

Bobcats Ground Valkyries In League Opener

Written by Whitney Noble

Thursday, 13 September 2012 07:28

Freshman Mallory Overholt (Grand Bend, Ontario, Canada) scored her second career goal, and MaryBeth Sullivan (Greensboro, N.C.) added a goal and an assist to lead the Lees-McRae

College women's soccer team to a 5-0 win over Converse College to open its Conference Carolinas schedule on Wednesday night on Tate Field.

Lees-McRae (2-2-1, 1-0 CC) dictated proceedings for much of the match, controlling possession in midfield and outshooting Converse (1-4-1, 0-1-1 CC) by a 33-2 margin in the match. The Bobcats took at least 16 attempts at goal in each half, holding a 12-0 advantage in corner kicks, as Alicia Pierson (Brooksville, Fla.) and Kaitlyn Briggs (Oviedo, Fla.) combined to keep a clean sheet.

Sullivan paced the Bobcats with a goal and an assist, as Emily Jones (Leonardtown, Md.), Sarah Mahar (Jacksonville, Fla.), Sam Arendt (Franklinton, N.C.), and Overholt each found the back of the net on the night. Kaitlyn Kerrigan (Lakewood Ranch, Fla.) led the way for Lees-McRae with two assists, while Meagan Thornton (Millville, N.J.), Erica Allen (Norton, Ohio), and Molly Ames (Greensboro, N.C.) all tallied a helper.

Gabriella Chamberland posted seven saves for the Valkyries, as Chamberland combined with Rebeccah Stansberry and Meghan Williams for the full 90 minutes between the pipes.

The Bobcats got on the board early, notching the breakthrough in the third minute on Mahar's second goal of the season. Mahar made the most of a well-played ball from Thornton on the flank, turning and lofting a perfectly struck finish inside the far post to give the Bobcats an early 1-0 advantage. Jones doubled the advantage to 2-0 in the early moments of the ninth minute, nodding home a corner from Kerrigan for her first goal of the season.

Lees-McRae carried the 2-0 advantage into the interval and the second half, pushing the margin to three goals midway through the 48th minute on Overholt's second strike of the season following a highlight reel buildup. After Kerrigan settled the ball in midfield and fed it in to Sullivan, the junior midfielder delivered a crafty touch through ball into Overholt, putting the freshman in perfect position to slot the finish into the bottom corner.

Arendt followed 22 minutes later, notching her first goal of the season when the sophomore tapped in a feed from Allen off a loose ball in the area to give the Bobcats a 4-0 advantage in the 70th minute. Sullivan capped the scoring four minutes later, redirecting an Ames corner over her shoulder and into the back of the net with a deft header to push the margin to 5-0.

"I'm very happy with our performance against a well-coached Converse side," praised Bobcat head coach Nick Whiting. "We had some players step up today in some unfamiliar roles, and they really showed well for themselves. It was definitely a total team effort tonight."

Lees-McRae returns to the pitch on Saturday when the Bobcats travel to Tigerville, S.C. to take on North Greenville University in conference play at 1 p.m.

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Lions Edge Bobcats, 1-0

The Mars Hill College men's soccer team scored midway through the 72nd minute, and held Lees-McRae College off the score sheet en route to a hard-fought 1-0 victory in non-conference play on Wednesday night.

Mars Hill (4-1) outshot Lees-McRae (1-4) by a 24-17 margin in the match, including a 13-7 advantage in the second half, while edging the Bobcats in corner kick attempts, 6-4. James Smith (Eastbourne, England) paced the Bobcats with six attempts at goal, including three on frame, as James Galvani (High Wycombe, England) launched four shots and Thomas Rusling (Sheffield, England) posted a season-high eight saves.

Nathaniel Enos tallied the lone goal on the night for Mars Hill, as Shadi Harb added an assist and Zac Scott made nine saves to keep a clean sheet for the Lions.

The two sides played to a scoreless draw through the first 45 minutes, with both teams having several chances to break the deadlock in the opening half. Lees-McRae nearly snatched the early breakthrough in the eighth minute, when Galvani forced a skillful save from Scott to preserve the deadlock.

After Scott denied a glorious effort from Smith midway through the 18th minute, the Lions keeper was called upon again in the 33rd to stop a header from Scott Alford (Hillsborough, N.C.) and send the match into the interval deadlocked at 0-0.

Rusling continued his strong early-season play in the second half, making several world-class saves to preserve the deadlock and deny the Lions the breakthrough. After Scott answered the call with a trio of stops within a four-minute span, Enos pounced on a rebound from a Harb attempt and slotted the finish into the back of the net to give the Lions the breakthrough and a 1-0 advantage midway through the 72nd minute.

Mars Hill would hold on from there, denying several more equalizing attempts from the Bobcats to seal the victory in a hard-fought, physical match that featured 25 fouls and five cautions.

Lees-McRae returns to the pitch on Saturday when the Bobcats travel to Tigerville, S.C. to take on North Greenville University to open their Conference Carolinas slate at 3 p.m.

Photo Courtesy: MaryBeth Sullivan, LMC Athletics