

Trojans edge Bobcats, 3-1

Written by Whitney Noble
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Angel Dache recorded a match-high 21 kills to lead the Mount Olive College men's volleyball team to a 3-1 victory over visiting Lees-McRae College in Conference Carolinas play on Saturday evening. Mount Olive (5-1, 4-0 CC) won the match

by scores of 25-22, 24-26, 25-21, and 25-21, posting 12 service aces as Lees-McRae (2-2, 2-2 CC) hit .271 on the attack in the contest. The Trojans tallied 53 kills and a .248 hitting percentage on the night, as Lees-McRae posted 45 smashes and 10 blocks.

Javier Jimenez (San Sebastian, Puerto Rico) paced the Bobcats with a double-double, smashing down 16 kills while recording a match-high 11 digs. Randy Ramirez (Guaynabo, Puerto Rico) added 42 assists and four digs, while Joshua Jones (Christmas, Fla.) chipped in nine kills and six blocks (three solo, three assists). Efrain Negron (Caguas, Puerto Rico) also added nine digs for the Bobcats.

Dache led the way for Mount Olive with 21 kills and a .385 hitting percentage while Andreas Lengler added 10 smashes. Ben Casado and Dan Arnold chipped in match-highs of 50 assists and 11 digs, respectively, as Dache tallied a contest-best three service aces.

The match proved to be a tightly contested affair throughout, with Mount Olive taking an early 11-9 lead in the first set before Lees-McRae responded with a 6-4 spurt, evening the tally at 15-15 following a service ace by Jose Ribas (Guaynabo, Puerto Rico).

After Mount Olive answered with a 7-3 run to claim a 22-18 advantage, Lees-McRae countered with a 3-0 spurt to trim the lead to 22-21 on a solo block by Ribas. The Trojans responded once again with a 3-1 spurt, taking the first set with a 25-22 win following a trio of Dache kills.

Lees-McRae countered in the second set, taking a 14-12 advantage following back-to-back Trojan miscues to cap a 5-1 spurt. Mount Olive would answer with a 7-5 run, evening the tally at 19-19 before the Bobcats responded with a 4-1 spurt, claiming a 23-20 advantage on a smash by Matt Harpenau (Cincinnati, Ohio).

The Trojans countered with a 3-0 spurt, leveling the score at 23-23 before the Bobcats pushed them to set point with a block by Harpenau and John Lucas (Cincinnati, Ohio). Lees-McRae then answered a Lengler kill with back-to-back points, evening the match at 1-1 following a Trojan miscue.

The third set would prove to be just as tightly contested as the first two, with Mount Olive seizing a 16-14 advantage on the heels of a 4-2 spurt following consecutive aces by Dache. The Trojans pushed the lead to 22-17 with a 6-3 run, capping the spurt with a Steven Cruse kill before claiming the set, 25-21, following a smash by Adam Miracle.

Mount Olive carried the momentum into the fourth, opening the frame with a 13-6 run before taking a 16-10 lead following back-to-back aces from Richard Hesse. The Trojans would push the advantage to 24-16 with an 8-6 spurt, capping the run on a Cruse smash. Lees-McRae countered with a 5-0 run, fighting off five set points before Cruse quelled the rally and closed out the match with a kill.

Lees-McRae returns to the court on Thursday when the Bobcats host Belmont Abbey College in their home opener at 7 p.m. in Williams Gymnasium.