

Blue Raiders Clinch Sole Possession of East Division Title

Middle Tennessee earns title and No. 1 tournament seed in 3-0 win over Western Kentucky

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Middle Tennessee clinched the Sun Belt Conference East Division title in dramatic fashion on Friday night as it topped rival Western Kentucky 3-0 (30-28, 30-24, 30-28). The Blue Raiders (29-2, 16-1 SBC) entered the match seeking revenge after losing to Western Kentucky earlier in the season. Middle Tennessee has its first solo conference division title in two years after



sharing the title with Western in 2006. This is the first time in eight seasons that Western Kentucky has not won or shared part of the East Division title. "We had a great crowd tonight. It was amazing, half way through the match I looked around and just thought this is incredible. They were a huge factor tonight and the band was awesome. It was a good match I'm not going to say we played great match but they are a good team," head coach Matt Peck said. "They beat us 3-0 earlier in the season. There was a lot on the line there with the No. 1 seed in the conference tournament. I am very proud of our players." The night began on a high note as head coach Matt Peck was honored for his 100th win at Middle Tennessee before play began. The Blue Raiders never looked back even though Western Kentucky proved to be a tough opponent. "We had a long road to get here. I think things happen for a reason. I don't know that we would have played this match tonight had we been down to them and playing for something here like we did tonight for the No. 1 seed," Peck said. Junior Ashley Adams guided the team through out the night as she recorded 18 kills, 11 digs and three blocks assists. Sophomore Leslie Clark led the team behind the scenes with 39 assists, 11 digs and three block assists. Defensively, junior Ashley Asberry and freshman Izabela Kozon each had five block assists in the match. Also on defense the Blue Raiders had a total of 46 digs in the match led by Clark and Adams. As a team, Middle Tennessee held the Lady Toppers to a .179 hitting percentage. The Blue Raiders had just three more kills in the match with 46. Middle Tennessee also had more blocks on the night with 11 while Western had just four. The Lady Toppers were led by Megan Argabright who posted 14 kills for a .560 hitting percentage. Emily Teegarden added nine kills of her own. Western Kentucky started the match strong taking a 9-5 lead to begin the match. Middle Tennessee rebounded to tie the game and kept it close to the end. With the game tied at 27, the Blue Raiders took a 29-27 lead on a kill by Adams and then won the game

after a service error by Western's Hayley Koetter. Game two started much the same way as the two teams traded points before the Blue Raiders took a 14-12 after a kill by Kozon. The Blue Raiders continued to pull away and took a four-point lead after a kill by Adams, 23-19. Western Kentucky recorded a service ace to begin game three but the Blue Raiders rebounded jumping out to a 9-5 lead. The two teams traded points but the Blue Raiders took a 27-25 lead on a kill by Adams. Western Kentucky tried to pull ahead to force a fourth game but was unable to as Asberry ended the match with a kill. Middle Tennessee will be back in action on Thursday, Nov. 15 when it begins play at the Sun Belt Conference Tournament hosted by Denver University. The Blue Raiders will be the No. 1 seed in the conference tournament. Middle Tennessee will play the No. 8 seed at 12 p.m. on Thursday. "We needed a match like this. We have had some sleepy matches since the last Western match and now. We haven't played any of the top teams except Florida International. We needed a match like this just to get ready for the conference tournament. I am confident going out to Denver that we are going to play some great ball," Peck said. "We are an experienced team with this. This is our third conference tournament and we have made the last two finals. I would be really disappointed if we weren't playing for the championship and an NCAA bid." Live broadcasts of all Middle Tennessee's matches during the Sun Belt Conference Tournament may be found on www.goblueraiders.com. Live video streaming will be available through the Sun Belt Conference website at sunbeltsports.org.

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