

Lady Raiders Fall to Cajuns 3-0

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LAFAYETTE, La. - Middle Tennessee volleyball (16-14, 7-7 SBC) fell 3-0 (30-12, 32-30, 30-28) to Louisiana-Lafayette's Ragin' Cajuns volleyball team (15-12, 9-4 SBC) Friday at Earl K. Long Gym.

KeKe Deckard led the MT offensive unit with nine kills and posted a team-high eight digs. The Lady Raiders attacked at a .239 clip, becoming the first team to post a higher hitting percentage than the Cajuns at Long Gym this season (UL Lafayette hit .231).

In what was a tightly contested match after game one statistics-wise, UL Lafayette took advantage of 10 services aces with six from sophomore outside hitter Stacey Cole in pivotal points of both games two and three to squeak by the Lady Raiders (16-14, 7-7). MT was their own worst enemy, committing 12 service errors, including some at critical serves in game three.

Louisiana-Lafayette raced out the gates in game one. The Ragin' Cajuns broke open a close 9-7 game with six straight points off the serve of Cole, which included two aces, giving UL Lafayette a 15-7 lead. Runs of 7-3 and 8-2 followed, which helped the Cajuns dispose of the Lady Raiders and take a 1-0 lead in the match.

In game two, MT seemed in control through the first 36 serves. Three straight attack errors by UL Lafayette to start the match gave the Lady Raiders an early 3-0 lead. MT would build the lead to 22-14 before the Cajuns made their rally.

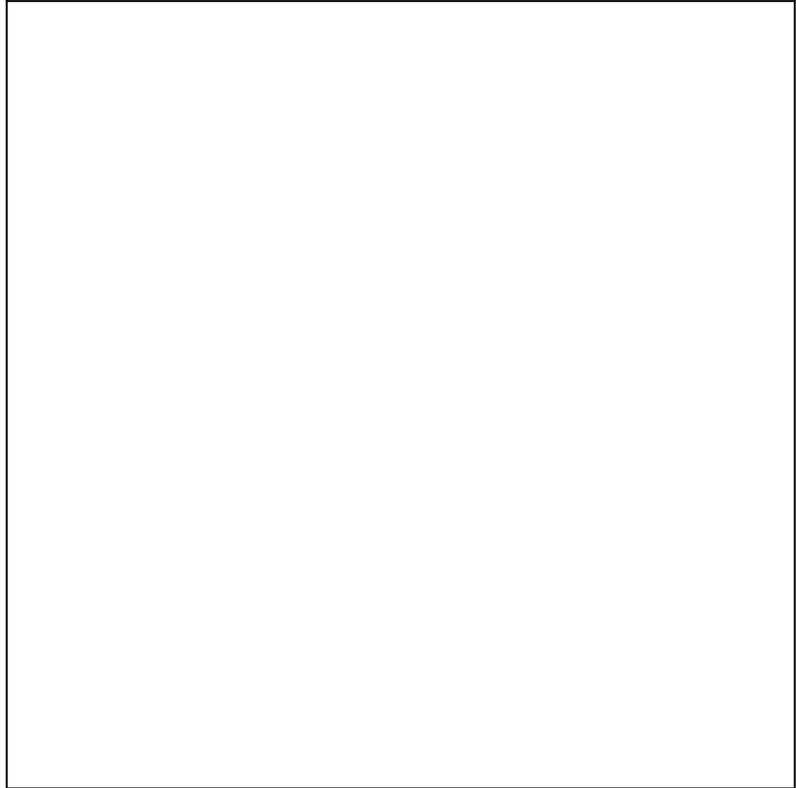
UL Lafayette received five straight points from Cole's serve to trim the MT lead to 22-19. The Lady Raiders increased the lead back to six, 26-20, only to watch the Cajuns rally once more. A 6-1 run, keyed by four MT errors, forced a Lady Raiders timeout.

Louisiana-Lafayette claimed its first lead of the game at 28-27 after back-to-back MT attack errors. The Lady Raiders reclaimed the lead on a Katie Thiesen kill and Beth Henson attack error.

A Cole kill on the games 60th serve knotted things up at 30-30. From there the Cajuns used the serve of Henson to push the lead to 2-0 and take game two 32-30.

Game three featured 12 ties and seven lead changes. It also featured the serve of Cole rallying the Cajuns one more time. With the Cajuns down 28-26, Cole stepped up and served the next four points. A Lares kill and Cole service ace tied things up at 28-28 and burned an MT timeout. After the timeout, Louisiana-Lafayette ended the game on a Lima kill.

Middle Tennessee concluded their regular season and will await word of their seeding for the tournament.



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