

Thornton Tallies Twice, Bobcats Win

Written by Whitney Noble

Saturday, 05 October 2013 23:38

Junior Meagan Thornton (Millville, N.J.) scored once in each half to lead the Lees-McRae College women's soccer team to a 2-0 Conference Carolinas win over Barton College during Homecoming

Weekend on Saturday afternoon on Tate Field.

With the victory, Lees-McRae (4-6, 3-1 CC) extends its win streak to two matches overall and three in league play, moving into second place in the conference standings. The Bobcats controlled the run of play for much of the match, outshooting Barton (6-4, 2-2 CC) by a 17-9 margin, including a 9-5 advantage in the first half.

Thornton paced the Bobcats with her second and third goals of the season, connecting on two of her three attempts on frame as the junior forward posted her fourth career multi-goal match. Sarah Mahar (Jacksonville, Fla.) and Mallory Overholt (Grand Bend, Ontario, Canada) each added an assist, while Kaitlyn Briggs (Oviedo, Fla.) kept her third clean sheet of the campaign.

Amanda Almonte led the way for Barton with three shots, including one on frame, as Kathryn Smith added two attempts of her own. Carson Moore kept her team in the match with a superb effort between the pipes, stopping eight of 10 shots on frame.

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The Bobcats put the pressure on early, attacking the Barton backline with a sense of urgency from the opening whistle while forcing Moore into a trio of saves in the first 20 minutes. Erica Allen (Norton, Ohio) nearly broke the deadlock just 12 seconds after coming on as a substitute, soliciting a skillful save from Moore to preserve the stalemate.

Thornton found the breakthrough midway through the 40th minute, settling a pass from Mahar and banking a curling finish off the bar from 15 yards out to give the Bobcats a 1-0 lead. Cheyenne Warrick's (Pikeville, N.C.) came within inches of opening her collegiate account just before the break, ringing the bar with a blast from distance after a long run from the back.

The Bobcats continued to press the attack in the second half, pushing forward in search of a second with a trio of early chances. Almonte recorded the Bulldogs' first shot on frame in the opening seconds of the 65th minute, making a run in from the wing and sending an effort toward goal that was easily corralled by Briggs.

Thornton completed her brace just over a minute later, doubling the advantage to 2-0 when Overholt bodied a pass in behind to Thornton, who delivered a cheeky side-footed finish into the back of the net from just inside the area. The Bobcats' final attempt at goal would come off the foot of Rachael Nobbs (North Charleston, S.C.), who unleashed a shot from distance that sailed inches wide of the post.

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Lees-McRae returns to the pitch on Wednesday when the Bobcats travel to Spartanburg, S.C. to take on Converse College in league play at 6 p.m.