

Huge first half leads Lehigh over William & Mary, 82-57

[box score](#)

LYNCHBURG, Va. - The Lehigh men's basketball team outscored William & Mary 40-7 over the final 13:29 of the first half, and cruised from there, downing the Tribe, 82-57 on Friday evening in a neutral site game as part of the 2K Sports Classic benefiting Coaches vs. Cancer. The junior class of Gabe Knutson, C.J. McCollum and Holden Greiner combined for 45 points, 35 coming in the first half. With the win the Mountain Hawks even their overall record at 2-2.

"I thought it was a tremendous collaborative effort," said Lehigh head coach Brett Reed. "We were in sync defensively, communication was high and we were challenging all the shots. Then on the offensive end, it was good to be able to establish an interior presence. Ultimately, I thought everyone we played tonight really contributed a strong game."

Knutson led the way with 16 points while McCollum had 15 and Greiner added 14 along with a team-leading seven rebounds. Freshman Stefan Cvrkalj also reached double-figures with 10 via 4-of-7 shooting. The Mountain Hawks finished with 12 steals while forcing over 20 turnovers for the second straight game.

The 25-point win marked Lehigh's largest since a 66-38 victory over NJIT on Dec. 31, 2008.

The game was close in the early going as William & Mary's Quinn McDowell hit a three-pointer with 13:29 remaining to pull the Tribe within 8-7, but that's when the Mountain Hawks took over. From there, they went on a 40-7 run to close out the half with a 48-14 advantage.

Lehigh began with a 12-0 run, which included six points from Knutson. He capped it off with a dunk to make it 20-7 with 10:01 to go. McDowell hit a trey to make it 20-10, but Lehigh responded with eight straight. That run wrapped up with five straight points from Greiner, who finished with all 14 of his points in the first.

The success continued as Greiner and Knutson finished with a combined 26 first-half points while McCollum added nine, including a three-pointer with just four seconds remaining. That was preceded by an emphatic fast break dunk by Knutson with just 46 seconds remaining. Greiner had added his third three-pointer of the half with just over one minute remaining.

William & Mary came out of the locker room strong, scoring nine of the first 15 second-half points to make it 54-23 with 16:31 remaining, but Lehigh staged a 10-0 run capped off by a McKnight three-point play to make it 64-23 with 13:28 to go.

The Tribe continued to be relentless, pulling to within 27 (73-46) following a Marcus Thornton layup with 4:16 remaining, but the Mountain Hawks continued to have answers as a three-point play from senior John Adams helped Lehigh regain a 30-point, 76-46 lead with 3:18 remaining. Cvrkalj continued his hot shooting by nailing a jumper with 2:24 to go, then hitting a three-pointer the following possession to make it 82-51 with 1:35 remaining. William & Mary scored the game's final six points over the final 1:13, but it wasn't nearly enough.

Lehigh finished at 49 percent (30-of-61) from the field, 36 percent (8-of-22) from three-point range. William & Mary shot 37 percent (18-of-49) including 33 percent (5-of-15) from long range. The Tribe held a slim 36-35 edge in rebounds.

Lehigh continues its stay in the 2K Sports Classic Subregionals Saturday when it plays host Liberty at the Vines Center. The Mountain Hawks round out their stay when they play Eastern Kentucky Sunday at 2:30 p.m.

