

Bobcat Falls Short To Belmont Abbey

Written by Whitney Noble

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The Belmont Abbey College women's soccer team scored a pair of second half goals against the run of play, and held on for a 2-0 victory despite a strong 90-minute performance from Lees-McRae College in Conference Carolinas play on Saturday afternoon at Tate Field. Kaitlyn Briggs (Oviedo, Fla.) turned in one of her best performances of the season, making 10 saves in soggy conditions on a water-logged pitch. The Bobcat forward corps provided a constant attacking presence throughout the match, causing the Abbey backline fits with their pace and chemistry.

Meghan Philip and Cassidy Coutinho provided the scoring touch for Belmont Abbey, as Jillian Lang added an assist and Hannah Kohls made four saves to keep a clean sheet. The teams played to a scoreless draw in the first 45 minutes, with the Crusaders forcing Briggs into several comfortable saves in the opening half hour as the Bobcat back line work tirelessly to limit Belmont Abbey's chances.

Lees-McRae nearly broke the deadlock less than two minutes into the second half, when Meagan Thornton (Millville, N.J.) made a run in behind the defense and forced Kohls into a diving save. The Crusaders struck back in the opening seconds of the 49th minute, taking a 1-0 advantage when Lang's corner found its way to Coutinho in the six-yard box and the sophomore tucked the finish inside the far post.

The Bobcats answered quickly, pushing forward with renewed determination as Kohls was forced into a pair of difficult stops off the feet of Mallory Overholt (Grand Bend, Ontario, Canada) and Cheyenne Warrick (Pikeville, N.C.) within a 30-second span.

After Sarah Mahar's (Jacksonville, Fla.) 65th minute effort narrowly missed the upper 90 from short range, Philip capitalized on her own miss in the 67th, collecting the rebound and slotting the finish into the bottom corner to give the Abbey a 2-0 advantage.

The Bobcats continued to push forward over the next 15 minutes, creating loads of space on the wings and through the middle but were unable to find a pass into the scoring areas. LeeAnn Sullivan (Greensboro, N.C.) nearly found the score sheet midway through the 83rd minute, making a brilliant run down the left flank and into the penalty area before unleashing a powerful shot on frame from 16 yards out.

Lees-McRae returns to the pitch on Wednesday when the Bobcats travel to Greeneville, Tenn. To take on Tusculum College in Southeast Region play at 7 p.m.

Photo Courtesy: Sarah Mahar, LMC Athletics