

Bobcats Defeat Lions, 6-1, In Home Opener

Written by Whitney Noble

Thursday, 06 September 2012 07:02

Junior MaryBeth Sullivan (Greensboro, N.C.) tallied two goals and two assists to lead the Lees-McRae College women's soccer team to a 6-1 victory over Mars Hill College on rain-soaked Tate

Field Wednesday night in the Bobcats home opener. Lees-McRae (1-1-1) outshot Mars Hill (2-1) by a 23-1 margin, including a 10-0 advantage in the second half, en route to head coach Nick Whiting's first career victory. The Bobcats blanked the Lions in corner kicks, 7-0, in the match before the contest was called in the 77th minute due to lightning in the area.

Sullivan paced the Bobcats with two assists and her first two goals of the season, moving into a tie for 10th in program history with her 26th and 27th strikes of her career. Ally Titsworth (Holmes Beach, Fla.), Erica Allen (Norton, Ohio), Sarah Mahar (Jacksonville, Fla.), and Mallory Overholt (Grand Bend, Ontario, Canada) each found the back of the net for the Bobcats, as Kaitlyn Kerrigan (Lakewood Ranch, Fla.) equaled Sullivan's match-high two assists.

Mary Dorn (Shallotte, N.C.), Kate Brandon (Charlotte, N.C.), Sam Arendt (Franklinton, N.C.), and Overholt each tallied an assist, as Kaitlyn Briggs (Oviedo, Fla.) and Alicia Pierson (Brooksville, Fla.) combined to allow one goal through 77 minutes.

Leah Taylor scored the lone goal for Mars Hill, while McKay Sharpe notched an assist on the strike. Chelsea Parker got the start between the pipes, making seven saves in 64 minutes as Tori Stajduhar tallied one stop in 13 minutes of action.

The Bobcats got off to a flying start in the second minute, taking a 1-0 lead when Sullivan lobbed a header over the Lions keeper off a flick on by Dorn from a Kerrigan corner. Mars Hill leveled proceedings in the eighth minute, evening the tally at 1-1 when Sharpe found Taylor for an easy tap in front of goal.

Lees-McRae reclaimed the advantage less than two minutes later when Brandon laid off to Sullivan, putting the midfielder in perfect position to feed Titsworth for her first goal of the season to give the Bobcats a 2-1 advantage.

Overholt would cap the first half scoring with her first collegiate goal in the 39th minute, chipping the finish past the diving keeper off a drop pass from Sullivan, and putting the Bobcats ahead by a score of 3-1 heading into the interval.

Sullivan pushed the advantage to 4-1 late in the 56th minute, freezing the keeper with a penalty kick into the left side of the net after the Lions net minder sent her to the turf with a rough challenge in the area. Mahar stretched the lead to 5-1 in the opening moments of the 66th minute, taking a through ball from Kerrigan off an Arendt pass on the left flank, and slotting the finish into the upper right corner for her first collegiate goal.

Allen capped the scoring in the 74th minute, receiving a cross from Overholt at the top of the area and delivering a perfect curling finish into the far corner for the first goal of her collegiate career. The match was called three and a half minutes later due to lightning, giving the Bobcats their first win of the season and the first of Whiting's career as a head coach.

"I'm so proud of the girl's effort tonight," said Whiting. "We have been working hard for this type of performance and this is what we will strive to produce week in and week out. Now we have to build off this and carry the momentum onto Saturday [against Carson-Newman]."

Lees-McRae returns to the pitch on Saturday when the Bobcats host Carson-Newman College

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at 2 p.m. on Tate Field.

Photo Courtesy: MaryBeth Sullivan, LMC Athletics