

December 1, 2006

Middle Tennessee Cages Cards 3-2 Advances to second round in NCAA Tourney

MT Media Relations

LOUISVILLE, Ky. - Middle Tennessee volleyball made history on Friday night winning its first match in the NCAA Tournament with a 3-2 (24,30, 30-19, 12-30, 30-25, 16-14) victory over the Louisville Cardinals in the first round of the NCAA Tournament at Kentucky International Convention Center.

The Blue Raiders improve to 27-7 on the season and will face Ohio State at 4 p.m. on Saturday in the second round of the NCAA Tournament. Louisville fails to reach the second round of the NCAA Tournament for the first time since 2000 and ends the season 25-7. The win snapped the Cardinals' 17-match winning streak.

Middle Tennessee was down 9-3 in game five but refused to go quietly. The Blue Raiders fought back and tied the match at 11 off a service ace by freshman **Leslie Clark**. Middle Tennessee took the lead, 12-11, when **Ashley Asberry** notched a kill and then led again 13-12 when **Jessica Robinson** got a kill. Down 14-13, Middle Tennessee reached match point off two huge kills by **Ashley Adams** and it was Adams' final kill that sealed the win.

Middle Tennessee was led by sophomore outside hitter **Ashley Adams** who led both clubs with 25 kills in the match. Senior **Jessica Robinson** had 14 kills and Clark recorded a double-double with 55 assists and 11 digs.

Middle Tennessee hit just .179 in game one and committed seven errors and five service errors to drop game one 30-24. Louisville on the other hand hit a scorching .429 and had just four errors.

Alicia Lemau'u had three service aces to keep the team in the game early but it wasn't enough to stop the Cardinals. Freshman **Savannah Pegg** saw her first action in a game since October 27 late in the game and notched three of her nine kills.

The Blue Raiders used a pair of streaks to take game two from the Cardinals 30-19. Tied at 9-9, Middle Tennessee took the lead for good in the game off a kill by Pegg. Middle Tennessee went on a 10-1 lead to build an 18-10 lead before Louisville could string together three points to cut the Blue Raider lead to 18-13. The Blue Raiders went on another run, this time 6-1 to go up 25-14. The Blue Raiders strung together a pair of kills by Pegg and one by Adams along with two Louisville errors to tie the match at one. Middle Tennessee hit .281 in game two while the Cardinals were -.125.


Middle Tennessee was helpless to stop the Cardinals in game three. Louisville came out of the locker room on fire hitting .536 in the game. Louisville built an early 14-6 lead and never looked back in the game. Middle Tennessee had just eight kills in the game and also committed eight errors for a .000 attack percentage. The Blue Raiders scored just 12 points in the match.

After playing arguably one of its poorest games all season in game three, Middle Tennessee came back with a vengeance in game four. The Blue Raiders hit .350 in the game and notched 20 kills and just six errors.

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Head Coach Matt Peck gives instruction to Ashley Asberry. (MT Media Relations) 

Up 22-15, Middle Tennessee let the Cardinals climb back into the game on a 4-0 run to make the score 22-19. The Blue Raiders pushed the lead to 26-22 and back-to-back kills by Robinson made it 28-24. An Adams kills and a block by **Ashley Asberry** closed out the game.

QUOTES:

HEAD COACH MATT PECK:

"We are very excited to have won the match. We feel very fortunate. I think one thing we thought about before the match was that Louisville may overlook us a little bit and focus on Ohio State. I think we had a good game plan. I am very proud of my team to fight back after having such a poor showing in game three we put together two really nice games to win the match. At one time we had three freshmen and two sophomores on the court. I think we were very aggressive and I told the team if we want to get anywhere in the tournament we have to swing. I think the players really put it together when we needed it.

"I really feel **Savannah Pegg** rose to the occasion today. Before today she hadn't played in a match since October. We have had a saying all year that it is dumb freshman luck. No, she has had some amazing practices this week and I just felt like she could bring something different to the team in the match tonight."

COMMENTS ON BEING DOWN 10-5 IN GAME FIVE:

"I told the team we had to play perfect volleyball to win this match. As a staff we said amongst ourselves that if we got 10 kills in game five we would win the match and sure enough we had 11 kills."

SOPHOMORE OUTSIDE HITTER ASHLEY ADAMS:

"I think the turning point for us was the win over Western Kentucky. We feel like we are coming together as a team and our chemistry is flowing. I think we have a lot more confidence and now we are starting beat these higher-profiled teams."

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