

Newberry Downs Bobcats, 15-9

Written by Whitney Noble

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Jessica MacConnell (Cary, N.C.) and Olivia Gudewich (Frederick, Md.) each scored a hat trick to pace the Lees-McRae College women's lacrosse team on Friday evening, as Newberry College held off a strong second-half rally by the Bobcats en route to a 15-9 victory in non-conference play. Newberry (6-6) tallied 39 shots in the contest, including 24 in the first half, as Lees-McRae (3-4) needed just 15 attempts to record nine goals on the day. The Wolves controlled 18 draws and scooped up 32 ground balls, while the Bobcats posted 26 grounders and converted 17-of-24 clearing attempts.

MacConnell and Gudewich both scored three goals to lead the way for the Bobcats, as Katelin Rooney (Naples, Fla.) controlled five draws and forced three turnovers. Rooney, Jessica Travers (Asheville, N.C.), and Nicole Dupont (Fort Myers, Fla.) each added an assist, while Mia Emmerson (Orlando, Fla.) posted 12 saves and a game-high five ground balls. Taylor Hunt (Lexington, N.C.) forced a contest-best six turnovers for the Bobcats.

Kerri Ann Barlage paced the Wolves with a game-high seven goals, as Carly Marksberry and Tessa Davis each dished out three assists. Megan Kenny and Davis both scored two goals, while Kristin Balish forced five turnovers and Morgan Raffaele made a trio of saves between the pipes.

Newberry jumped to an early 4-1 lead in the first half before the Bobcats responded, cutting the margin to 4-2 on MacConnell's second strike of the day at the 24:12 mark. The Wolves answered with four goals, pushing the advantage to 8-2 following Kenny's first tally with 15:25 to play in the half.

After MacConnell completed her hat trick at the 11:25 mark, Newberry responded with a trio of strikes, taking an 11-3 lead into the intermission. The Bobcats stormed out of the break, opening the second half with a 3-1 spurt to close the gap to 12-6 on a man-up goal by Gudewich with 22:11 to play.

Newberry would answer with a pair of goals before the Bobcats countered, cutting the lead to 14-9 on back-to-back strikes by Gudewich, the second of which coming at the 6:16 mark. The Wolves quelled the rally shortly thereafter, capping the day's scoring with Barlage's seventh of the day with 6:07 to play.

Lees-McRae returns to action on Tuesday, April 2 when the Bobcats travel to Charlotte, N.C. to resume their Conference Carolinas schedule against Queens University of Charlotte at 6 p.m.

Photo Courtesy: Ray Cameron, LMC Athletics