

Bridges Signs With Bobcats

Written by Staff Reports

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The Lees-McRae College men's lacrosse program is pleased to welcome 12 new members to the Bobcat family for the upcoming season, announced head coach Brendan Arthur Monday. The class is comprised of one attackman, three defenders, three goalies, and five midfielders, representing five states as well as Canada.

Among those signees was former Pioneer Will Bridges. The 5-6 midfielder led the Watauga High men's lacrosse team in scoring for two years. He recorded 18 goals and 18 assists in his senior year to earn all-conference first team honors for the second year in a row.

"Will is pound for pound the strongest player on our team," said Arthur. "He is constantly working to better himself, and will develop into a serious two-way threat. "

At attack, the Bobcats welcome Jarrod Brady from Kernersville, NC. Brady, a 5-10 graduate of East Forsyth High School, scored 16 goals and recorded 18 assists while also scooping up 83 ground balls in his senior year, while helping his team to a 6-10 mark in their first season of varsity competition.

"I'm thrilled with the addition of Jarrod to our already strong attack lines," said Arthur. "Jarrod brings the natural left-handed component that we have been missing the past few years. I expect him to make a strong impact in his first season."

On defense, Macully Netting joins his brother Nick Netting (Arlington, Va.) on the Bobcats roster. A native of Arlington, Va., the 6-0 defender scored three goals and added an assist while picking up 57 ground balls in his senior year, helping Yorktown High School to a 13-6 record. His play earned him all-district first team honors last season.

"Having Macully join his brother shows that we are really building something that the players believe in," said Arthur. "Macully had an outstanding high school career and will continue to grow as an athlete here at LMC."

Benjamin Shifflett comes to Banner Elk from the Forsyth Country Day School in Clemmons, N.C., where he captained his team to a school-record 10 wins last season. Along the way, he scored a goal, handed out two assists and collected 52 ground balls. Walker Wiggins joins the Bobcats from E.A. Laney High School in Wilmington, N.C.

"Benjamin is a very aggressive defender and a solid athlete," said Arthur. "I think he will fit in very well with our defensive schemes. Walker is a great athlete and I believe he is going to develop into a great defender for us. I anticipate all three of our new defensemen earning significant playing time this season."

A trio of goalies also join the Bobcats this season. Coming from to LMC from Lake Brantley High School is Ryan Harrison. The Lake Mary, Fla. native led his team to the state semifinals, and collected all-conference first team, all-county first team, and Team MVP honors along the way. He finished his season with 200 saves, a 0.68 save average, and anchored a defense that allowed just 7.45 goals a game.

From Durham, N.C. comes Chris Spathis, who recorded a .675 save average and helped his

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Riverside team to a 6.125 goals against average in his senior year. A 2010 graduate of Wakefield High School in Raleigh, N.C, Chris Hicks joins the Bobcats this season after attending Lees-McRae last year. In his senior year his team posted a 7-7 record but averaged just 5.3 goals against.

"We graduated two very talented goalies last year but these three are ready to step in and fill their shoes," said Arthur. "Ryan comes from a very well-respected program and is a natural shot stopper. Chris Spathis also comes from a great program here in North Carolina, and has a great ability to see the ball as well as quarterback the defense. Chris Hicks has really impressed me from the start, making some very impressive saves in practice. I think the three of them will push each other to excel and I am expecting very big things from them."

Five midfielders will be joining the Bobcats for the 2012 season. From West Forsyth High School comes Dalton Lamb. The 6-1 Clemmons, N.C. native scored 21 goals and added 15 assists while collecting 89 ground balls, as he captained his team to a school-best six wins in his senior campaign. For his strong play, Lamb was honored with his team's Best Midfielder Award.

"Dalton brings a level of poise to our game," said Arthur. "He has an ability to see the field well and control the tempo of the game."

From Bluffton, S.C. comes Britton Baker. During the 2011 season, the 6-1 midfielder scored 39 goals, dished out 33 assists, and picked up 92 ground balls on his way to earning Lower State first team and all-state second team accolades.

"Britton is going to be a great between the lines player for us," said Arthur.

A 5-9 native of Middle Township, N.J., Jeff White played his senior year with teammate Jarrod Brady at East Forsyth High School in Winston-Salem, N.C. In his season with the Eagles he scored 51 goals, added 17 assists, and picked up 116 ground balls to earn all-conference first team honors.

"Jeff has a natural talent to create opportunities for himself and as he develops his offensive vision he will become not only a threat to score, but to create for his teammates as well," said Arthur.

Rounding out the midfield is Sean O'Neill. Coming from Vancouver, British Columbia, the 5-9 midfielder will bring his box lacrosse skills to the outdoor game.

"This midfield class provides us with a lot of depth to play a very high tempo game," said Arthur.

"They all are capable scorers and work well together. I think that collectively, they will achieve great things for Lees-McRae."

"I am looking forward to seeing Sean adapt his skills to field lacrosse, and with his athleticism, I expect him to be an impact player right away."

The Bobcats will host their annual alumni game during Homecoming Weekend at 10 a.m. on Saturday, October 1. Lees-McRae will travel to Hickory, N.C. the following weekend, taking on Lenoir-Rhyne University in an 11 a.m. scrimmage before squaring off against Catawba College at 1:40 p.m.