

# Blue Raiders Reach SBC Finals

## Second consecutive appearance

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**DENTON, Texas** - For the second straight year Middle Tennessee volleyball will be playing in the finals of the Sun Belt Championships thanks to a 3-1 (30-20, 23-30, 30-25, 30-27) win over No. 4 seed North Texas (23-13) Friday in North Texas Volleyball Center.

The top-seeded Blue Raiders improve to 25-7 on the season and will face Florida International at 3 p.m. on Saturday. The match will be televised on ESPN Regional.

Game one was a breeze for the Blue Raiders. The squad hit a scorching .484, recorded just three errors and held North Texas to a .156 hitting percentage. Sophomore outside hitter Ashley Adams had six kills in the game and committed just one error. The rest of the match would not be so easy.

"I think one of the bad things that happened in this match was we came out and played our best game of the year almost hitting .500," said Head Coach Matt Peck. "I think we got a little complacent, thinking they [North Texas] was going to roll over. Our transition from game one to game two was unbelievable."

If game one was a nice relaxing dream, then game two was a nightmare. Middle Tennessee looked flustered and disjointed in the second game and North Texas took advantage. The tone was set early as setter Leslie Clark was called for three consecutive bad sets putting Middle Tennessee down early and the team seemed to never recover. The Blue Raiders hit an ice cold .067 in the match and Adams was held to just two kills and committed an uncharacteristic three errors.



Tied at one game a piece coming out of the locker room it came time for the crucial game three. The Blue Raiders have struggled at times in the third game and the team needed to take control of the game to take the momentum back.

It was a see-saw game three. There were twelve lead changes until Middle Tennessee took a 15-14 win off an error by North Texas. Early in the game freshman setter Leslie Clark had to be taken out of the game with an injury and Peck had to replace her with seasoned veteran Megan Sumrell. The calming presence of Sumrell, in an uncertain time for the team and Clark, kept the Blue Raiders on pace and in the game. The Blue Raiders never trailed again and the game was won off a kill by Adams. Clark later came back into the game and played all of game four.

"When we had to put Megan in I knew we would be okay and wouldn't miss a beat," Peck said. "She is a senior and been here before."

Game four was yet another hotly contested match. The Mean Green refused to give up in their own gym and it was the never give up attitude of the Blue Raiders that pushed them over the top for the game four win and victory in the match.

Middle Tennessee hit .268 in the match and also recorded eight service aces. The club also recorded 10 block assists. North Texas hit .212 in the match.

For the second consecutive match Adams recorded 23 kills with eight errors and hit .312. She now has 46 kills in the two matches in the Sun Belt Tournament.

Adams was one of three Blue Raiders to record double figure kills. Quanshell Scott was second on the team with 17 kills and also picked up four crucial aces. Senior Jessica Robinson added 12 kills.

Clark had 49 assists in the match but more importantly her 1,013 assists this season makes her the first freshman setter in school history to record over 1,000 assists in a season. She also moves into sixth place for assists in a season.

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