

Thornton treble paces Bobcats past Crusaders, 5-0

Written by LMC Sports Information
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Freshman Meagan Thornton (Millville, N.J.) recorded her first collegiate hat trick on Saturday to lead the Lees-McRae College women's soccer team to a 5-0 win over North Greenville University in Conference Carolinas play at Tate Field.

Lees-McRae (3-2, 3-0 CC) posted its third straight clean sheet in conference play, outshooting North Greenville (2-3, 1-1 CC) by a 34-1 margin, including a 16-0 advantage in the first half. Thornton tallied the first treble of her career, swelling her season total to five goals, which is tied for the team lead with sophomore MaryBeth Sullivan (Greensboro, N.C.) who pushed her goal-scoring streak to three matches with a tally of her own.

Senior Mary Dorn (Shallotte, N.C.) posted her first goal of the season for the Bobcats, while Allyson Titsworth (Holmes Beach, Fla.) added a pair of assists. Senior Jessica O'Leary (Millbury, Mass.) also added an assist, while Kaitlyn Briggs (Oviedo, Fla.) played the full 90 minutes between the pipes to earn her second clean sheet of the season.

Thornton put the Bobcats on the board late in the 18th minute, taking a perfect lead pass from O'Leary on the flank and delivering a masterful finish past the keeper to give LMC an early 1-0 lead. Dorn doubled the advantage midway through the 33rd minute, lacing a free kick from 40 yards distance past the keeper to push the lead to 2-0.

Thornton notched her second of the day in the 40th minute, accepting a pass from Titsworth at the top of the area and delivering a well-placed finish into the lower left corner of the net to send the Bobcats into the interval with a 3-0 advantage.

The Bobcats maintained the three-goal margin until the early moments of the 69th minute, when Thornton intercepted a pass in North Greenville's defensive third and beat the keeper with a brilliant left-footed finish from the top of the area. Sullivan tallied the final goal of the match at the death of the 80th minute, delivering a perfect finish into the back of the net following a well-placed through ball by Titsworth.

Lees-McRae returns to the pitch on Monday as the Bobcats travel to Jefferson City, Tenn. to take on NCAA Division II Southeast Region foe Carson-Newman College in a 6 p.m. matchup.

Shahdad header lifts Bobcats past Crusaders in extra time thriller

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Freshman Preston Shahdad (Charlotte, N.C.) picked as good a time as any to score his first collegiate goal on Saturday night, delivering the match-winner in the 10th minute of extra time to lead the Lees-McRae College men's soccer team to a 1-0 win over North Greenville University in Conference Carolinas play at Tate Field.

Lees-McRae (4-2, 2-1 CC) outshot North Greenville (2-3, 1-1 CC) by a 20-16 margin, including an 11-5 advantage in the first half, in a physical match that featured five cautions and 34 fouls. Shahdad, James Galvani (High Wycombe, England), and David Palmer (South Shields, England) each attempted a match-high five shots at goal, as Shahdad tallied his first career goal following Kevin Osorio's (Marietta, Ga.) first collegiate assist.

The match remained goalless and level throughout regulation, as North Greenville was unable to provide the breakthrough despite a pair of open-net opportunities in the 60th and 62nd minutes. Galvani nearly broke the deadlock in the 81st minute, but was denied by Crusader keeper Justen Braddock to send the match into extra time.

Lees-McRae controlled the run of play in the extra period, outshooting the Crusaders by a 3-1 margin. The Bobcats provided the breakthrough in the final minute of the first extra time period following a tremendous buildup.

After a Palmer corner kick sailed through the area and the ball was played out into touch by North Greenville, Osorio took possession on the right flank and curled a brilliant cross into the area. The cross found Shahdad unmarked on the near post, putting the freshman in perfect position to flick the finish over the Crusader keeper and into the back of the net for the winner. Lees-McRae returns to the pitch on Tuesday, traveling to Greeneville, Tenn. to take on Tusculum College in a pivotal NCAA Division II Southeast Region matchup at 7 p.m.

Bobcats sweep trio to run win streak to five

The Lees-McRae College women's volleyball team continued its winning ways on Saturday, sweeping a trio of matches against Barton College, University of North Carolina at Pembroke, and Concord University in Williams Gymnasium to run its victorious streak to five contests. Lees-McRae (7-6, 3-0 Conference Carolinas) opened the day with a league win over Barton (4-4, 0-2 CC), sweeping the Bulldogs by scores of 25-17, 25-23, and 25-18. The Bobcats then registered a 25-16, 25-19, 25-18 victory over Pembroke (5-7), before closing out the day with a 25-13, 25-14, 25-14 win over Concord (4-7).

The Bobcats posted a combined .272 hitting percentage on the day, including a .323 clip against Concord, while averaging an impressive 15.33 kills per set. Senior Megan Epperson (St.

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John, Ind.) paced the Bobcats with 38 kills and a sensational .350 hitting percentage for the day, averaging 4.22 kills and two digs per set. Junior Taylor Clendenin (Statesville, N.C.) had a solid day as well, averaging 3.22 kills per set while attacking at a .311 clip.

Megan Mitchell (Minden, Nev.) averaged 11.75 assists and 1.75 kills per set, while posting a sensational .433 hitting percentage. Freshman libero Sariah Suryadevara (Cincinnati, Ohio) continued her strong play for the Bobcats, averaging an impressive 6.22 digs per set to raise her conference-leading season clip to 5.19 savers per frame.

Match One: Lees-McRae 3, Barton 0 - Box Score

The Bobcats opened the day with a solid sweep of Barton, holding the Bulldogs to a .092 clip on the attack while dropping in 11 service aces. Epperson led the way for the Bobcats with 12 kills on 23 swings, posting a .348 hitting percentage while sophomore Lauren Fox (Garland, Texas) notched nine kills and a blistering .412 attacking clip. Mitchell chipped in 38 assists, while Suryadevara added a match-high 16 digs.

Kati Wood paced Barton with five kills, while Melissa Cochran and Jordan Lee each added four kills. Amanda Grandy chipped in 13 digs, while Meka Hoover added a team-high 17 assists.

Match Two: Lees-McRae 3, UNC Pembroke 0 - Box Score

Lees-McRae pushed its winning streak to four with a three-set sweep of UNC Pembroke in its second match of the day, limiting the Braves to a .029 clip on the attack while posting a .269

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hitting percentage of its own.

Epperson led the way once again, tallying a match-high 15 kills while attacking at a .379 clip. Clendenin added 11 kills and a .526 hitting percentage, while Mitchell and Suryadevara chipped in match-highs of 34 assists and 22 digs, respectively. Dana Oliver (Davie, Fla.) nearly posted a double-double with eight kills and nine digs, while Kallai Johnston (Statesville, N.C.) added a match-high four blocks.

Tricia Varno paced the Braves with nine kills and a .368 hitting percentage, as Chelsea Phillips added six kills and five digs. Marissa Baker also added a team-high 12 digs for UNCP.

Match Three: Lees-McRae 3, Concord 0 - Box Score

The Bobcats closed out the day with a three-set sweep of Concord, posting a .323 hitting percentage while holding the Mountain Lions to a .011 attacking clip. Senior Jessica Singewald (Port St. Lucie, Fla.) paced the Bobcats with 12 kills and a .417 hitting percentage, while Epperson and Clendenin each chipped in 11 kills. Suryadevara and Molly Corhn (Hendersonville, N.C.) chipped in 18 and 11 digs, respectively, while Mitchell added match-highs of 22 assists and five service aces.

Lindsay Smith paced Concord with four kills, while Sarah Jones and Helen Theisen each added three smashes. Amanda Walker and Nikki McMillan chipped in nine and eight digs, respectively, as Theisen added a team-high eight assists.

Lees-McRae returns to the court on Wednesday when the Bobcats travel to Due West, S.C. to take on Erskine College in a conference matchup at 7 p.m.