

## Malbon, Chambers Sign with Lees-McRae

Written by Whitney Noble

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Darius Malbon and Mike Chambers have signed National Letters of Intent to attend Lees-McRae College and play men's basketball during the 2013-2014 academic year, announced head coach Steve Hardin Wednesday. "I am excited to have Mike and Darius in our program [next season]," said Hardin. "Both are proven winners and also proven individual players. Mike and Darius will be excellent representatives of Lees McRae College and the future of our basketball program."

Malbon comes to Lees-McRae from nearby Hickory High School in Hickory, N.C., where he helped the Red Tornadoes compile a 98-19 record over the course of his four-year career. The 6-4 point guard has played for three 3A conference championships, making two 3A regional appearances, while leading the Red Tornadoes to the state championship game.

A native of Hickory, N.C., Malbon averaged 14 points, 4.1 assists, and 3.2 rebounds per game during his senior season, while shooting 88 percent from the charity stripe. Malbon has also excelled off the court, posting a 4.6 grade point average in his high school career.

"Darius is a perfect example of a true student athlete," praised Hardin. "He excels on the court and also in the classroom. He brings the combination of athleticism and skill to our program. Darius is a coach's dream on the floor and in the classroom. He will be able to play and defend multiple positions, which fits my style of pressure defense basketball. I am blessed that Darius chose to be a part of the Bobcat family."

Chambers joins the Bobcats from North Forsyth High School in Winston-Salem, N.C., where he averaged 20 points and six rebounds per game. The 6-2 shooting guard is ranked eighth out of all shooting guards in the state of North Carolina, according to Elite Hoops Rankings; Chambers shot 44 percent from three-point range as a senior, while knocking down 80 percent of his free throw attempts.

"Mike was the first recruit I saw as head coach," explained Hardin. "I knew during the first workout I wanted him [on our team] because of his work ethic, and his ability to score the basketball in many different ways. Mike can really shoot the basketball and is a floor leader; he fits my system and I expect he will become a good player for us."

"Bobcat Basketball will have all new faces and names next season," said Hardin. "We are basically bringing in a totally new team. I hope my brand of up-tempo basketball will make for an exciting year in Banner Elk. These two young men are the first installment with many more players to come."

**Photo Courtesy: Darius Malbon and Mike Chambers, LMC Athletics**