

UPDATED: Pacers outlast Bobcats In Five Sets

Written by Mike Kelly

Saturday, 22 October 2011 22:05

The University of South Carolina at Aiken women's volleyball team rallied from a 2-1 deficit against Lees-McRae College on Saturday, winning the last two sets to defeat the Bobcats in five frames on the final day of Lander University's Crossover Tournament.

USC Aiken (12-12) won the match by scores of 21-25, 31-29, 24-26, 25-16, and 15-11, holding Lees-McRae (20-8) to a .093 hitting percentage while handing the Bobcats their second consecutive loss. The Pacers posted a .124 hitting percentage on the afternoon, recording 12 blocks and 84 digs as the Bobcats notched 13 service aces, 11 stuffs, and dug out 72 Pacer attacks.

Junior Taylor Clendenin (Statesville, N.C.) paced the Bobcats with a match-high 21 kills, registering a .280 hitting percentage while notching 12 digs to record her third straight double-double. Megan Epperson (St. John, Ind.) and Megan Mitchell each added a double-double of their own, as Epperson chipped in 12 kills and 12 digs and Mitchell tallied 37 assists and 12 digs. Epperson and Jessica Singewald (Port St. Lucie, Fla.) each tallied a match-high six blocks, as Sariah Suryadevara (Cincinnati, Ohio) posted a contest-best 28 digs and four service aces.

Shannon Byers and Hannah Tierney each posted a team-high 10 kills for the Pacers, as Endea Ellison chipped in nine kills and a .381 hitting percentage. Alex Petcok (20 assists and 14 digs), and Sheila Walsh (22 assists and 10 digs) each added a double-double, while Byers chipped in 17 digs to notch a double-double of her own with 17 digs. Samantha Lukrally added a match-high 28 digs, as Ellison, Tierney, and Emily Maassen each posted a contest-best six blocks.

Lees-McRae battled to a 25-21 win in the first set, leading from wire-to-wire before closing out the frame on a Clendenin smash. Aiken responded in the second, jumping out to a 15-11 lead before Lees-McRae responded with an 8-1 run, claiming a 19-17 advantage on a Pacer miscue. The Pacers fought back to even the tally at 23-23 before pushing the Bobcats to set point on a block by Ellison and Nicole DeVries.

After the Bobcats answered with back-to-back kills from Clendenin and Epperson, the Pacers engaged in a seesaw battle with Lees-McRae for the remainder of the set, as the teams traded points until Aiken claimed the frame on a Maassen kill and back-to-back Bobcat miscues to even the match at 1-1 with a 31-29 win in the second set.

Aiken carried the momentum into the third set, claiming a 17-14 lead on a Bobcat miscue to force an LMC timeout. The Bobcats quickly responded out of the brief intermission with an 8-4 run, taking a 22-21 lead on a Clendenin service ace. Aiken countered with a 3-1 spurt, pushing the Bobcats to set point before Lees-McRae answered with three straight points to close out the frame and take a 2-1 lead in the match on a Mitchell service ace.

The Pacers responded in the fourth, jumping out to an 18-11 lead following an 8-3 run. Aiken would hang out for a 25-16 win in the set, closing out the frame on a kill by Heather Granger

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following an emphatic block by Bobcats Epperson and Singewald.

Aiken set the tone early in the fifth set, taking an early 8-4 lead on back-to-back kills from Tierney and DeVries before the Bobcats responded with a 3-0 spurt, cutting the margin to 8-7 on a block by Clendenin and Kallai Johnston (Statesville, N.C.). The Pacers answered with a pair of quick points, taking a 10-7 lead before the Bobcats answered with a 3-1 spurt to cut the advantage to 11-10 on a kill by Suryadevara. Aiken countered with a 4-1 run to close out the set and the match, claiming the 15-11 fifth-frame win on a Bobcat miscue.

Lees-McRae returns to the court on Friday, October 28 when the Bobcats travel to Hartsville, S.C. to resume their Conference Carolinas schedule against Coker College at 7 p.m.

Bobcats tame Cobras, 9-0, Clinch Conference Crown

Meagan Thornton (Millville, N.J.) and Vickie Rich (Arlington Heights, Ill.) each tallied two goals and one assist to lead the Lees-McRae College women's soccer team to a resounding 9-0 win

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over Coker College on Saturday afternoon, as the Bobcats clinched the Conference Carolinas regular season championship outright with their program-record 11th league victory of the season.

Lees-McRae (12-2-1, 11-0 CC) outshot the Cobras (1-14-1, 1-8-1 CC) by a 26-3 margin, including a 17-0 advantage in the first half, as nine Bobcats found their way onto the score sheet with at least one point.

Thornton and Rich each notched a brace for the Bobcats, as Mary Dorn (Shallotte, N.C.), Kaitlyn Kerrigan (Lakewood Ranch, Fla.), LeeAnn Sullivan (Greensboro, N.C.), Samantha Arendt (Franklinton, N.C.), and Jessica Cardenas (Bakersfield, Calif.) each scored a goal. Kerrigan notched a team-high two assists, as Thornton, Dorn, Rich, Alex Trujic (Venice, Fla.), and Jessica O'Leary (Millbury, Mass.) each posted a helper. Kaitlyn Briggs (Oviedo, Fla.) and Alicia Pierson (Brooksville, Fla.) each played one half between the pipes, as Pierson made two saves.

Rich opened the scoring late in the 16th minute, finishing the rebound off an initial shot from Thornton to give the Bobcats an early 1-0 lead. Thornton doubled the margin to 2-0 in the 24th minute, burying a cross from Rich into the lower corner for her 11th goal of the season. Dorn pushed the lead to 3-0 four minutes later, nodding home a corner from Kerrigan to notch her third goal of the campaign.

Thornton completed her brace early in the 31st minute, taking a pass from O'Leary and beating the keeper for her team-leading 12th goal of the season. Arendt sent the Bobcats into the interval with a 5-0 lead midway through the 44th minute, scoring her first collegiate goal off a cross from Kerrigan.

Kerrigan stretched the margin to 6-0 less than a minute into the second half, delivering a masterful one-touch finish off a headed cross from Trujic. Sullivan pushed the lead to 7-0 with her first career goal in the 77th minute, firing a shot just over the keeper from distance.

Cardenas tallied her first goal of the campaign midway through the 80th minute, converting from the spot. Rich notched the final tally of the afternoon four ticks into the 90th minute with a sliding finish off a cross from Dorn.

Lees-McRae returns to the pitch on Tuesday when the Bobcats travel to Gaffney, S.C. to take on Limestone College in their regular season finale in conference play. Kickoff is slated for 1 p.m.

Shahdad, Bobcats upset No. 7 Cobras in extra time thriller

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Lees-McRae College men's soccer team recorded perhaps its most influential result of the season on Saturday night, upsetting No. 7 Coker College by a 1-0 score line in extra time of a Conference Carolinas matchup.

Lees-McRae (11-4-1, 8-2 CC) edged the conference-leading Coker (13-2, 8-1 CC) Cobras in shots by a 10-9 margin, including a 2-0 advantage in extra time. Both goalkeepers played exceptionally well, recording nine saves between them as Lees-McRae's Thomas Rusling (Sheffield, England) stopped six attempts at goal to keep his fifth clean sheet of the season. Coker's James Sweeney recorded three saves for the Cobras. Lees-McRae freshman Preston Shahdad (Charlotte, N.C.) scored the lone goal of the match, tallying his second match-winner of the season in extra time.

The Cobras tested Rusling early, forcing the sophomore keeper to make a pair of saves in the first 18 minutes of play as the match went into the interval deadlocked at 0-0. Lees-McRae began to push forward with more urgency early in the second half, forcing Sweeney to make a pair of stops in the opening 15 minutes of the period on attempts from Scott Alford (Hillsborough, N.C.) and James Galvani (High Wycombe, England).

The match remained scoreless through the end of regulation, sending the teams into extra time with the Cobras holding a narrow 9-8 advantage in attempts at goal. Neither side would muster a shot in the first 10 minutes of extra time, with the first attempt at goal coming off the foot of Bobcat senior Luke Duffy (Wakefield, England) in the 102nd minute to force Sweeney's third save of the match.

Shahdad's winner came just under a minute and a half later, as the freshman took possession of a loose ball in the area and hammered the finish into the back of the net to give the Bobcats the thrilling one-goal victory.

Lees-McRae returns to the pitch on Tuesday, travelling to Gaffney, S.C. to take on Limestone College in a pivotal conference battle to close out the Bobcats' regular season league schedule. Kickoff is slated for 3 p.m.