

Smith, Rusling Help Lift Dynamo To Division Title

Written by Whitney Noble
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Lees-McRae College's Thomas Rusling (Sheffield, England) and James Smith (Eastbourne, England) have played a vital role in the success of the Carolina

Dynamo of the United Soccer Leagues' Premier Development League this summer, helping the Dynamo clinch the South Atlantic Division this past Saturday with a 3-0 win over Southern West Virginia King's Warriors.

Smith has played in all but two matches, logging 460 minutes while tallying two goals and one assist on just four shots. The Eastbourne, England native put together a strong sophomore season with the Bobcats in 2012, posting two goals and three assists.

It feels great to win the league especially with two games to spare," said Smith. "But it is still important that we finish the regular season strong in order to have a good mindset going into the playoffs. It's been a great experience playing with some of the best young players in the country, and the style of play that has been implemented by Coach Nicolls made it easy for me to settle in quickly."

Rusling made five appearances for the Dynamo between the pipes, posting an unblemished 5-0 record while allowing just three goals. The Sheffield, England native kept a trio of clean sheets and made 17 saves. Rusling was a key component in the Bobcats' success last fall, making 81 saves and keeping five clean sheets.

"I'm delighted!" said Rusling. "The lads have come together a lot towards the end of regular season and I think our best soccer is yet to come. The playoffs are exciting and it's a good opportunity to get our names out there. Competition for places is very high so it's a big incentive to keep performing to keep my place in the team."

The Dynamo have two more regular season matches left on their schedule before the playoffs, which are slated to begin on Tuesday, July 23. Carolina will square off against Virginia Beach on July 17 before wrapping up the regular season on July 20 at home against SC United.

Photo Courtesy: Thomas Rusling, LMC Athletics