

## **Bobcats To Honor Michael Shope Saturday**

Written by Whitney Noble

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The Lees-McRae College men's soccer program will pay tribute to a former teammate prior to Saturday's regular season finale against Mount Olive College, announced head coach Lee Squires, honoring Michael Shope with a pre-match

moment of silence. Squires and the Bobcats will pay tribute to Shope, a former member of the team who passed away on March 16, 2006 as a result of a tragic boating accident off the North Carolina coast near Ocean Isle. He and three other men lost their lives when their fishing boat capsized in rough waters; two of the six men on the boat survived.

Shope, a 2003 graduate of Leesville Road High School in Raleigh, N.C., was in his junior year at Lees-McRae College working towards a Bachelor's degree in criminal justice. Michael was a three-year letter-winner on the Bobcat's soccer team, and was looking forward to being the only four-year letterman on the team as a senior. Michael was also a volunteer firefighter for the Banner Elk Volunteer Fire Department, and had been with the department for approximately two years at the time of his death.

Shope, known as "Mike" to his teammates, had also successfully passed the North Carolina state exam for EMT-Basic, and was planning to complete the EMT-Intermediate course. His goal in life was to be a professional firefighter, and was well on his way to doing so. Mike was a wonderful son and brother, a good friend to everyone he met, and was loved by many. He touched many lives with his perpetual sense of humor, his love of life, and his award-winning smile.

In addition to a moment of silence in Shope's memory, Lees-McRae will honor its 2012 senior class prior to kickoff against Mount Olive on Saturday. The match is slated to begin at 4 p.m. on Tate Field.

**Photo Courtesy: Michael Shope, LMC Athletics**