

## **Eight Bobcats Named All-Conference**

Written by Whitney Noble

Thursday, 07 November 2013 19:16

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The Lees-McRae College women's soccer team tied a program record with eight selections to the all-Conference Carolinas teams, including a trio of first-team spots earned by senior Kaitlyn Kerrigan

(Fishers, Ind.), junior Meagan Thornton (Millville, N.J.), and sophomore Sarah Mahar (Jacksonville, Fla.), announced conference officials Thursday.

Lees-McRae (10-7-1, 8-1 Conference Carolinas) rebounded from a tough start to the season with a torrid run of form, stringing together a 10-match unbeaten streak that included eight straight clean sheets and a stretch of more than 830 minutes without allowing a goal.

The Bobcats parlayed the streak into their third straight conference regular season title, earning the top seed in the conference tournament for the third consecutive year before falling to eighth-seeded King University in the quarterfinal round on Monday.

Lees-McRae paced the conference with eight selections, as regular season runner-up Belmont Abbey College followed closely with seven all-conference honorees. Barton College and Pfeiffer University were tied for third with four selections each, as North Greenville University earned a trio of honorees.

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Barton's Jodi Barber and Chris Shaw garnered Offensive Player of the Year and Coach of the Year, respectively, as Belmont Abbey's Silvia Vazquez earned Defensive Player of the Year honors. Pfeiffer's Brae Buster was named Freshman of the Year.

Mahar, Thornton, and Kerrigan paced the Bobcats on the first team, with Mahar and Kerrigan each earning a first-team spot for the second straight year and Thornton receiving her first career selection to the league's top squad. Senior LeeAnn Sullivan (Greensboro, N.C.) and sophomore Mallory Overholt (Grand Bend, Ontario, Canada) each earned a spot on the second team, as juniors Ariana Smith (Jackson, N.J.) and Kaitlyn Briggs (Oviedo, Fla.) joined freshman Cheyenne Warrick (Pikeville, N.C.) on the third team.

Kerrigan concludes an outstanding career with her second straight all-conference first team selection, capping her tenure with the Bobcats ranked third in program history with 34 career assists. A native of Fishers, Ind., Kerrigan posted one goal and seven assists this season, tallying at least seven helpers each year throughout her career. Kerrigan put together perhaps her best overall season in 2012, earning a pair of all-region selections and garnering all-Conference Carolinas First team honors.

Thornton caps a strong junior season with her first career all-conference first-team honors, leading the team this fall with eight goals, five assists, and 21 points. The Millville, N.J. native has tallied 22 goals, 14 assists and 58 points in her three-year career with the Bobcats, netting five match-winners to go along with five multi-goal performances and a trio of hat tricks.

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Thornton posted her best point total of the season against Erskine on October 16, netting a first-half hat trick to lead the Bobcats to a 4-0 victory.

Mahar garners all-conference first team honors for the second straight season, leading the team and the conference with five match-winners in league play this fall. A native of Jacksonville, Fla., Mahar has established herself as one of the most clutch goal-scorers in program history over the last two seasons with 11 of her 17 career goals proving to be the match-winner, a total which ranks fifth on the school's all-time list.

Sullivan earns a spot on the all-conference team for the second straight season, claiming a spot on the second team with a strong senior campaign in which she led the Bobcat backline to 10 clean sheets and a 0.82 goals against average. A native of Greensboro, N.C., Sullivan has played an integral role in 28 clean sheets during her career in the Green and Gold as the backline has allowed 49 goals in 58 matches during that span. Sullivan closes out her career with two goals and two assists, while earning all-conference honors in each of the last two seasons.

Overholt nets her second straight all-conference selection, earning second-team honors while playing a pivotal role in the center of the park for the Bobcats. A native of Grand Bend, Ontario, Canada, Overholt finished the season tied for third on the team with four assists, tying her career high from last fall to double her two-year total to eight helpers. Overholt played a key role in the Bobcats' 2-0 win over King on October 12, tallying an assist on both goals to equal her career high.

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Briggs put together the best individual season of her career this fall, posting the second-lowest goals against average in school history with a mark of 0.63 while allowing just nine goals in 15 matches. The Oviedo, Fla. native tied a career-high with nine clean sheets, swelling her three-year total to 21 shutouts which ties her for the top spot on the program's all-time list. The junior goalkeeper ranks third in career wins (29), fifth in goals against average (0.82), sixth in saves (163), and ninth in save percentage (.799).

Smith enjoyed a strong junior season with the Bobcats, playing a key role in the center of a backline which kept 10 clean sheets and allowed just 15 goals in 18 matches. A native of Jackson, N.J., Smith nets her second straight all-conference selection, earning a spot on the second team while starting every match at center back over the last three seasons. During her three-year tenure at Lees-McRae, the Bobcats have kept 28 clean sheets, including 12 in 2011.

Warrick started every match at right back in her freshman season for the Bobcats, helping the backline keep 10 clean sheets while tallying an assist. The Pikeville, N.C. native recorded her first collegiate point on October 12 at King, tallying an assist on Lena Langille's (Lawrencetown, Nova Scotia, Canada) second strike of the match.

Lees-McRae is expected to return 19 letter-winners from this year's Conference Carolinas regular season championship squad, including rising seniors Ariana Smith (Jackson, N.J.), Kaitlyn Briggs (Oviedo, Fla.), and Meagan Thornton (Millville, N.J.).

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