

## Bulldogs Nip Bobcats On Homecoming

Written by Whitney Noble

Sunday, 06 October 2013 07:53

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The Lees-McRae College men's soccer team dropped a heartbreaker on Saturday afternoon during Homecoming Weekend, falling to visiting Barton College by a score of 1-0 in Conference Carolinas play

on Tate Field.

Lees-McRae (5-4, 3-1 CC) controlled nearly every aspect of the match, outshooting Barton (3-5-1, 2-2 CC) by a 26-6 margin, including a 17-2 onslaught in the second half. Despite the disparity in attempts on goal, the Bulldog backline held firm for 90 minutes, keeping the Bobcats off the scoresheet while snapping LMC's five-match win streak.

Jordan Wright (West Lothian, Scotland) and Scott Alford (Hillsborough, N.C.) paced the Bobcat attack on the afternoon, combining for 17 attempts on frame, as James Galvani (High Wycombe, England) made his return to the pitch with four shots.

Wright and Alford were a constant threat to the Bulldog backline throughout the match, putting six shots on frame while each rung the bar in the second half. Thomas Rusling (Sheffield, England) turned in another strong performance between the pipes for the Bobcats, making a pair of saves as the Bobcats' shutout streak came to an end at 415:26.

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Danilo Matos scored the lone goal of the match for the Bulldogs, connecting on his only attempt on frame, as Dante De Luca and Archer Bane each contributed an assist. Vasily Yakimkin delivered an outstanding effort in goal for Barton, stopping six shots as another was cleared off the line by a Bulldog defender.

The Bobcats nearly got off to a flying start in the 12th minute, when Alford pivoted on the edge of the box and sent a curling effort toward the top corner, only to be denied the opener when Yakimkin managed a leaping fingertip save to send the shot ricocheting off the bar. Rusling answered with an acrobatic stop of his own in the 21st, tipping Kevin Strassburger's chance over the bar after the Barton attacker shook his defender and ripped a shot destined for the far corner.

Barton would net the breakthrough midway through the 32nd minute, taking a 1-0 lead when De Luca and Bane combined to find an onrushing Matos, who streaked in alone and delivered the finish into the bottom corner.

The Bobcats quickly countered with a concerted push forward, as both Galvani and Wright came within inches of netting the equalizer in the 41st and 42nd minutes as Barton carried the one-goal advantage into the interval. Lees-McRae kept up the pressure in the second half, unleashing a seemingly endless barrage toward the Barton frame as the Bobcats outshot the Bulldogs, 11-2, in the first 20 minutes of the period.

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Perhaps Wright's best opportunity of the second half came in the 56th minute, when his headed effort off a corner from Matthew Cureton (Waxhaw, N.C.) was cleared off the line. Yago Xavier (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) came within inches of the equalizer in the 63rd minute, making a brilliant run in behind as his finish struck the woodwork before rolling across the face of goal and out over the byline.

Alford unleashed a barrage of his own in the 67th minute, sending a trio of glorious attempts toward goal, including an effort which rung the bar from close range. Yakimkin would be equal to the task over the final 20 minutes, turning aside a part of Bobcat efforts, as Wright sent a rocket ringing off the bar late in the 83rd minute.

Lees-McRae returns to the pitch on Tuesday when the Bobcats host Southeast Region foe Francis Marion University in non-conference play at 7 p.m. on Tate Field.

**Photo Courtesy: Scott Alford, LMC Athletics**