

Thornton, Sullivan Earn Southeast Honors

Written by Whitney Noble

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Lees-McRae College junior Meagan Thornton (Millville, N.J.) and senior LeeAnn Sullivan (Greensboro, N.C.) have been named to the National Soccer Coaches' Association of America (NSCAA) NCAA Division II Women's Soccer all-Southeast Region team for the first time in their careers, announced NSCAA officials Wednesday.

Lees-McRae (10-7-1, 8-1 Conference Carolinas) is one of four Conference Carolinas schools to place at least one player on the NSCAA all-Southeast Region teams, joining Pfeiffer University with two selections as Belmont Abbey College and Barton College each earned a trio of honorees. Thornton garnered second-team honors and Sullivan earned a spot on the third team, as Lees-McRae placed at least one player on the NSCAA all-region teams for the third straight year.

Thornton adds to her awards bouquet this season with her second first-time honor of the year, earning her first career NSCAA all-Southeast Region honors in addition to her first selection to the North Carolina Collegiate Sports Information Association all-State First team last week. A native of Millville, N.C., Thornton led the team in scoring this season with eight goals, five assists, and 21 points en route to her first career all-Conference Carolinas First team selection.

Sullivan nets her second individual honor of the fall, adding to her all-Conference Carolinas Second team selection with a spot on the NSCAA all-Southeast Region third team. The Greensboro, N.C. native earned her second straight all-conference selection with a strong senior season, leading the Bobcat backline to 10 clean sheets and a 0.82 goals against average. Sullivan 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.

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The Bobcats claimed the program's third consecutive Conference Carolinas regular season title this fall, earning the top overall seed in the league tournament for the third straight year on the heels of a 10-match unbeaten streak. Head Coach Nick Whiting's squad enjoyed one of the best stretches of defensive play in program history during the streak, keeping eight straight clean sheets while not allowing a goal for more than 830 consecutive minutes.

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 Thornton.