

Bobcats Women's Soccer Inks Eight On National Signing Day

Written by Whitney Noble

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Eight student-athletes have signed a National Letter of Intent to attend Lees-McRae College and play women's soccer in the fall of 2013, announced Lees-

McRae women's soccer coach Nick Whiting Wednesday.

Joining Lees-McRae in the fall will be Erin Barcal (Wilmington, N.C.), Jessica Bunce (Charlotte, N.C.), Hannah Cruse (Concord, N.C.), Phenix Durham (Waxhaw, N.C.), Emma McGovern (Lexington, N.C.) Madison Provines (Palm City, Fla.), Ashley Ritter (Vero Beach, Fla.) and Cheyenne Warrick (Pikeville, N.C.).

A link to a photo gallery with signing and action pictures of each incoming freshman is provided at the bottom of this page.

"This 2013 class is a tremendous group of young women," said Whiting. "They have the ability to be very special, both on the field and as ambassadors for Lees-McRae. They are a perfect fit for our program and the school, and I couldn't be more excited to welcome them to the Bobcat family.

"They are all going to be wonderful assets to our team and I'd also like to thank our assistant coach Catherine Hauck for her tireless efforts in recruiting this talented class," added Whiting.

"What really sticks out to me about this group is how much they all want to be successful and how they are all willing to put in the work to do that."

Erin Barcal – Midfielder – 5-7 – Wilmington, N.C.

Barcal has been a key member of the Cape Fear Wave White team, which advanced to the Region III Premier League her freshman year and reached the Final Four of North Carolina State Cup. During her sophomore year, she led her team to the North Carolina Premier League Championship and then to a third place finish her junior season.

Going into her senior year at Wilmington Christian Academy, Barcal has been named to the North Carolina All-State Team three times and has recorded a stellar 58 goals and 41 assists. She has received the Coaches Award all three seasons, has twice been named to the all-tournament team (once at the Alamance Invitational Tournament and once at the Wilmington Invitational Tournament).

Barcal boasts a 4.3 grade-point-average and is in the top five of her class. She is a member of the American Christian honor Society, Student Council, and serves as the youth ministry president. She has also received the physical education award, American History Award and the Wendy Heisman Award. She is the daughter of Matthew and Helma and has two brothers, Nik and Michael.

"Erin is an extremely hard working person who gives 110% in everything she does – be it on the field, in the classroom or in the community," praised Whiting. "That type of effort is going to give

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our midfield a great boost. She is a well-rounded player that excels in all aspects of the game. We were tracking her for a long time and she really stood out when she attended our ID camp last summer."

Jessica Bunce – Goalkeeper – 5-5 – Charlotte, N.C.

Bunce has been a member of the Charlotte United Futbol Club Gold where she was a teammate of fellow Bobcat signee Phenix Durham. As the starting goalkeeper, Bunce led her team to an undefeated season in 2012 and did not allow a goal the whole year – a span which led to 14 shutouts.

Charlotte United also won the North Meck Kick Off and the Labor Day Shoot Out in 2012. She was a member of the South Team at the 2011 PowerAde State Games of North Carolina High School Soccer Showcase.

A four-year letter winner, Bunce started at Northwest Guilford High School before transferring to David W Butler. She is a member of National Honor Society, the leadership team for Fellowship of Christian Athletes and the Butler DREAM team. She is the daughter of Linda Whitcher -Bunce and Bruce Bunce. She has one brother, Jordan and his wife, Laura.

"Jessica came to us after being highly recruited around North Carolina and we couldn't be happier," said Whiting. "She is a great leader in the net and possesses so many qualities in a goalkeeper that you just cannot teach. She is fearless off her line and will do anything to make the save and keep her team in the game."

Hannah Cruse – Midfielder – 5-8 – Concord, N.C.

Cruse has been a member of the FC Carolina Alliance Elite '94 team that won the Norcross Tournament, their bracket of the Score at the Shore, the FCCA Tournament and went undefeated in North Carolina State Cup before being eliminated.

A four year standout at Mount Pleasant High School, Cruse was named to the all-region and all-conference team in both her junior and sophomore seasons. She was also named team Most Valuable Player and offensive Player of the Year as a junior and was all-conference and Rookie of the Year as a freshman. She is the daughter of Bill and Jennie Cruse and has one brother, Bailey.

"Hannah is going to be a sparkplug in the middle," expressed Whiting. "She has a great work rate and is very athletic. She is really going to be a great addition to our transition game, with her ability to get forward and score goals but is also very strong tracking back and a good 1v1 defender."

Phenix Durham – Defender – 5-3 – Waxhaw, N.C.

Durham has led the backline of the Charlotte United Futbol Club Gold for the past season, leading her team to an undefeated regular season and victories in the North Meck Kick Off and the Labor Day Shoot Out. Durham is listed on TopDrawer Soccer as a "Player to Watch", and was a member of the South Team at the 2011 PowerAde State Games of North Carolina High School Soccer Showcase.

Previously, she was a member of the Mecklenburg Union Futbol Club Navy team where she was a two-year team captain. A North Carolina 2A State Champion her sophomore season at Cuthbertson High School, Durham has enjoyed a very impressive high school career. She is a three-time 2A All-Conference Player and two time all-region honoree.

After their state championship triumph her sophomore year, Durham captained her team to a state runner-up finish and was named team "Most Valuable Player" for her efforts. She has also led her team to two consecutive Rocky River Conference Championships. Durham is the daughter of Kim and Robert Black, has one brother, Tyler Durham and one sister, Ryleigh Durham. She also has one step sister, Heather Black, and one step brother, Thomas Black. "Phenix is another exciting addition to our class," said Whiting. "She is a highly competitive and very athletic defender who is going to give our backline a real boost. She has a winning mentality, leading her high school team to a state championship as a sophomore, and I am sure will continue to help us win games here at Lees-McRae."

Emma McGovern – Forward – 5-1 – Lexington, N.C.

McGovern is a member of the '94 North Carolina Soccer Fusion Elite team, which is currently ranked among the top five club teams in the nation by both Soccer in College and Got Soccer. The Fusion were crowned champions of the 2012 Region III Premier League East Division, as well as the 2013 North Carolina State Cup. They will again represent North Carolina at the Region III Championships in June. Emma has also been a member of the North Carolina Olympic Development Program for the past four seasons.

A four year starter for North Davidson High School, McGovern has been named to the Lexington Dispatch All-County teams all three years so far. She led the team in goals and points, earning all-conference honors and being named North Davidson's Offensive Player of the Year. As a sophomore, she set the school record for assists in a season.

McGovern is a three-time Academic Letter Winner, as well as a member of the National Honor Society and the National Art Honor Society. She is also the Secretary and Vice President of the Drama Club, and a member of the Wind Ensemble, in which she plays both the clarinet and

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piano.

She is the daughter of John and Dawn McGovern, has one brother, Matt and one sister, Jessica. Her father John played football and wrestling at Lycoming College, while her grandfather Jack played football and ran track at Drexel.

"It is tough to find a player as crafty and technically smart as Emma, so we were delighted to have her as part of our team," praised Whiting. "She brings an element of speed to our already deep frontline, and I am sure she will find her name on the score sheet often as a Bobcat."

Madison Provines – Goalkeeper – 5'9 – Palm City, Fla.

Provines is the starting goalkeeper for the Melbourne Eau Gallie United Fusion U18 team that participated in the Disney Showcase in 2012. Previously, she was a member of the Mako Soccer Club, where she was the starting goalkeeper on a team that was a constant threat to go deep at the Florida State Cup.

At Martin County High School, Provines has been the starting goalkeeper all four seasons, earning four varsity letters. She has led her team to four District 14-4A Championship appearances where they were the champions her freshmen and junior seasons and runners up as a sophomore and senior.

A team captain her senior year, she recorded 9 shutouts. As a junior, Provines posted 16 shutouts, good for second in school history. She allowed only 10 goals all season and had a 0.45 goals-against-average and was named one of the Best of the Treasure Coast by the Palm Beach Post.

Provines led her team to a combined 29-10-6 record her junior and senior seasons. An AP/Honors student all four years of high school, Provines has been a member of the yearbook staff all four years and as a senior was named Editor-In-Chief after previously being the Sports Editor her junior year. She and her staff have won countless awards at various competitions. She is the daughter of Steve and Jill Provines and has one brother, Cameron.

"With her willingness to compete and her outstanding athletic ability, Maddie possesses a ton of potential," said Whiting. "While she is technically sound already, we believe she is only going to get better and better. She has been a stalwart on her club and high school teams and we can't wait to work with her."

Ashley Ritter – Defender – 5'4 – Vero Beach, Fla.

Ritter, a club teammate of fellow Bobcat signee Madison Provines on the Melbourne Eau Gallie United Fusion U18 team, is listed by TopDrawer Soccer as a 3-star recruit. She led MEGU to

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the Florida State Cup Final Four her junior season and was a captain her senior year. Ritter previously was a member of the Melbourne Beach Tsunami team and the Indian River Soccer Association. A member of the Florida Olympic Development Program, Ritter once earned a spot to the ODP Region III camp.

A National Soccer Coaches Association of America Scholar All-American, Ritter led her team to an undefeated regular season as a senior. She was a four year starter at Vero Beach High School and a two time captain. As a junior, she led her team to the state championship game where they finished as runner up, earning her second-team Florida 6A All-State honors.

She was also named to the 6A All-Region team. A member of the National Honors Society, Ritter is ranked sixth in her class with a 4.736 GPA. She is the Digital Design Senior Editor, Spanish Club Vice President, Editor of the School Newspaper and a Vero Beach Spear-It Club member. She is the daughter of Jeanne and Stephen Ritter and has one sister, Ali.

"Ashley has earned the nickname 'Scrappy' for a reason," commented Whiting. "She never backs out of a tackle and does a great job winning aerial challenges. We are excited with the physicality she is going to bring to our backline and the threat she adds on set pieces."

Cheyenne Warrick – Defender/Forward – 5'8 – Pikeville, N.C.

A member of the '95 CASL Chelsea Ladies Elite Club National League team, Warrick has been competing in the highest league in the country for the past. In 2011, her team was a USYS Region III Tournament Semi Finalist, the Region III Premier League East Champions, and the North Carolina State Cup Champions.

In 2010, they were the North Carolina State Cup Semi Finalist and were again the champions in 2009. Warrick has also been a member of the North Carolina Olympic Development Program every year since 2004 and has been invited to every Region Camp since 2008.

Warrick is the North Carolina High School Athletic Association record holder for goals in a season by a women's soccer player for both a sophomore and a junior. She scored 64 goals as a sophomore and 68 as a junior; both totals rank in the top 10 in all-time seasons in North Carolina history.

She also is ranked in the top 10 in goals in a single game as she has had multiple seven and six goal games for Charles B. Aycock High School. She was named Spring Athlete of the Year twice by the Goldsboro News Argus. She has earned Eastern Carolina Conference All-Conference honors and Most Valuable Player honors as a sophomore, and was again all-conference as a junior.

Warrick was named Most Valuable Player by her high school for both of those seasons. Also a member of the Charles B Aycock cross country team, she has also earned team MVP, all-conference, and Goldsboro News Argus Athlete of the Year honors in that sport.

An AP/Honors student who is ranked ninth in her class with a 4.7 grade-point-average, she is a member of the Engineering Academy and Microsoft Academy where she is a specialist in several programs. She won the National Vocational and Technical Education Award, is a member of the National Honor Society and is a Scholastic Junior Marshal.

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Warrick has been on the Principals List all four years, has received the National Mathematics and Spanish Award and recorded perfect attendance from grades K-10. She has also completed countless community service activities and events. Warrick is the daughter of Erin and Donnie and has one dog, Outback.

"Cheyenne is a tremendous pickup for Lees-McRae," said Whiting. "She obviously has the ability to score goals, but is equally adept defending and gives us a ton of options on how we can use her. She has all the skills you look for in an impact player, but more importantly is going to be a great kid and teammate."

Whiting and the Bobcats will look to these eight young ladies to help build on the success that the Lees-McRae women's soccer program has enjoyed over the past two seasons, capturing back-to-back Conference Carolinas regular season championships while earning the school's first-ever berth in the NCAA Division II Championships in 2011.

"Conference Carolinas has a ton of good coaches and strong teams that are just getting better and better," said Whiting. "We knew that to continue achieving the goals that we set for ourselves and living up to the high standards we have set, we had to bring in a really strong class.

"We set out with a specific plan and goals in mind, and I am thankful to report that I believe we have achieved it," expressed Whiting. "We have a great group returning, but are still a young team and these additions are only going to make us that much stronger and add some needed depth.

"One of the most important things to me is continuing our great team chemistry," stressed Whiting. "We really do have an awesome group of young ladies, and this group is only going to add to that and make Lees-McRae a really special place to be."