

Thornton Scores Three Times, Bobcats Win

Written by Whitney Noble

Thursday, 17 October 2013 07:46

Junior Meagan Thornton (Millville, N.J.) scored a first-half hat trick, and Kaitlyn Kerrigan (Lakewood Ranch, Fla.) added two assists to jump two spots on the program's all-time list and lead the Lees-McRae

College women's soccer team to a 4-0 win over Erskine College in Conference Carolinas play on Wednesday evening.

With the victory, Lees-McRae (8-6, 6-1 CC) extends its win streak to seven matches, while also pushing its run of not allowing a goal to 490:17, a span that stretches over six contests. The Bobcats controlled the run of play for much of the match, outshooting Erskine (1-11, 1-4 CC) by a 32-5 margin, including a 15-4 advantage in the first half.

Thornton paced the Bobcats with her third career treble, scoring the natural hat trick with three tallies within a 12-minute span, while adding an assist on the opener. Sarah Mahar (Jacksonville, Fla.) notched her sixth of the season to open proceedings, with Thornton chipping in an assist on Mahar's opening strike.

Kerrigan posted two assists to jump into a tie for fourth on the program's all-time list, while Kaitlyn Briggs (Oviedo, Fla.) made one save to keep her seventh clean sheet of the season and 19th of her career, moving into second by herself in school history.

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Ashton Burgess made 10 saves for Erskine in the match, playing the full 90 minutes, as McKenzie Waldrop tallied the Fleet's lone attempt on frame.

Mahar got the Bobcats off to a flying start midway through the fourth minute, taking a pass from Thornton and sending a left-footed finish into the bottom corner for her fourth winner of the season. Thornton would double the advantage to 2-0 in the 17th minute, running on to a long ball from Kerrigan and tucking the finish into the corner from 10 yards out.

The duo repeated the feat less than three minutes later, connecting on another long pass that put Thornton alone with the keeper before she finished with a chip off the bar to stretch the lead to 3-0.

After ringing the bar with a 27th-minute effort, Thornton would complete the treble in the closing moments of the 28th, cutting in from the flank and delivering a picturesque strike into the top corner to send the Bobcats into the interval with a 4-0 advantage.

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The Bobcats kept the pressure on in the second half, pushing forward with pace and a sense of urgency while forcing six saves by Burgess in the final 45 minutes. Briggs and the Bobcats would weather a late push by the Fleet, playing as a cohesive unit throughout the match while holding Erskine's forward corps to just two shots on the night.

Lees-McRae returns to the pitch on Saturday, travelling to Gaffney, S.C. for a pivotal conference clash with Limestone College at 1 p.m.

Photo Courtesy: Meagan Thornton, LMC Athletics