

Senior Duo Propels LMC to Victory

Written by Chris Parker

Saturday, 18 January 2014 23:05

Lees-McRae men's volleyball senior duo Randy Ramirez and Matt Harpenau ignited an effective offensive attack while LMC downed Mount St. Joseph, 23-25, 25-21, 25-19, 25-14 to collect its first victory of

the 2014 campaign at Harrington Center in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The Bobcats (1-1) bounced back from a sweep Friday to hit better than 42% in two sets while rallying back from a one set deficit. The Lions (0-1) impressed in the first set, hitting 55%, before dropping the final three sets.

Sophomore Brady Markle (York, Pa.) collected one of his 11 kills to give LMC its first lead of the opening set, 9-8. The first set proved to be entertaining while a John Lucas (Cincinnati, Ohio) service ace tied the score at 17.

The Lions responded with a quick 3-0 run to take a 20-17 lead. Each squad exchanged blows, but a Sam Sheers (Centerville, Ohio) kill cut the Bobcat deficit to one, 24-23, but MSJ's Toby Birnbrich buried a kill to give the home team an early 1-0 advantage.

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LMC jumped out to a quick 4-0 lead in the second set thanks to consecutive kills from Harpenau (Cincinnati, Ohio). The Lions would close the gap after a Richie Planek kill made it a 10-8 Bobcat lead.

Both teams exchanged 3-0 runs before a 4-0 spurt from LMC stretched the lead to 20-15. The Bobcats tied the match at 1 following kills from Markle and Harpenau.

The third set remained close while it was tied at 16. LMC took control of the set thanks to a 9-3 run fueled by Ramirez, who chimed in with four service aces and two of his 39 assists during the spurt.

LMC took advantage of sloppy play in the fourth set while jumping out to a 9-2 lead. The Lions hit .036 in the deciding set.

However, MSJ rallied back and cut the deficit to two, 14-12, following another Birnbrich kill. The Bobcats slammed the door after freshman Mark Shayka (Hamilton, Va.) took the reigns as the server, leading to an 11-2 run to seal the victory.

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LMC hit at a clip of 38.2 on the evening while Harpenau (17) and Harkle (11) registered double digit kills. Efrain Negrón (Caguas, Puerto Rico) paced the team with nine digs while the Bobcats amassed 45 kills.

MSJ was led by Alex Vohland and C. Trigo de Serrano, who had 14 and 12 kills, respectively. Luke Eschnbach set the tone offensively with 41 assists while the Lions racked up 25 digs.

The Bobcats return to action Tuesday for an exhibition match against Milligan in their home opener at 7 p.m. in Williams Gymnasium.