

Lucas Powers Bobcats To Sixth Straight Win

Written by Whitney Noble

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John Lucas (Cincinnati, Ohio) posted 10 kills and a .421 hitting percentage to lead the Lees-McRae College men's volleyball team to a straight-set victory over Belmont Abbey College in Conference Carolinas play on Saturday afternoon.

Lees-McRae (11-3, 7-3 CC) won the match by scores of 25-19, 25-14, and 25-22, extending its winning streak to six, while posting a .233 hitting percentage and holding Belmont Abbey (7-8, 3-7 CC) to a -.062 clip on the attack. Each team recorded eight blocks in the contest, as Lees-McRae tallied 40 kills and 31 digs on the afternoon.

Jose Ribas (Guaynabo, Puerto Rico) paced the Bobcats with a match-high 12 kills, posting a .360 hitting percentage as Lucas added 10 smashes and six digs. Randy Ramirez (Guaynabo, Puerto Rico) chipped in a match-high 34 assists, while Efrain Negron (Caguas, Puerto Rico) posted a contest-best nine digs.

Griffin O'Camb led the way for Belmont Abbey with 10 kills, as Derek Sullivan added 13 assists and five digs. Aaron DeKalb also chipped in eight digs for the Abbey.

The Abbey jumped out to an early 5-1 lead in the first set before the Bobcats responded, answering with a 17-9 run to claim an 18-14 advantage following a solo block by Brady Markle (York, Pa.). The Bobcats would close out the set from there, claiming the frame on a Markle kill to cap a 7-5 spurt.

Lees-McRae carried the momentum into the second set, opening the frame with a 17-9 surge that was capped by a dump kill from Ramirez. The Bobcats would finish the set with an 8-5 spurt, taking a commanding 2-0 lead in the match following back-to-back kills by Matt Harpenau (Cincinnati, Ohio).

Belmont Abbey battled back in the third, launching a 7-0 spurt to take a 14-11 lead on a kill by Sullivan. The Bobcats would answer with a 10-6 run, claiming a 21-17 advantage following an Abbey miscue. After Belmont Abbey countered with a 3-1 spurt to trim the margin to 22-20, Lees-McRae responded with three of the next five points, claiming the set and the match on a kill by Houston Callaway (Thurmond, N.C.).

Lees-McRae returns to the court on Friday, March 1 when the Bobcats host Mount Olive College in league play at 2 p.m. in Williams Gymnasium.

Photo Courtesy: John Lucas, LMC Athletics