

Zanna, Johnson Lead Cougars Past Lehigh, 77-58

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[box score](#)

PITTSBURGH (AP)-Talib Zanna scored a career-high 23 points to with 14 rebounds and Pittsburgh made quick work of Lehigh 77-58 on Wednesday night.

Durand Johnson chipped in career-high 15 points for the Panthers (4-0), who had little trouble with the well-traveled Mountain Hawks after racing to an early 23-point lead. James Robinson added a career-high 11 assists without turning it over as Pitt cruised. The Panthers have won their four games by an average of 26 points.

Tim Kempton led Lehigh with 20 points but the Mountain Hawks (1-4) couldn't keep pace. Playing its fourth road game in 12 days, Lehigh made just four of its first 19 shots and never got within 18 points over the final 34 minutes.

The Panthers will head to Brooklyn next week for the Legends Classic semifinals against Texas Tech.

Pitt will take its traditional smothering defense to New York, but now it is accompanied by an offense that appears to be intent on fulfilling coach Jamie Dixon's preseason promise to play at a faster pace.

Having willing shooters helps.

A game after setting a school-record by shooting 81 percent in the first half of a romp over Howard, Pitt kept it going. The Panthers raced to a quick 32-11 lead led by Zanna and Johnson and some quick passing that set up easy shots.

Johnson knocked down five 3-pointers in the first half alone, coming up one short of the program mark for 3-pointers in a half. Several came from well behind the line, as he had little trouble shooting over the extended arms of the undersized Mountain Hawks, who have away several inches at nearly every position.

Lehigh eventually steadied itself behind Kempton, whose father Tim Kempton Sr. played for nine NBA teams during a journeyman career. Using a variety of moves, including a jump hook and a nifty up and under, Kempton more than held his own with Zanna.

It's the rest of the Mountain Hawks that had trouble keeping up. By the time Johnson hit a 3-pointer from the right corner with time winding down in the half, Pittsburgh led by 24.

Lehigh managed to slow things down a bit in the second half. By then, however, the damage was done.

The Panthers outrebounded Lehigh 44-21, turned it over only nine times while finishing with 20 assists on 29 field goals.

Zanna's efficiency made pushing the assist total up easy. He made 9 of 10 shots, not all of them layups or dunks at the rim. The senior has worked hard at developing an outside touch and drilled a pair of feathery 17-footers in the game's opening minutes.

For all his progress on offense, however, Zanna remains a work in progress on the other end of the floor. He had his hands full with Kempton, playing in just the fifth game of his career.

Still, he was more than enough to help Pitt remain unbeaten heading into its first real test next week.

