

Mahar Paces Bobcats Over Catawba

Written by Whitney Noble

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Sophomore Sarah Mahar (Jacksonville, Fla.) opened her season's account midway through the 51st minute to lead the Lees-McRae College women's soccer team to a 1-0 victory over visiting Catawba College in the Bobcats' home opener on Wednesday night on Tate Field. Lees-McRae (1-2) outshot Catawba (1-2) by a narrow 10-8 margin in a tightly contested and match that featured 22 fouls and two cautions. The Bobcats edged the Catawba Indians by one attempt at goal in each half, as both teams took three corner kicks.

Mahar paced the Bobcats with the lone goal of the night on a match-high five shots, including two on frame, as Mallory Overholt (Grand Bend, Ontario, Canada) added an assist. Meagan Thornton (Millville, N.J.) and Lena Langille (Lawrencetown, Nova Scotia) each chipped in two attempts at goal, while Kaitlyn Briggs (Oviedo, Fla.) made four saves en route to her 13th career clean sheet.

Mary Kirkland led the way for Catawba with two shots, as Anna Toole, Sophie Waller, Amy Iwanicki, and Kali Chaplin each put one attempt on frame. Bethany Davis made two saves for the Catawba Indians.

The teams played to a scoreless draw through the first 45 minutes, with each keeper forced to make several routine saves in a half perhaps highlighted most by a nearly one hour delay for lightning in the area.

Lees-McRae would waste little time injecting some life into the evening's festivities in the second half, taking a 1-0 lead when Overholt caught Mahar in stride behind the defense, putting the sophomore forward in position for a picturesque chipped finish over the keeper from 20 yards distance.

The Bobcats nearly doubled the advantage to 2-0 in the 61st minute if not for a tremendous save by Davis, who made a point-blank save on Langille just outside the six-yard box after a skillful headed flick by MaryBeth Sullivan (Greensboro, N.C.).

Catawba responded well with a concerted attack of its own, outshooting the Bobcats by a 4-2 margin over the final 20 minutes, as the Bobcat backline did a superb job of cutting down the passing and shooting lanes around their area to maintain the clean sheet.

Lees-McRae returns to the pitch on Saturday when the Bobcats host University of North Georgia at 2 p.m. on Tate Field in a Southeast region showdown.

Photo Courtesy: Sarah Mahar, LMC Athletics