

## **LMC Men tabbed third in Conference Carolinas Preseason Coaches' Poll**

Written by LMC Sports Information  
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The Lees-McRae College men's cross country team is picked to finish third in the race for the 2011 Conference Carolinas championship, announced league officials Wednesday with the release of the Conference Carolinas Preseason Coaches' Poll.

Lees-McRae will look to build on the success of last season after finishing third at the Conference Carolinas Championships, and eighth at the Southeast Regional Championships. The Bobcats are third in the poll and face a demanding schedule this fall, but hope to rely on a strong returning core to carry them through the season and mentor a gifted group of newcomers.

"We are looking forward to a great cross country season," said head coach Thomas Cason. "Our conference gets stronger every year, so we continue to work even harder in order to compete against such strong distance programs."

Senior Craig Simpkins (Boiling Springs, S.C.) who finished sixth at the conference championships last season with a school-record time, is joined by fellow seniors Luke Anton (Brevard, N.C.) and Connor Gray (Christiansburg, Va.) to lead the veteran core for the Bobcats. Lees-McRae also returns juniors Jared Lupton (Nampa, Idaho) and Sondre Thorbergsen (Tranoy, Norway), while welcoming four talented newcomers into the fold.

Lees-McRae opens the season on Friday when the Bobcats travel to Spartanburg, S.C. to participate in the Eye Opener Invitational, which is being held at the Roger Milliken Center.

## **LMC Women tabbed third in Conference Carolinas Preseason Coaches' Poll**

The Lees-McRae College women's cross country team is picked to finish third in the race for the 2011 Conference Carolinas championship, announced league officials Wednesday with the release of the Conference Carolinas Preseason Coaches' Poll.

Queens University of Charlotte tops the poll with 121 points and 11 first-place votes, followed by Mount Olive College (91) and Lees-McRae, who received one first-place vote and 85 points. Converse College is fourth with 83 points, while King College rounds out the top five with 80 points. Barton College is sixth with 69 points, followed by Belmont Abbey College (68), Erskine College (57), Limestone College (49), Coker College (45), North Greenville University (26), and Pfeiffer University (18).

Lee-McRae will rely on a veteran core and an influx of gifted newcomers to carry it through a demanding schedule as the Bobcats claim the third spot in the league's preseason poll. Head

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coach Thomas Cason returns for his second season after leading the Bobcats to a third-place finish at the Conference Carolinas Championships last fall.

"We are looking forward to a great cross country season," said head coach Thomas Cason. "Our conference gets stronger every year, so we continue to work even harder in order to compete against such strong distance programs."

Cason welcomes senior Rayne Delutis (Christiansburg, Va.) back into the fold, along with juniors Lindsey Bush (Catawba, N.C.) and Cinthia Lehner (Greer, S.C.) to lead the Bobcats in their quest for the program's ninth conference championship

Lees-McRae opens the season on Friday when the Bobcats travel to Spartanburg, S.C. to participate in the Eye Opener Invitational, which is being held at the Roger Milliken Center.

## Conference Carolinas Women's Cross Country Preseason Coaches' Poll

### Rk.School (First-place votes) Points

1. Queens	(11)	121
2. Mount Olive		91
<b>3. Lees-McRae</b>	<b>(1)</b>	<b>85</b>
4. Converse		83
5. King		80
6. Barton		69
7. Belmont Abbey		68
8. Erskine		57
9. Limestone		49
10. Coker		45
11. North Greenville		26
12. Pfeiffer		18

### **Bobcats to host second annual Shope Tournament this weekend**

The Lees-McRae College men's soccer team is set to host the Michael Shope Memorial Tournament this weekend, honoring a fallen teammate while taking on nationally-ranked opponents University of Montevallo and Flagler College.

The Bobcats will host the second annual Michael Shope Memorial Tournament this weekend, paying tribute to former Bobcat Michael "Mike" Shope, who passed away on March 16, 2006 as a result of a tragic boating accident off the North Carolina coast near Ocean Isle. He and three other men lost their lives when their fishing boat capsized in rough waters; two of the six men on the boat survived. Head coach Lee Squires and the Bobcat soccer family will honor the Shope family prior to kickoff against No. 22 Flagler on Saturday.

Mike, a 2003 graduate of Leesville Road High School in Raleigh, N.C., was in his junior year at Lees-McRae College working towards a Bachelor's degree in criminal justice. Michael was a three-year letter-winner on the Bobcat's soccer team, and was looking forward to being the only four-year letterman on the team as a senior. Michael was also a volunteer firefighter for the Banner Elk Volunteer Fire Department, and had been with the department for approximately two years at the time of his death.

Mike had also successfully passed the North Carolina state exam for EMT-Basic, and was planning to complete the EMT-Intermediate course. His goal in life was to be a professional firefighter, and was well on his way to doing so. Mike was a wonderful son and brother, a good friend to everyone he met, and was loved by many. He touched many lives with his perpetual sense of humor, his love of life, and his award-winning smile.

The Bobcats will open the tournament and the season on Thursday, taking on No. 19 Montevallo on Tate Field at 6 p.m. in Squires' regular season debut on the touchline. Flagler will then play King College (Tenn.) on Friday at 4 p.m., before Montevallo takes the pitch against Milligan College on Saturday at 1 p.m. The Bobcats will conclude the weekend with a pivotal matchup against No. 22 Flagler on Saturday, with a scheduled kickoff at 3 p.m. on Tate Field.