Double-overtime heartbreaker

Blue Raiders drop 4-3 setback to Vandy

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee erased a pair of second-half deficits in a stirring comeback against Vanderbilt; however, the Blue Raiders' valiant effort came up short in a 4-3 setback in double overtime Sunday afternoon.

The Blue Raiders (6-2-0) rallied to tie the game, 3-3, on Caitlin Reeves second goal in as many matches when she beat the keeper in the 66th minute on an assist from Jen Threlkeld. Reeves has been a spark off the bench in consecutive matches, while playing two different positions.

The contest would remain a defensive stalemate through the remainder of regulation and the first 10-minute overtime period, before Sarah Dennis scored the winner on a brilliant goal, her first of the season, from 18 yards out. Dennis, who assisted two goals, lofted the ball into the right corner out of the reach of Blue Raider keeper Erynn Murray, who had five saves in the match and cradled several attempts in the overtime periods.

"It's a tough loss but I think there are positives," Middle Tennessee coach Aston Rhoden said. "Caitlin Reeves has been a big positive and we have traveled on the road and had opportunities, great opportunities, to beat two very good teams out of the Southeastern Conference.

"I thought our team showed a great deal of character and will to win in the second half, and that was

the biggest thing. We had a tough stretch late in the first half and Vanderbilt took full advantage. I believe Vanderbilt helped prepare us for our conference race and I hope we were able to do the same for them."

Kala Morgan continued her torrid stretch with one goal and an assist. She has scored seven goals and collected three assists in her last four matches and her goal off a Rayburn assist provided Middle Tennessee a 1-0 lead in the ninth minute. It was Morgan's ninth goal of the season.

The lead was short-lived; however, as Nicole Lukens and Meredith Kohn scored goals within a nine-minute span to send the Commodores (4-1-3) into the half with a 2-1 advantage.

Middle Tennessee tied the game, 2-2, when Threlkeld's fourth goal, assisted by Morgan, found the net just three minutes into the second half. Vanderbilt went back ahead, 3-2, in the 55th minute before Reeves continued her fine work with her second goal to even the score in the 66th minute.

Middle Tennessee concludes the non-conference portion of its schedule with a 6-2 mark. The Blue Raiders open Sun Belt Conference play on the road against Florida Atlantic Friday afternoon.

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