Written by Whitney Noble
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The Mount Olive College women's basketball team outscored Lees-McRae College by a 38-22 margin in the second half, including a 12-0 run midway through the period, to pull away for a 74-48 victory in Conference Carolinas play on Saturday evening.

(Mount Olive (13-7, 9-7 CC) shot 48.3 percent from the floor in the contest, including a 53.6 percent clip in the first half, while holding Lees-McRae (8-11, 6-10 CC) to a field goal percentage of 39.5 percent on the evening. The Trojans won the battle on the glass by a 39-27 margin, including a 15-7 advantage on the offensive boards, while converting 23 Bobcat miscues into 28 points.

Lauren Lewis (Concord, N.C.) led the way for Lees-McRae with a game-high 19 points, connecting on 7-of-14 attempts from the floor and going 4-for-8 from beyond the arc. Alyssa Munson (Summerfield, N.C.) added eight points and five boards, knocking down each of her three field goal attempts, as Kerri Belcher (Roanoke, Va.) chipped in six markers and five rebounds.

Tamara Nesmith nearly recorded a triple-double for Mount Olive, posting 18 points to go along with game-highs of 11 rebounds and nine assists. Joneiqua Gary added a game-high 19 markers with a 7-for-15 night from the floor, as Jasmine McDonald chipped in 12 points and five boards.

The Bobcats fought hard in the opening minutes of the first half, answering a 7-1 spurt by the Trojans with a Lewis triple to cut the lead to 11-10 at the 13:45 mark. Mount Olive would counter with a 17-8 run to push the advantage to 28-18 following a trey by Kirksten Mitchell with 6:28 to play in the half.

After Lewis responded with a solo 8-0 run for the Bobcats to cut the lead to 28-26, Mount Olive quickly countered with an 8-0 spurt of its own, taking a 36-26 advantage into the intermission following a last-second lay-in by Alexandra Silva.

The Bobcats answered in the early moments of the second half, trimming the margin to 42-36 on a layup by Zukye Smith (Chesterfield, Va.) with 15:14 to go to cap a 10-6 spurt. Mount Olive responded with a 12-0 run, stretching the lead to 54-36 on a Mitchell lay-in at the 11:28 mark. The Trojans continued to dictate play over the next several minutes, pushing the advantage to 67-42 following a Gary triple with 4:37 to go before closing out the victory with a pair of late free throws by Ansia Dial.

Lees-McRae returns to the court on Wednesday when the Bobcats welcome King College to Williams Gymnasium at 5:30 p.m. for a Conference Carolinas matchup. The Bobcats will host Church Night that evening, and encourage all members of the community to attend. All fans who present a church bulletin at the gate will receive free admission for the evening, and are welcome to remain in the gym following the men's contest for Lees-McRae's Worship on Wednesday.

Strong first half lifts Trojans over Bobcats

The Mount Olive College men's basketball team placed four players in double figures, and outscored Lees-McRae College by a 57-34 margin in the first half en route to a 95-64 victory in Conference Carolinas on Saturday evening.

Mount Olive (11-9, 8-6 CC) posted a field goal percentage of 54.2 percent on the night, including a blistering 60.6 percent clip in the first half, while holding Lees-McRae (2-18, 2-12 CC) to a 33.3 percent mark from the floor in the contest. The Bobcats edged the Trojans by a 37-36 margin on the glass, including a 16-12 advantage on the offensive boards, as Mount Olive converted 25 Lees-McRae miscues into 31 points.

Asad Lamot (Mebane, N.C.) led the way for Lees-McRae with a game-high 15 points, connecting on 6-of-11 attempts from the floor, as Daniel Sepokas (Illawong, Australia) added 14 markers and a game-high seven rebounds. DJ Brown (Anderson, S.C.) chipped in 10 points and six boards for the Bobcats.

Mahamed Ibrahim, Deshaune Green, Darrell Patterson, and John Wieland each tallied 13 points to pace the Trojans, as Dory Hines dished out a game-high 10 assists. Caleb Henderson and Kendall Hargrove each chipped in eight markers, while Ewon Wright posted seven points and Hines pulled down a team-high five boards.

Mount Olive jumped out to an early 14-3 lead in the contest, capping the opening run with an Ibrahim layup before pushing the advantage to 26-9 following a Hargrove dunk, and a Green jumper with 11:12 left in the first half.

After the Bobcats answered with a three-point play by Sepokas and a pair of freebies from Will Lopez (Sydney, Australia), Mount Olive quickly countered with an 11-2 spurt, stretching the lead to 40-16 with 6:06 to play in the period.

The Bobcats battled hard over the next several minutes, cutting the advantage to 57-34 heading into the intermission following a last-second triple by Chad Eppley (Boone, N.C.) and a buzzer-beating layup by Brown.

Mount Olive responded in the second half, opening the period with a 21-12 run to widen the margin to 78-46 with 11:05 to play. Lees-McRae counter with a 14-3 spurt over the next eight minutes, cutting the lead to 81-60 on a Sepokas triple at the 3:15 mark to cap a strong period of play for the Bobcats.

The Trojans would regain the momentum with a 14-4 run over the final three minutes of play, quelling the rally and closing out the 95-64 win on a pair of late free throws from Henderson.

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Wednesday.

WOMEN:
MOUNT OLIVE 74, LMC 48

Score By Period	**1st**	**2nd**	**Total**
Lees-McRae	26	22	48
Mount Olive	36	38	74

LMC: MUNSON 8, BELCHER 6, TRUESDALE 4 (6 ASSISTS), LEWIS 19, De SOUZA 1, FALTUS 1, SMITH 5, JOHNSON 2, COLLINS 2. FG: 17-43, 3FG: 4-14, FT: 10-16. 27 REBOUNDS, 10 ASSISTS, 23 TURNOVERS.
THREE-POINTERS: LEWIS 4.

MT. OLIVE: NESMITH 18 (11 REBOUNDS, 9 ASSISTS), LUEB 2, GARY 19, McDONALD 12, SILVA 4, BUIE 2, MITCHELL 9, GRAHAM 5, DIAL 2. FG: 28-58, 3FG: 6-14, FT: 12-24. 39 REBOUNDS, 21 ASSISTS, 13 TURNOVERS.
THREE-POINTERS: GARY 5, MITCHELL.

MEN:
MOUNT OLIVE 95, LMC 64

Score By Period	**1st**	**2nd**	**Total**
Lees-McRae	34	30	64
Mount Olive	57	38	95

LMC: BROWN 10, LOPEZ 5, SEPOKAS 14 (7 REBOUNDS), LAMOT 15, BLUITT 5, CLARKE 3, EPPLEY 6, URBINA 3, SAINT MARC 3. FG: 19-57, 3FG: 8-22, FT: 18-23. 37 REBOUNDS, 10 ASSISTS, 25 TURNOVERS.
THREE-POINTERS: SEPOKAS 4, BROWN 3, LOPEZ.

MT. OLIVE: IBARHIM 13, GREEN 13, WRIGHT 7, HINES 3 (10 ASSISTS, 5 REBOUNDS), McCAIN 3, BRITE 6, PATTERSON 13, HARGROVE 8, MOORE 5, TUCKER 3, HENDERSON 8, WIELAND 13. FG: 32-59, 3FG: 10-27, FT: 21-33. 36 REBOUNDS, 20 ASSISTS, 14 TURNOVERS.
THREE-POINTERS: PATTERSON 3, WIELAND 3, IBRAHIM 2, WRIGHT, TUCKER.

Photo Courtesy: Daniel Sepokas, LMC Athletics