishing with 16 points and 13 rebounds. The Leopards outrebounded a Patriot League opponent for the third time this season, 45-31, the team's largest rebound margin of the season. Seth Hinrichs pulled down a career-high eight rebounds to go with Willen's career-best performance.

Lafayette (12-17, 7-7) and American (19-10, 10-4) traded 7-0 runs to open the game with AU taking its first and Lafayette responding. The game was tied 9-9 at the 12:33 mark. The Eagles ripped off a 20-2 run. Tony Wroblicky had five points in the span and Mike Bersch added two three-pointers and Charles Hinkel contributed another as AU led 29-11 with 4:48 left in the opening stanza.

Hinrichs stopped the AU spurt with a drive and dunk. American led by as many as 20

twice in the first half and held a 36-22 advantage at intermission. Lafayette shot 30 percent from the floor in the first half including 1-for-11 from long range.

The Leopards came out of the locker room with renewed intensity, slicing the American lead to 10 (53-43) with 10:39 left on Jim Mower's three-pointer from the top of the arc off a Hinrichs' feed. Mower finished with 10 points as one of three Lafayette players in double figures.

Two minutes later, Bersch put back a missed Hinkle jumper to push the AU lead back to 14. Nick Petkovich followed with a three, and three free throws from Willen moved the deficit to eight (57-49) with 5:49 left.

Troy Brewer (13 points) nailed two crucial three-pointers on consecutive possessions and Daniel Munoz added a layup as American led 65-51 with 4:41 left. Rob Delaney, who finished with 14 points, drained a three-pointer with 1:37 left to put the score at 68-62.

Willen's layup with 1:19 left in the game put the Eagles' advantage at five and again with 37 seconds remaining on two more Willen foul shots. The Leopards pressured the inbounds pass but Blake Jolivette sneaked away down the court to put in a layup that ran the final to 76-69.

Lafayette shot 37 percent for the game and 7-for-28 from three-point land. The Eagles fared better from long distance, converting 10-of-17 (59%) while shooting 47 percent from the floor.

[Click here for the game's full box score.](#)

Editor's Note: Alan Flannigan returned to action for the Leopards after missing several games due to concussion symptoms. The freshman saw limited minutes, but took a step in the right direction by getting back on the court.

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