

Bobcats edge Pioneers, 3-1

Written by Staff Reports

Monday, 30 January 2012 07:55

The Lees-McRae College men's volleyball team registered 13 blocks and eight service aces en route to a 3-1 win over Sacred Heart University on Sunday afternoon in non-conference play. Lees-McRae (2-3) recorded 39 kills and a .140 hitting percentage

in the match, while holding Sacred Heart (2-4) to a .145 clip on the attack to go along with 47 kills and eight and a half blocks. The Bobcats won the match by scores of 18-25, 25-18, 25-23, and 25-18.

Joshua Jones (Christmas, Fla.) paced the Bobcats with 11 blocks, including one solo and 10 assists, while Chris Flood (Louisville, Ky.) and Jose Ribas (Guaynabo, Puerto Rico) added 10 and eight kills, respectively. Randy Ramirez (Guaynabo, Puerto Rico) chipped in 30 assists and seven digs, while Efrain Negrón (Caguas, Puerto Rico) posted a match-high 11 digs.

Nick Hunt led the way for Sacred Heart with a match-high 15 kills, while Enzo Mackenzie added 13 smashes and John Jutjen posted a contest-best 38 assists. Connor Bohl chipped in a team-high eight digs, as Bradley Borsay recorded nine kills.

Sacred Heart jumped out to an early 15-9 lead in the first set on back-to-back blocks by Jason Kinney before the Bobcats answered with an 8-4 run, closing the gap to 19-17 on a smash by John Lucas (Cincinnati, Ohio). The Pioneers responded with a surge of their own, claiming the set on back-to-back kills by Mackenzie to cap a 6-1 spurt.

The Bobcats countered in the second, opening an early 10-point lead on a Ribas service ace that pushed the margin to 13-3. Sacred Heart would cut the advantage to 15-9 with a 6-2 spurt before Lees-McRae answered with a 9-5 run, taking a 24-14 lead on an ace by Ribas. The Pioneers fought off four straight set points, closing the gap to 24-18 before Flood answered the run for the Bobcats, evening the match with an emphatic kill.

Lees-McRae opened the third set with a 12-8 run, extending the margin to 20-13 on a Flood kill before Sacred Heart responded with an 8-0 surge, claiming a 21-20 advantage following a smash by Mike Komlanc. The Bobcats countered with a 5-2 spurt of their own, closing out the set and taking a 2-1 lead in the match on a kill by Ribas.

The Bobcats carried the momentum into the fourth frame, opening the set with a 13-7 run before the Pioneers responded with five straight points, closing the gap to 13-12 on a Hunt kill. Lees-McRae countered with a 10-2 surge, widening the margin to 23-14 on a Ribas service ace. Sacred Heart would fight back with a 4-0 spurt, cutting the lead to 23-18 on a Mackenzie kill before the Bobcats closed out the set and the match on a Flood smash and a block by Flood and Matt Harpenau (Cincinnati, Ohio).

Lees-McRae returns to the court on Sunday, February 5 when the Bobcats travel to Wilson, N.C. to take on Barton College in Conference Carolinas play. The match is slated to begin at 3 p.m.

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Photo Courtesy: John Lucas, LMC Athletics