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This Week in Blue Raider Tennis

MT Media Relations

SHORT SEES UP-AND-DOWN FIRST TOURNAMENT: Middle Tennessee head coach Dale Short watched his team post an 8-6 singles mark and a 4-3 doubles record at the MT Fall Invitational. The squad performed very well on the first day of the tournament, going 8-3 in singles outdoors at the Buck Bouldin Tennis Center. But rain forced the final two days indoors and created havoc with the schedule of the tournament.

"Going outdoors to indoors created a bit of chaos because of the weather," Short said. "I thought the singles as a whole looked good. Of course the first day was the best.

"Inside we didn't play very well. Our lack of doubles play or play indoors really showed on Saturday and Sunday. We were used to the slower outdoor courts and then inside the courts are much faster and we didn't adjust very well."

The Blue Raiders doubles teams of [Marco Born](#) and [Andreas Siljestrom](#) as well as [Marc Boiron](#) and Joao Paoliello reached the finals in their respective flights. Short said the effort was good from both teams but lack of previous play was a determining factor in the end results.

"Marco and Andreas played well; I just thought the other team played great," Short said. "What it really showed is that our doubles needs some work all the way around. We did not play very many matches this summer as individuals and we had not concentrated a lot of practice time to doubles before the tournament.

"This year we have guys who are better singles players and in the past we've had some guys who were better doubles players. We've been spoiled in that way the last couple of years because getting that first point of the match in doubles has been expected.

"Guys like Greg [Pollack], Brandon [Allan], Kai [Schledorn], they were better doubles players than singles players and it helped us get off to good starts in dual matches. Those players' games were centered more around serve and volley. The guys we have now are not as comfortable at the net, but that will come with more matches and practice."

In singles the Blue Raiders lost three matches to Tennessee on Sunday, all in the semifinals, disappointing the 20th-year head coach.

"I was disappointed we didn't win any matches against Tennessee on Sunday. It really showed our lack of tournament play," Short said. "Just about every team in the tournament had played at least once and some had played twice before our tournament. We have to get more match-tough over the next few weeks to improve our results."

PAOLIELLO PLEASED WITH FIRST RESULTS: Middle Tennessee redshirt freshman Joao Paoliello played his first matches as a Blue Raider during the MT Invitational, winning twice in singles before falling in the semifinals and taking three victories in doubles before dropping the final. He was very nervous in his first match but settled down to reach the semifinals.

"I was very nervous with it being my first college match. A lot of times you don't play your real game when you're nervous, but I was able to get over that after the first match," Paoliello said. "I played a little loose and played pretty well for my first tournament."

Boiron-Paoliello also played their first matches together in the doubles draw. Paoliello said he was just trying to stay calm in the beginning of the doubles play on Saturday.

"I was just trying to keep us calm and play like we had been practicing. I was to have good energy and excitement. I thought we did well for our first tournament playing together," he said.

Paoliello dropped a straight-set decision to Tennessee's Kiril Tcherveniachki in the semifinals on Sunday after taking an early lead. He said the experience was a positive one despite the loss.

"I had chances in the first set, broke him once and was up 3-0 before he settled down and came back," Paoliello said. "It was a very close match and I thought our games really matched up well. Indoors it was different though, much faster. It was a good experience and I learned a lot from it."

RICHARD GETS GOOD RESULTS IN FIRST FALL TOURNEY: [Morgan Richard](#) played in his first fall tournament at the MT



Redshirt freshman Joao Paoliello won two singles and three doubles matches in his first collegiate tournament at the MT Fall Invitational (Bradley Lambert)

Invitational after enrolling in January. The lefthander won twice in singles before falling in the semifinals but dropped a first-round doubles match with newcomer [Marc Rocafort](#).

"I have been practicing hard and was physically ready to play. I was a little unsure because it was my first tournament," Richard said. "Mostly I just didn't take advantage of my chances in the match I lost, but I thought the overall results were good.

"In doubles we have to work a lot more with each other. We don't have a good feel for each other yet. It's a little different in college tennis and Marc and I will get more comfortable with more matches."

Richard dropped a three-setter to Tennessee's 116th-ranked Davey Sandgren Sunday in the semifinals, falling 10-2 in the third set supertiebreaker. The Blue Raider sophomore missed a chance to take down a ranked opponent.

"You can flip a coin in a supertiebreaker. He played very good at the beginning and it was just too much to come back from," Richard said. "I have to be more aggressive, at the end of the second set and also in the tiebreaker. I had two balls in the second set to go up 4-3 and missed those and then he broke me. It was just not putting things away when I had the opportunity."

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