Written by Whitney Noble
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The Belmont Abbey College women's basketball team jumped out to a 37-24 halftime lead and held off a furious second half rally by Lees-McRae College en route to a 64-60 win in Conference Carolinas play on Saturday evening.

Belmont Abbey (8-8, 7-5 CC) posted a field goal percentage of 35.8 percent in the contest, including a 44.4 percent clip in the first half, as Lees-McRae (7-8, 5-7 CC) shot 53.8 percent from the floor over the final 20 minutes to bring its game total to 45.3 percent. The Crusaders edged the Bobcats by a 37-36 margin on the glass, including a 17-13 advantage on the offensive boards, while converting 17 Lees-McRae miscues into 18 points.

Kerri Belcher (Roanoke, Va.) led the way for Lees-McRae with 13 points and a game-high eight rebounds, as Lauren Lewis (Concord, N.C.) chipped in 14 markers. Zukye Smith (Chesterfield, Va.) added 10 markers and six boards, while Layana De Souza (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) posted a team-high five assists to go along with six points and five rebounds.

Kelsey Long paced the Abbey with 23 points on 8-of-15 shooting, knocking down six three-pointers, while Morgan Midkiff added 18 markers. Caitlyn Ranson chipped in 11 points with a 2-for-4 night from beyond the arc, as Candace Fox posted game-highs of seven assists and five steals.

Belmont Abbey got off to a strong start in the first half, taking an early 12-4 lead on a Ranson jumper before pushing the advantage to 20-6 following back-to-back triples by Long with 10:31 left in the half. The Bobcats would battle back, cutting the lead to 23-20 with a 14-3 run that was capped by a trey and a layup from Kabrina Truesdale (Wilmington, N.C.), the latter coming at the 5:41 mark.

The Abbey responded with a 14-4 spurt, closing out the half with a Long triple to head into the intermission with a 37-24 advantage. Lees-McRae answered once again in the second half, opening the period with a 7-3 spurt to close the gap to 40-31 with 15:10 left on a Belcher jumper.

The Bobcats would continue to dictate play over the next ten minutes, cutting the lead further with a 12-5 run to trim the margin to 50-47 following another Belcher jumper at the 5:39 mark. After Ranson answered with a trey with 4:12 to play, the Bobcats countered with a 9-5 spurt, cutting the lead to 58-56 following a Lewis triple with 1:39 left on the clock.

Belmont Abbey would respond with a Long triple, taking a 61-56 lead before the Bobcats countered with a 4-2 spurt, cutting the advantage to one possession at 63-60 with eight seconds left on the clock. The Abbey quelled the rally with a freebie by Fox seconds later, equaling the final margin of 64-60.

Lees-McRae returns to the court on Thursday when the Bobcats travel to Gaffney, S.C. to take on Limestone College in league play at 5:30 p.m.

BELMONT-ABBEY 64, LMC 60

Score By Periods	**1st**	**2nd**	**Total**
Lees-McRae	24	36	60
Belmont Abbey	37	27	64

Lees-McRae	**Belmont Abbey**
Pts: Lauren Lewis - 14	Pts: Kelsey Long - 23
Reb: Kerri Belcher - 8	Reb: McKenzie Owen - 8
Ast: Layana De souza - 5	Ast: Candace Fox - 7

Team Statistics	**Lees-McRae**	**Belmont Abbey**
Field Goal %	45.3% (24-53)	35.8% (19-53)
Rebounds	36	37
Assists	11	16
Turnovers	17	13
Pts off Turnovers	18	12
2nd Chance Pts	12	12
Pts in the Paint	22	8
Fastbreak Pts	0	0
Bench Pts	12	6

Crusaders Scratch Bobcats, 98-74

The Belmont Abbey College men's basketball team placed four players in double figures and shot 54.7 percent from the field en route to a 98-74 victory over Lees-McRae College in Conference Carolinas play on Saturday evening.

Belmont Abbey (13-6, 6-5 CC) posted a field goal percentage of over 50 percent in each half, including a 55.2 percent clip in the first half, as Lees-McRae (1-16, 1-10 CC) recorded a field goal percentage of 43.3 percent in the contest. The Abbey won the battle on the glass by a 40-32 margin, including a 14-10 advantage on the offensive boards, while outscoring the Bobcats, 42-20, in the paint.

Charles Clarke (Orlando, Fla.) paced the Bobcats with 18 points off the bench, going 5-for-8 from the floor while converting each of his six free throw attempts. Asad Lamot (Mebane, N.C.) and Corey Young (Bluff City, Tenn.) each added nine points, as Daniel Sepokas (Illawong, Australia) dished out a game-high five assists.

Tyshawn Good led the way for Belmont Abbey with a game-high 25 points, going 8-for-17 from the floor and 7-for-9 at the free throw line. Darryl Durham nearly posted a double-double with 20 markers and a contest-best nine boards, knocking down each of his nine field goal attempts and going 2-for-2 at the charity stripe. Jay Council and Terrone Sheffey chipped in 13 and 11 points, respectively, as Chris Davis added a game-high four steals.

Belmont Abbey opened the game with a 10-6 run before the Bobcats responded, claiming a 12-10 advantage with a 6-0 spurt that was capped by a three-point play by Jeremiah Henry (Semmes, Ala.) with 14:06 left in the half. The Crusaders answered with a 14-5 surge, taking a 24-17 lead on a Good triple before Young countered with a trey to cut the lead to 24-20 at the 9:11 mark.

The Abbey responded once again, closing out the half with an 18-13 run to take a 42-33 lead into the intermission following a late Good freebie. Belmont Abbey carried the momentum into the second half, opening the period with a 24-10 run to push the advantage to 66-43 with 13:42 to play. The Crusaders would hold on from there, closing out the win with a late three-point play by Tim Mason with 1:41 left on the clock.

Lees-McRae returns to the court on Thursday when the Bobcats travel to Gaffney, S.C. to take on Limestone College in conference play at 7:30 p.m.

BELMONT-ABBEY 98, LMC 74

Score By Periods	**1st**	**2nd**	**Total**
Lees-McRae	33	41	74
Belmont Abbey	42	56	98

Lees-McRae	**Belmont Abbey**
Pts: Charles Clarke - 18	Pts: Tyshawn Good - 25
Reb: Asad Lamot - 5	Reb: Darryl Durham - 9
Ast: Daniel Sepokas - 5	Ast: Chris Davis - 3

Team Statistics	**Lees-McRae**	**Belmont Abbey**
Field Goal %	43.3% (26-60)	54.7% (35-64)
Rebounds	32	40
Assists	13	15
Turnovers	15	9
Pts off Turnovers	5	20
2nd Chance Pts	11	17
Pts in the Paint	20	42
Fastbreak Pts	0	0
Bench Pts	51	21

Photo Courtesy: Candace Flowers, LMC Athletics