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The King College men's volleyball team rallied for a hard-fought five-set victory over Lees-McRae College in Conference Carolinas play on Wednesday evening, holding the Bobcats to a .034 hitting percentage

over the final two sets to rally from a 2-1 deficit. King (2-4, 1-3 CC) won the match by scores of 25-22, 22-25, 20-25, 25-15, and 18-16, posting a hitting percentage of .208 in the contest while holding Lees-McRae (1-1, 1-1 CC) to a .194 clip on the attack. Lees-McRae recorded 66 kills in the match, adding seven blocks and six service aces, as King posted 40 smashes, 19.5 blocks, and seven aces.

Javier Jimenez (San Sebastian, Puerto Rico) paced the Bobcats with a match-high 18 kills, notching a .290 hitting percentage as John Lucas (Cincinnati, Ohio) added 13 smashes of his own. Matt Harpenau (Cincinnati, Ohio) chipped in 11 kills and a .421 clip on the attack, while Brady Markle (York, Pa.) posted 10 smashes and four blocks (two solo, two assists).

Randy Ramirez (Guaynabo, Puerto Rico) nearly added a double-double with eight digs and a match-high 58 assists, as Efrain Negron (Caguas, Puerto Rico) dug out 11 Tornado attacks. Harpenau also added a match-high three aces for the Bobcats.

Michael Koebel led the way for King with 11 kills, as Matthew Lychock, Adrian Lopez, and Matthew Harper each added six smashes. Lopez chipped in a match-high 10 blocks (10 assists), while Lychock notched seven stuffs (seven assists) and Ned Parker posted nine digs. Ashton Hippenstiel added 33 assists for the Tornado.

King jumped out to an early 14-9 lead in the first set, opening the five-point advantage on a Koebel kill before pushing the margin to 16-10 with a Hippenstiel ace. After the Bobcats cut the deficit to 16-13 on a Lucas ace and King countered with a Brown/Lopez block to take an 18-14 lead, Lees-McRae answered with a 5-1 spurt to even the tally at 19-19 following a Jimenez smash.

The teams would trade points over the next several minutes, with Lees-McRae taking a 21-20 advantage on a Jimenez ace before King answered with a 5-1 run, claiming the opening set following a block by Koebel and Lopez.

Lees-McRae responded in the second frame, taking a 14-10 lead following a Tornado miscue and back-to-back kills by Jimenez before pushing the margin to 18-13 on a Lucas smash. King would close the gap with a 7-5 spurt, cutting the advantage to 23-20 with a block by Lychock and Hippenstiel before the Bobcats pushed the Tornado to set point following a Jimenez smash. The Tornado fought off a pair of decisive points before the Bobcats closed out the frame with a Markle smash, evening the match at 1-1.

The third set proved to be a tightly contested affair, with neither team holding more than a three-point advantage in the early moments until the Bobcats went on a 5-0 run, claiming a 22-15 lead following a Tornado miscue.

King would fight back with a 3-0 spurt to trim the margin to 22-18 before Lees-McRae answered with three of the set's final five points, taking a 2-1 advantage in the match on a kill by Harpenau.

The Tornados responded in the fourth, opening the frame with an 11-4 run before Lees-McRae answered with a 5-2 spurt to cut the lead to 14-9 following a Harpenau ace. King would answer

with a 9-4 surge, claiming a 23-13 advantage on a block by Harper and Lopez before forcing a decisive fifth set following a Bobcat miscue.

The teams battled throughout the fifth set, refusing to cede momentum or control, with neither squad holding more than a two-point advantage at any point during the frame. After King claimed a narrow 10-9 lead and Lees-McRae answered with a 5-2 run to push the Tornado to double match-point, King came out of a strategic timeout with a 3-1 spurt to even the tally at 15-15 on a Harper kill.

The Tornado then countered a Lucas smash with their second 3-1 spurt of the frame, claiming the set and the match with a block by Lopez, Lychock, and Zach Prexta to cap the frame, 18-16.

Lees-McRae returns to the court on Friday when the Bobcats travel to Wilson, N.C. for a league matchup with Barton College at 7 p.m.