

## Ribas Leads Bobcats To split At Quincy Crossover

Written by Whitney Noble

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Jose Ribas (Guaynabo, Puerto Rico) recorded 28 kills and 21 digs to lead the Lees-McRae College men's volleyball team to a Saturday split at the Quincy University Crossover, as the Bobcats fell to Park University in straight sets before rallying for a 3-1 victory over host Quincy in the afternoon.

Park (16-0) opened the day with a 25-21, 25-17, and 25-16 win over Lees-McRae (14-8), before the Bobcats rallied for a hard-fought 23-25, 28-26, 25-23, and 26-24 victory against Quincy (9-13) in the afternoon match.

### **Match One: Park 3, Lees-McRae 0**

John Lucas (Cincinnati, Ohio) paced the Bobcats with 12 kills and a .308 hitting percentage in the match, as Ribas added 10 smashes and Efrain Negrón (Caguas, Puerto Rico) chipped in eight digs. Sam Sheers (Centerville, Ohio) posted 26 assists in the contest.

Zach Penolio led the way for Park with a match-high 13 kills, posting a .478 hitting percentage while adding eight digs. Fabricio Toledo chipped in six smashes, as Kalani Rose recorded a contest-best nine digs and Rob Cordero dished out 28 assists.

Park jumped out to an early lead in the first set, opening the frame with an 8-1 run before the Bobcats answered with a 6-3 spurt, closing the gap to 11-7 on a Lucas smash. After the Pirates countered with eight of the next 14 points to claim a 19-13 advantage, Lees-McRae battled back with a 4-0 spurt to cut the lead to 19-17 following a kill from Ribas.

The Pirates would answer once again, capping the set with a 6-4 spurt to take a 1-0 lead in the match on a kill by Matheus Roham. Park would carry the momentum into the second frame, taking an early 5-0 advantage before the Bobcats responded with a 5-1 spurt to close the gap to 6-5 following a Lucas smash.

Penolio and the Pirates countered with a 12-7 run, pushing the lead to 18-12 before closing out the set on a Caio Souza kill, and a Bobcat miscue to take a 2-0 lead in the match. The Pirates maintained the pace in the third, opening an early 11-4 lead on an LMC miscue.

The Bobcats would close the gap to 16-11 following a block by Lucas and Matt Harpenau (Cincinnati, Ohio) before Park responded, answering with a 9-5 run to cap the set and the match with back-to-back stuffs by Toledo and Paul Bilanzic.

### **Match Two: Lees-McRae 3, Quincy 1**

Ribas turned in perhaps his best performance of the season against Quincy, posting a match-high 18 kills to go along with a season- and career-best 17 digs. Lucas and Harpenau each added nine smashes, as Lucas recorded five blocks (two solo, three assists) and seven digs.

Sheers chipped in a match-high 41 assists, while Negrón posted 13 digs. Joshua Jones (Christmas, Fla.) also added seven kills, three blocks (one solo, two assists), and a .385 hitting percentage for the Bobcats.

Ian Lawson paced the Hawks with 15 kills and four block assists, as Jack Gamache added 12 smashes and 11 digs. Brian Peth and Chris Lynch posted match-highs of 17 digs and 41 assists, respectively, while Steven Battaglia chipped in a contest-best eight blocks (two solo, six assists).

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The Hawks battled to an early 12-9 lead in the opening set, building on the advantage with a 4-1 spurt to push the margin to 16-10 following a Bobcat miscue. Lees-McRae would answer with an 8-1 surge, claiming an 18-17 advantage on a Lucas. Quincy responded with a 7-4 run, pushing the Bobcats to set point, and capping the frame on a Lawson kill following a block by Harpenau and Ribas.

Lees-McRae answered in the second, opening the frame with a 13-9 run before Quincy countered with a 4-0 spurt to even the tally on a block by Battaglia. The Bobcats would battle back with a 7-4 spurt, claiming a 20-17 advantage following a Hawk miscue.

Quincy countered with a 7-2 surge, pushing the Bobcats to set point at 24-22 before Ribas answered for Lees-McRae, recording back-to-back smashes to even the tally at 24-24. The Bobcats would fight off two more set points before claiming the frame for themselves, squaring the match at 1-1 on a block by Ribas and a Hawk miscue.

The third proved to be a tightly contested affair, with the teams trading runs in the early going before the Hawks launched an 8-2 spurt, opening a 22-17 advantage on a Battaglia kill.

Lees-McRae would answer with an 8-1 surge, claiming the set and a 2-1 lead in the match on a pair of emphatic smashes from Harpenau.

The Bobcats would carry the momentum into the fourth set, opening the frame with a 16-10 run before Quincy answered with a 9-5 spurt, closing the gap to 21-19 on an LMC miscue.

After Lees-McRae countered with three of the next four markers to push the Hawks to match point at 24-20, Quincy battled back to even the tally at 24-24 following a block from Lawson and John Pranger. The Bobcats quickly answered with back-to-back points, claiming the set and the match on a Hawk miscue after a kill from Sheers.

Lees-McRae returns to the court on Tuesday when the Bobcats resume their Conference Carolinas schedule with a home match against Pfeiffer University in Williams Gymnasium at 7 p.m.

**Photo Courtesy: Jose Ribas, LMC Athletics**