

Lucas Lifts Bobcats To Sweep Of Barton

Written by Whitney Noble
Saturday, 09 March 2013 13:23

Junior John Lucas (Cincinnati, Ohio) nearly recorded a triple-double to lead the Lees-McRae College men's volleyball team to a straight-set sweep of Barton College in Conference Carolinas play on Friday afternoon in Williams Gymnasium.

Lees-McRae (13-6, 8-6 CC) won the match by scores of 25-21, 25-21, and 25-16, posting a .447 hitting percentage in the contest, while holding Barton (1-16, 1-10 CC) to a .171 clip on the attack. The Bobcats tallied 44 kills, 28 digs, and eight blocks on the afternoon, as Barton recorded 32 smashes, 18 digs, and four stuffs.

Jose Ribas (Guaynabo, Puerto Rico) led the way for Lees-McRae with a match-high 11 kills, posting a .429 hitting percentage, while Joshua Jones (Christmas, Fla.) added nine smashes and a .727 clip on the attack.

Lucas put together a strong all-around afternoon, tallying nine kills to go along with match-highs of nine digs and seven blocks, including five solo stuffs. Matt Harpenau (Cincinnati, Ohio) chipped in seven smashes on 10 swings, as Randy Ramirez (Guaynabo, Puerto Rico) recorded 39 assists and two aces.

Cameron Hudson and Zach McCalla paced the Bulldogs with eight kills each, as Brennan O'Connor added six smashes. Hudson and Nick Scalia both tallied a team-high five digs, while Jordan Robison chipped in 26 assists.

Barton jumped out to an early 6-3 lead in the first set before the Bobcats responded, claiming a narrow 13-12 advantage on a Ribas smash. The Bulldogs would answer with a 9-6 spurt, taking a 21-19 lead following a block by Tanner Medina and O'Connor. The Bobcats countered with a 6-0 surge to claim the set and a 1-0 advantage in the match on a Bulldog miscue.

The Bulldogs battled back early in the second, taking a 5-4 lead following a Medina kill before the Bobcats responded with a 9-5 run to claim a 13-10 advantage on a Barton miscue. The lead would change hands four times over the next several minutes, with Lees-McRae opening a narrow 20-19 margin on a solo stuff by Lucas.

After Barton countered with a McCalla kill to even the tally at 20-20, Lees-McRae answered with a 5-1 spurt to claim the set and a commanding 2-0 lead in the match following an emphatic block by Lucas and Harpenau.

The Bobcats carried the momentum into the third frame, opening the set with a 9-6 run before pushing the advantage to 15-10 on a block from Jones and Lucas. Lees-McRae would close out the victory from there, weathering a brief Bulldog run before capping the set and the match following monster smashes from Ribas and Lucas.

Lees-McRae returns to the court on Friday, March 15 when the Bobcats travel to Quincy, Ill. to take on Lindenwood University on the first day of the Quincy University Crossover at 8 p.m.

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Photo Courtesy: John Lucas, LMC Athletics