Men's Tennis Falls at Mississippi State

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - The 59th-ranked Middle Tennessee Blue Raiders lost the doubles point in a tiebreaker, came back to win the first set in four singles matches but could not hold on to the momentum in dropping a 5-2 decision to 30th-ranked Mississippi State Sunday afternoon in Starkville, Miss., at the A.J. Pitts Tennis Centre.

The homestanding Bulldogs (4-4) won the doubles point, but only in a tiebreaker at No. 1.

Florent Girod and Jerome Le Belicard defeated Greg Pollack and Brandon Allan, 8-2, at No. 2 to start, but the Blue Raiders evened the doubles with a victory at No. 3, as Trevor Short and Michael Staniak won 9-7 over Matt Armstrong and Michael Hailey. The point came down to No. 1, where the 10th-ranked Middle Tennessee duo of Daniel Klemetz and Kirk Jackson lost to Romain Ambert and Max Fomine, 8-6 in the tiebreaker.

But the Blue Raiders (1-7) would bounce back in a hurry as they have so many times this year, winning the first set in four singles matches, Nos. 2, 4, 5 and 6.

Fomine gave the Bulldogs a 2-0 lead with a 6-2, 6-2 victory at No. 3 over Pollack, but Staniak then took care of Girod, 7-5, 6-2, at No. 5. The third-ranked Klemetz went down, 6-2, 6-2, to Ambert, at No. 1, but Anant Sitaram cut the deficit to 3-2 with a 6-3, 6-4 win at No. 6 over Armstrong.

No. 92 Jackson had a 7-5, 5-2 lead over Le Belicard at No. 2 that would have evened the match, but Le Belicard overcame the deficit and won 11 of the final 13 games in the match to take a 5-7, 7-5, 6-2 win and secure the deciding point for MSU. No. 76 Rene Charles-Combette defeated Rishan Kuruppu, 5-7, 6-3, 6-4, at No. 4 in the final match on the court.

"We have played well in almost every match but haven't been able to close out matches," head coach Dale Short said. "We will have to see how our guys can respond. I have never experienced this type of thing before, but we have to keep working and get everyone healthy and see where it goes."

The Blue Raiders return home this week to face Chattanooga Wednesday at the Buck Bouldin Tennis Center at 2 p.m. and will also host Arkansas-Little Rock Friday at the same time.

#30 MISSISSIPPI STATE 5, #59 MIDDLE TENNESSEE 2

SINGLES

1. Romain Ambert (MSU) def. (3) Daniel Klemetz (MT), 6-2, 6-2

2. Jerome Le Belicard (MSU) def. (92) Kirk Jackson (MT), 5-7, 7-5, 6-2

3. Max Fomine (MSU) def. Greg Pollack (MT), 6-2, 6-2

4. (76) Rene-Charles Combette (MSU) def. Rishan Kuruppu (MT), 5-7, 6-3, 6-4

5. Michael Staniak (MT) def. Florent Girod (MT), 7-5, 6-2

6. Anant Sitaram (MT) def. Matt Armstrong (MT), 6-3, 6-4

DOUBLES

1. Ambert-Fomine (MSU) def. (10) Klemetz-Jackson (MT), 9-8 (6)

2. Girod-Le Belicard (MSU) def. Pollack-Brandon Allan (MT), 8-2

3. Trevor Short-Staniak (MT) def. Armstrong-Michael Hailey (MSU), 9-7

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