

Bobcats Outlast Saints In Four Sets

Written by Staff Reports

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Randy Ramirez (Guaynabo, Puerto Rico) posted 45 assists and five blocks to lead the Lees-McRae College men's volleyball team to a 3-1 win over Limestone College in Conference Carolinas play on Friday night in Williams Gymnasium. Lees-McRae (5-4, 2-0 CC) won the match by scores of 25-22, 25-21, 23-25, and 32-30, holding Limestone (5-4, 2-2 CC) to a .111 hitting percentage while recording

11 blocks and a .153 clip on the attack. The Saints posted 20 blocks on the night, as the Bobcats recorded 36 digs.

Jose Ribas (Guaynabo, Puerto Rico) paced the Bobcats with a match-high 18 kills, as Matt Harpenau (Cincinnati, Ohio) and John Lucas (Cincinnati, Ohio) added 11 and 10 smashes, respectively. Efrain Negrón (Caguas, Puerto Rico), the national leader in digs per set, continued his strong play with a match-high 16 digs, as Ramirez added five kills on nine attempts. Joshua Jones (Christmas, Fla.) also chipped in nine kills for the Bobcats.

Scott Warren led the way for Limestone with 13 kills, adding nine blocks (two solo, seven assists), as Curtis Van Grinsven posted a match-high 11 blocks (two solo, nine assists). Derek Daley added eight kills on 11 swings, posting a .727 hitting percentage, as Andrew Pile chipped in 31 assists and five digs. Joe Gilliland also recorded 13 digs on the night.

Limestone jumped out to an early 10-8 lead in the first set before the Bobcats answered with a 4-1 run, claiming a 12-11 advantage on a Lucas service ace. Neither team would hold more than a two-point advantage until the Bobcats launched a 6-2 run, closing out the 25-22 first-set win on a Ribas kill.

The second set proved to be a tightly-contested affair, as Lees-McRae launched a 5-1 run midway through the frame to snatch a 16-12 lead on a kill by Chris Flood (Cincinnati, Ohio). After the Saints responded with a 7-3 run to even the tally at 19-19, the Bobcats countered with a 6-2 spurt of their own to claim a 2-0 advantage in the match on a Limestone miscue.

Lees-McRae jumped out to a 16-12 lead in the third on back-to-back Ribas kills before the Saints responded with an 8-2 run, snatching a 20-18 advantage following a Pile smash. The Saints would push the margin to 23-20 before the Bobcats answered with a 3-1 spurt, cutting the lead to 24-23 on a Ribas kill. The set was then awarded to Limestone because of an illegal substitution by the Bobcats.

The fourth set followed a similar script to that of the second frame, with neither team claiming more than a three-point advantage throughout its duration. Limestone would snatch an early 10-7 lead before the Bobcats responded, claiming a narrow 17-16 advantage on a Lucas kill to force a Saint timeout. The Saints countered with a 5-3 spurt out of the break, taking a 21-20 lead on a Pile kill.

The Bobcats answered with a 3-0 spurt, claiming a 23-21 advantage before pushing the Saints to a trio of match-points, the third of which coming via a Ribas kill at 27-26. Limestone would answer with back-to-back points, pushing the Bobcats to the brink on a trio of occasions before Lees-McRae tallied three straight points to take the set and the match on an emphatic block by Jones and Edmund Walkley (Glenbrook, Australia.)

Lees-McRae returns to the court on Saturday when the Bobcats host Pfeiffer University in conference play at 2 p.m. in Williams Gymnasium.

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Photo Courtesy: Randy Ramirez, LMC Athletics