

Eagles edge Bobcats In Overtime

Written by Whitney Noble

Tuesday, 17 September 2013 08:04

The Lees-McRae College men's soccer team put on a tremendous display of grit and heart on Monday night, battling back from an early 1-0 deficit against Carson-Newman College to send the match into extra time, before an errant cross found its way into the back of the net to give the Eagles a 2-1 win on Tate Field.

Lees-McRae (0-3) outplayed Carson-Newman (2-1) for much of the match, outshooting the Eagles by a 22-13 margin in the contest, including an 11-5 advantage in the second half. The tilt proved to be a tightly contested and physical affair, with the sides combining for 24 fouls and five cautions.

Scott Alford (Hillsborough, N.C.) led the way for Lees-McRae with a goal on six shots, including a trio on frame, as freshman Jordan Wright (West Lothian, Scotland) was a constant threat on the attack for the Bobcats with seven attempts at goal. Senior goalkeeper Thomas Rusling (Sheffield, England) made a trio of stops for the Bobcats.

Ross Frame paced the Eagles with a goal and an assist, as Matheus Bachi added an early strike and Kristian Speake chipped in a helper. Marius Staalby attempted a team-high three shots, as Rumwald Le Guevel tallied five saves.

Carson-Newman got off to a flying start in the seventh minute, taking an early 1-0 lead when Speake flicked on a Frame cross, finding Bachi in prime position for the finish just outside the six-yard box. The Bobcats nearly pulled level five minutes later, when Alford's blistering strike was pulled off the line by a defender.

Alford continued to be a massive on the attack, forcing a skillful save by Le Guevel in the 17th minute. The Eagle keeper then made perhaps the stop of the match in the 36th, denying Wright's equalizing bid with a superb diving stop to send the Eagles into the interval with a narrow 1-0 advantage.

The Bobcats wasted little time resuming their attack in the second half, continuously pushing forward in search of the equalizer while holding the Eagles without a shot through the period's first 15 minutes. Lees-McRae would find the equalizer with just seconds left in the 61st minute, knotting the match at 1-1 when Wright played a perfect ball in behind to Alford, hitting his fellow forward in stride before Alford sent a curling strike into the far corner for his first of the season. Both sides renewed their respective attacks with increased urgency following the equalizer, making seemingly endless and relentless pushes forward in their quest to break the deadlock. The Bobcats nearly netted the winner on multiple occasions throughout the final 10 minutes of regulation, with perhaps the best opportunity coming on a free header by Alford that narrowly missed the post off a cross from Matthew Cureton (Waxhaw, N.C.).

Alford nearly netted the winner just 25 seconds into extra time, sending a curling strike just inches left of the woodwork from the top of the area. The Eagles would snatch the victory just over two minutes later, when Frame's intended cross for the back post took an unexpected slice, sailing just over the keeper's outstretched arm and into the far netting for the extra time winner.

Lees-McRae returns to the pitch on Wednesday when the Bobcats travel to Wingate, N.C. to take on No. 10 Wingate University in a Southeast region showdown at 7 p.m.

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Photo Courtesy: Scott Alford, LMC Athletics