

Pioneers Blank Bobcats, 3-0

Written by Whitney Noble

Thursday, 26 September 2013 07:34

The Tusculum College women's soccer team scored twice in the second half and held off a furious rally by Lees-McRae College en route to a 3-0 win in non-conference play on Wednesday evening.

Tusculum (3-3-2) held a slim 14-9 edge in attempts at goal, including a narrow 5-4 margin in the first half, while taking four corner kicks to Lees-McRae's (1-6) three. Alicia Pierson (Brooksville, Fla.) and Kaitlyn Briggs (Oviedo, Fla.) combined for six saves in the match, including four stops by Pierson through the first 69 minutes. Sarah Mahar (Jacksonville, Fla.) paced the Bobcats with six shots, including two on frame.

Nikki Arthur, Monica Perez, and Taylor Lewis each found the back of the net for the Pioneers, as Jenique Thombs and Amy Neltner both added an assist. Marissa Williams made three saves to keep a clean sheet for Tusculum.

Mahar nearly got the Bobcats off to a flying start in the 13th minute, launching a shot from just inside the area that struck the bar just inches away from the top corner.

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Tusculum would break the deadlock early in the 20th minute, taking a 1-0 lead when Arthur found the back of the net from 20 yards out off a cross from Thombs. Mahar put another attempt on frame midway through the 31st minute, forcing Williams into a skillful save to preserve the one-goal advantage heading into the interval.

Perez doubled the margin to 2-0 less than three minutes into the second half, spinning off a loose ball and tucking away the finish late in the 48th minute. Lewis would stretch the lead to 3-0 in the 64th minute after Neltner put her in on goal with a flicked through ball.

Freshman Hannah Cruse (Concord, N.C.) came within inches of netting her first collegiate goal midway through the 76th minute, forcing Williams into a difficult stop off a strong buildup by the Bobcats.

Lees-McRae returns to the pitch on Saturday when the Bobcats resume their Conference Carolinas slate with a 3 p.m. tilt against North Greenville University on Tate Field.