

ASU Defeats Defending-Champion Chattanooga

Written by Paul Blascovich

Monday, 06 February 2012 08:00

In a fight for the top spot in the Southern Conference standings, Appalachian State University wrestling triumphed over seven-time defending SoCon champion Chattanooga, 21-17, in a clash of the league's unbeaten teams

at MacLellan Gym on Sunday. Senior Savva Kostis' (Boone, N.C./Watauga) overtime pin highlighted the Apps' performance as the Mountaineers (10-3, 4-0 SoCon) defeated the Mocs (11-4, 4-1 SoCon) for the first time since the 2002-03 season. With Appalachian's victory, only VMI and Davidson stand in the Mountaineers' way from ASU's first undefeated league performance since the team's last regular-season crown in 2002-03; a win against either SoCon opponent would clinch at least a share of the title.

For the seven-time defending SoCon regular-season and tournament champion Chattanooga, Sunday's conference loss was its first since Feb. 2004 and may signal the end of the Mocs' championship dynasty in the league.

Chattanooga got on the scoreboard first with a 7-3 decision. Appalachian's leader in career victories, No. 12 Austin Trotman (Winston-Salem, N.C./Mount Tabor), quickly responded at 184, needing only 1:34 to pin his opponent and put the Mountaineers on top 6-3. Freshman Paul Weiss (Ft. Lauderdale, Fla./St. Thomas Aquinas) earned a critical win at 197 pounds, outscoring his opponent 6-1 in the third period en route to an 8-3 decision, extending the ASU lead to 9-3.

Looking to break the Appalachian momentum, Chattanooga rattled off three straight wins, including two major decisions, at the next three classes. UTC retook the lead and built a 14-9 advantage. ASU senior Mike Kessler (Bay City, Mich./Western) broke the streak at 141 pounds, notching three takedowns in an eventual 8-2 decision.

With the Mountaineers still trailing, 12-14, Kostis came to the mat for his memorable match. After a scoreless first period, Moc Kelly Felix scored the first point on an escape in the second, and Kostis answered to break free in the third, sending the bout to overtime at 1-1.

More than two-thirds through the sudden-victory period, Kostis recorded the winning takedown. With a near-fall imminent, the match continued, and not settling for a mere decision, the Mountaineer capitalized on his position and pulled out the pin in 7:48 total. With six team points, Appalachian State pulled ahead, 18-14, and the victory also marked ASU's first overtime dual-meet win in three attempts this season.

With two bouts remaining, Chattanooga continued to fight and earned a 5-2 decision at 157 to bring the score to 18-17 with one match to go.

Finally, it was Appalachian senior Kyle Blevins' (Sapulpa, Okla./Sapulpa) turn on the mat. Ranked No. 16 in the nation, Blevins was challenged by his opponent but never wavered. After the third stanza began with the score tied, 2-2, Blevins escaped five seconds into the period and added a crucial takedown to earn a 6-3 victory and seal the monumental, 21-17 win for ASU. With their 10th win of the year, the Mountaineers now have their most victories in a season during the tenure of head coach JohnMark Bentley and have clinched their first winning season since 2007-08.

Having completed the team's road schedule, Appalachian now returns home for four-straight matches to conclude the regular season. ASU hosts VMI on Friday and No. 20 Virginia on

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Saturday with both matches scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Next weekend, Appalachian concludes with Duke on Sat., Feb. 18 at 6 p.m. and Davidson on senior day, Sun., Feb. 19 at 2 p.m.

Appalachian State 21, Chattanooga 17

Jan. 5, 2012 | Chattanooga, Tenn. | Maclellan Gym

174: Levi Clemons (UTC) dec. Carter Downs (ASU) 7-3. UTC, 0-3
184: No. 12 Austin Trotman (ASU) pinned Cory Canada (UTC) 1:34. ASU, 6-3
197: Paul Weiss (ASU) dec. Robert Prigmore (UTC) 8-3. ASU, 9-3
285: Kevin Malone (UTC) dec. Joe Cummings (ASU) 6-4. ASU, 9-6
125: Manuel Ramirez (UTC) maj. dec. Tony Gravely (ASU) 13-1. UTC, 9-10
133: No. 13 Nick Soto (UTC) maj. dec. Brett Boston (ASU) 14-3. UTC, 9-14
141: Mike Kessler (ASU) dec. Shawn Greevy (UTC) 8-2. UTC, 12-14
149: Savva Kostis (ASU) pinned Kelly Felix (UTC) 7:48. ASU, 18-14
157: Daniel Waddell (UTC) dec. Chip Powell (ASU) 5-2. ASU, 18-17
165: No. 16 Kyle Blevins (ASU) dec. Brandon Wright (UTC) 6-3. ASU, 21-17

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Photo Courtesy: Savva Kostis, ASU Athletics