Written by Whitney Noble
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Sophomore Kerri Belcher (Roanoke, Va.) recorded a program-record nine steals and Layana De Souza (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) poured in a game-high 27 points to lead the Lees-McRae College women's

basketball team to a hard-fought 77-65 victory over Erskine College in Conference Carolinas play in Williams Gymnasium.

Lees-McRae (7-7, 5-6 CC) posted a field goal percentage of 42.6 percent on the night, including a 46.4 percent clip in the first half, while limiting Erskine (0-16, 0-11 CC) to a mark of 26.3 percent from beyond the arc in the contest. The Bobcats edged the Fleet by a 37-36 margin on the glass, including a narrow 14-13 advantage on the offensive boards, while doubling Erskine's total points in the paint, 44-22.

De Souza led the way for the Bobcats with a game- and career-high 27 points, connecting on 9-of-16 attempts from the floor while converting each of her eight tries at the free throw line. Belcher added a strong night with 17 points, six rebounds, and a program-record nine steals, going 5-for-9 from the field and 7-for-8 at the charity stripe. Kabrina Truesdale (Wilmington, N.C.) chipped in 11 points and a team-high eight rebounds for the Bobcats.

Tara Potter paced the Fleet with a double-double, scoring 17 points with a 7-for-11 night from the floor while adding a game-high 10 rebounds. Lindsey Weidenaar chipped in 12 points, as Andrienne Bannerman nearly tallied a double-double with eight markers and nine boards.

Erskine would take an early 8-6 lead on a Sha'niqua Whitley jumper before the Bobcats responded with a 13-0 run, claiming a 19-8 advantage following a clutch three-point play by De Souza with 12:37 left in the first half.

After the Fleet cut the margin to 19-13 on a Bannerman freebie, Truesdale kick started a 7-0 run with a smooth spin in the lane before knocking down a running jumper at the 10:25 mark. De Souza capped the spurt with a long three-pointer with 8:02 remaining in the period before the Fleet battled back, cutting the lead to 28-22 with a 9-2 run.

Erskine then closed out the half with a 9-5 spurt, trimming the margin further to 34-31 heading into the intermission after Weidenaar knocked down a late triple. The Fleet carried the momentum into the second half, opening the period with a 9-4 run to take their first lead of the game at 40-38 on a Potter jumper with 17:15 to play.

After Lees-McRae responded with an 11-6 spurt to claim a 49-46 lead on a Truesdale jumper, Erskine countered with an 11-2 run, opening a 57-51 advantage following a Weidenaar bucket with 7:31 left on the clock. Lees-McRae would answer once again, taking a 67-60 lead on the heels of a 16-3 surge when De Souza banked in a circus layup, and converted the ensuing freebie with 1:57 to play.

The Bobcats closed out the victory from there, knocking down each of their 10 attempts at the free throw line over the final one and a half minutes to seal the 77-65 win.

Lees-McRae returns to the court on Saturday when the Bobcats travel to Belmont, N.C. to take on Belmont Abbey College in conference play at 5:30 p.m.

LMC 77, ERSKINE 65

Score By Periods	**1st**	**2nd**	**Total**
Erskine	31	34 -	65
Lees-McRae	34	43 -	77

Erskine	**Lees-McRae**
Pts: Tara Potter - 17	Pts: Layana De souza - 27
Reb: Tara Potter - 10	Reb: Kabrina Truesdale - 8
Ast: Haleigh Spaulding - 5	Ast: Layana De souza - 4

Team Statistics	**Erskine**	**Lees-McRae**
Field Goal %	45.3% (24-53)	42.6% (26-61)
Rebounds	36	37
Assists	14	14
Turnovers	24	16
Pts off Turnovers	12	34
2nd Chance Pts	9	10
Pts in the Paint	22	44
Fastbreak Pts	4	14
Bench Pts	18	14

Fleet Hold Off Bobcats In Defensive Battle

The Erskine College men's basketball team weathered a late 12-4 run and a stifling defensive effort by Lees-McRae College en route to a hard-fought 68-56 victory over the Bobcats in Conference Carolinas play on Thursday evening in Williams Gymnasium.

Lees-McRae (1-15, 1-9 CC) posted a field goal percentage of 44.2 percent in the contest, including a 54.2 percent clip in the second half, while holding Erskine (11-4, 7-4 CC) to a mark of 34.5 percent from the floor on the night. The Bobcats won the battle on the glass by a 38-35 margin, including a 28-23 advantage on the defensive boards, as Erskine converted 23-of-27 attempts from the charity stripe.

Charles Clarke (Orlando, Fla.) paced the Bobcats with 16 points off the bench, connecting on 5-of-7 attempts from the floor while converting each of his four tries at the free throw line. Daniel Sepokas (Illawong, Australia) added 14 markers with a 3-for-5 night from downtown, while posting a team-high eight rebounds to go along with contest-bests of three assists and three steals.

DeAndre Tillman (Charlotte, N.C.) added a strong night with six rebounds, five points, and a pair of emphatic blocks, as Jeremiah Henry (Semmes, Ala.) added nine markers and four boards.

Roderick Perkins led the way for Erskine with a game-high 18 points, converting each of his 10 attempts at the charity stripe, while adding seven rebounds and a contest-best three assists.

DeShaun Hall chipped in a double-double with 16 markers and a game-high 10 boards, as Corey Sorrell and Mike Gabbard each posted 12 points.

The first half would prove to be a tightly contested defensive battle, with Erskine snatching an early 7-5 lead before the Bobcats responded with a 6-0 spurt, claiming an 11-7 advantage following a Clarke throw-down with 10:02 left to play in the period.

Erskine answered with a 10-2 spurt, taking a 17-13 lead with a pair of Perkins freebies with 4:18 remaining on the clock. Hall then capped the period's scoring with a layup at the 1:00 mark, sending the Fleet into the intermission with a 21-16 advantage as the Bobcats held Erskine to its second-lowest-scoring first half of the season.

Both offenses came to life in the second half, combing for 87 points in the period as each team connected on over 50 percent of their field goal attempts in the period. The Bobcats would strike first, opening the half with a 7-3 spurt to cut the margin to 24-23 following a freebie by Henry at the 17:03 mark.

Erskine answered with a 13-2 run, pushing the advantage to 37-25 on a Corey Sorrell lay-in with 12:37 to play. The Fleet would widen the margin to 49-30 before the Bobcats responded, cutting the lead to 56-42 when DJ Brown (Anderson, S.C.) set up Tillman for an emphatic alley-oop dunk on the fast break, which brought Williams Gymnasium to its feet with 4:24 left on the clock.

The Bobcats continued to whittle away at the lead over the next several minutes, cutting the

lead to 64-49 on a Sepokas triple in the midst of a 12-4 run to close out the game, as Sepokas capped the night with his third trey of the contest with 11 seconds to play.
Lees-McRae returns to the court on Saturday when the Bobcats travel to Belmont, N.C. to take on Belmont Abbey College in conference play at 7:30 p.m.

ERSKINE 68, LMC 56

Score By Periods	**1st**	**2nd**	**Total**
Erskine	21	47 -	68
Lees-McRae	16	40 -	56

Erskine	**Lees-McRae**
Pts: Roderick Perkins - 18	Pts: Charles Clarke - 16
Reb: DeShaun Hall - 10	Reb: Daniel Sepokas - 8
Ast: 3 Players (Perkins, Gabbard, Hall - 3)	Ast: Daniel Sepokas - 3

Team Statistics	**Erskine**	**Lees-McRae**
Field Goal %	34.5% (20-58)	44.2% (19-43)
Rebounds	35	38
Assists	12	8
Turnovers	10	22
Pts off Turnovers	20	14

2nd Chance Pts	12	12
Pts in the Paint	28	24
Fastbreak Pts	4	7
Bench Pts	2	29

Photo Courtesy: Layana De Souza, LMC Athletics