

# Blue Raiders Top Indians 3-0

## Middle Tennessee advances to the semi-finals of the Sun Belt tournament.

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**DENVER, Colo.** - Middle Tennessee advanced to the semi-finals of the Sun Belt Conference Tournament on Thursday after defeating Arkansas State 3-0 (30-23, 30-28, 30-26) in the first round. Middle Tennessee (30-2) knocked down 53 kills for a .256 hitting percentage. The team also had 14 blocks while holding the Indians to just seven. "We are a little



disappointed that we didn't come out and play better. I think there were a number of factors for that, one the altitude. I don't think we had the energy we usually do as a team," head coach Matt Peck said. "The second thing is every match we have played this year had a short practice beforehand and we weren't able to do that today. I think all that kind of got in their heads a little bit. We will get back to that tomorrow." The Blue Raiders were led by senior Quanshell Scott who posted a .526 hitting percentage with 13 kills. Scott also led Middle Tennessee on defense with nine block assists. Junior Ashley Adams had 12 kills in the match with a .229 hitting percentage followed by sophomore Savannah Pegg with eight. Pegg who played in just two games of the match had a hitting percentage of .517. Adams added assistance on defense with five block assists while junior Ashley Asberry and freshman Izabela Kozon added four block assists of their own. Sophomore Leslie Clark added depth to the offense in the match with 45 assists. Clark also had three kills, seven digs and two block assists in the match. "Playing a team you have beaten. We have only lost once to Arkansas State in my four years and I think in the back of the girls' heads they are thinking lets get this over with and get to the real stuff. Arkansas State played us really well and they had a good game plan," Peck said. Middle Tennessee won the first point in the match on a kill by Kozon but then Arkansas State took a two-point lead 7-5, after the two teams continued to trade points. The Blue Raiders continued to battle but could never get within more than one-point early in the match, 10-7 ASU. Middle Tennessee continued to struggle tying the game but never able to take the lead as Arkansas State jumped out 17-14. Then the Blue Raiders launched a comeback that began with a kill by Asberry, 18-15. Middle Tennessee won the next three points behind the serve of Lemau'u to tie the game at 18. Middle Tennessee continued on that streak winning six of the next seven points to take a 23-19 lead. Arkansas State would score just four more points in the game as the Blue Raiders took game one 30-23. To begin game two, the two teams traded points back and forth before the Blue Raiders pulled ahead by four, 10-6. Arkansas State trailed 13-8 before taking a time out and then caught up to within one point, 13-12. The two teams continued to trade points knotting

the score a number of times before Middle Tennessee pulled ahead 22-21. The score continued to knot up, 28-28 but the Blue Raiders won the next two points to take the game 30-28 and a 2-0 lead in the match. Clark had the winning point in game two after a pass from sophomore Ashley Waugh. Middle Tennessee had a hitting percentage of .237 with 32 kills through game two. The team had 11 blocks while holding the Indians to just three. Scott led the team defensively with seven block assists followed by Adams with four. Adams also led the Blue Raiders offensively with nine kills. In game three, Middle Tennessee jumped out to a 5-1 lead and continued to pull ahead allowing Arkansas State to score just one point, 8-2. The Blue Raiders then took a seven-point lead after a kill by Scott, 14-7. Arkansas State continued to battle and cut the lead to five, 20-15 mid-way through the game. The Indians won the next three points, 20-18 before Middle Tennessee broke the streak, 21-18. Then Arkansas State tied the game at 21 but the Blue Raiders regrouped to pull ahead by two, 24-22. Once the Blue Raiders regained their footing there was no looking back as they took a late five-point lead, 28-23. "I told the team we need to be more focused tomorrow and bring more energy. We need to play like it is the end of the season because even though we have a match with UAB this is what we have been aiming for all season," Peck said. "I wouldn't be very excited if we didn't achieve what we did last year. I think the girls know that and I think we will come out and play a lot better tomorrow." Middle Tennessee will be back in action in the semi-finals of the tournament on Friday Nov. 16 at 6 p.m. when it plays the winner of Florida International and Arkansas-Little Rock which is set to begin at 2:30 p.m. Live broadcasts of Middle Tennessee's matches at the Sun Belt Conference tournament will be available on [www.goblueraiders.com](http://www.goblueraiders.com). Live streaming of the tournament will also be available through the Sun Belt Conference website, [www.sunbeltsports.org](http://www.sunbeltsports.org).

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