

## King Outlasts Lees-McRae In Five-Set Thriller

Written by Whitney Noble

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A trio of players registered at least 10 kills to lead the King College to a thrilling five-set win over visiting Lees-McRae College in Conference Carolinas play on Wednesday night, as the Tornado

rallied from a 2-1 deficit en route to victory. King (4-4, 1-0 CC) won the match by scores of 25-23, 26-28, 23-25, 25-17, and 15-12, holding Lees-McRae (3-4, 0-1 CC) to a .170 hitting percentage and snapping the Bobcats' 58-match winning streak in league play, which ranked as the second-longest stretch in the NCAA Division II ranks. The Tornado posted a .188 hitting percentage on the night while recording 68 digs, seven service aces, and six blocks.

Lees-McRae tallied 53 digs, seven blocks and six aces in the contest.

Dana Oliver (Davie, Fla.) nearly posted a double-double with 13 kills and nine digs to pace the Bobcats, as Taylor Pritchett (Apex, N.C.) added 40 assists and 10 savers. Haydn Beatty (Norman, Okla.) and Taylor Clendenin (Statesville, N.C.) each posted 11 kills on the night, as Molly Corhn (Hendersonville, N.C.) and Clendenin chipped in 16 and 11 digs, respectively. Summer Kremer led the way for King with 15 kills, as Grace Underwood and Mariah Herington added 14 and 12 smashes, respectively. Olivia Underwood chipped in 41 assists, nine digs, five kills and a match-high four aces, while Payton Tipton recorded a contest-best 20 digs.

King jumped out to an early 8-3 lead in the first set, wrapping a 6-0 run on an ace by Olivia Underwood before the Bobcats responded, cutting the margin to 14-13 with a 10-6 spurt that was capped by a Tornado miscue. The Tornado responded with a 7-3 run, stretching the margin to 21-16 on a smash by Kremer.

After the Bobcats answered with a 5-1 spurt to close the gap to 22-21 following a trio of Tornado miscues, King tallied three of the next five points to cap the set and take a 1-0 lead in the match on a kill by Grace Underwood.

The Bobcats battled back in the second set, rallying from a 20-17 deficit to claim a narrow 22-21 advantage on back-to-back kills from Clendenin to cap a 5-1 spurt. The teams would trade points for the next several rallies until Lees-McRae seized control at 26-26, taking advantage of a Tornado miscue and closing out the hard-fought 28-26 win on a kill by Angela Morse (Clinton Township, Mich.) to even the match at 1-1.

Lees-McRae carried the momentum into the third, jumping out to an 11-5 advantage before King responded with a 9-2 spurt to claim a 14-13 lead following a Kremer smash. The Bobcats would counter with a 6-3 run, taking a 19-17 advantage on a Beatty kill before pushing the margin to 24-20 following a King miscue. King battled back, fighting off three set points to trim the lead to 24-23 before Oliver capped the set with a kill to give the Bobcats a 2-1 advantage in the match.

The Tornado countered early in the fourth, opening the frame with a 10-4 run before the Bobcats responded with a 9-4 spurt to cut the lead to 14-13 on a King miscue. After King pushed the margin to 17-13 and the Bobcats answered with a 4-1 spurt to cut the lead to 18-17, the Tornado closed out the set with a 7-0 surge to level the match at 2-2 and send the contest to a decisive fifth frame on a block by Kelsey Griffiths.

The Bobcats opened the fifth with a 5-4 run, claiming the early one-point advantage following a trio of kills from Oliver. King responded with a 7-3 spurt, taking an 11-8 lead on a Bobcat miscue before pushing the margin to 14-9. Lees-McRae would fight off a trio of match points to cut the

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lead to 14-12 on a Tornado miscue before King countered, closing out the set and the match on a kill by Kremer.

Lees-McRae returns to the court on Saturday when the Bobcats host USC Aiken at 11 a.m. in Williams Gymnasium, followed by a 2 p.m. conference tilt against North Greenville University at 2 p.m.

**Photo Courtesy: Dana Oliver, LMC Athletics**