

# Blue Raiders Top Cardinals 3-2 Advancing in NCAA Tourney

## Middle Tennessee advances to NCAA second round second consecutive year

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**LOUISVILLE, Ky.** - Middle Tennessee advanced to the second round of the NCAA Tournament in dramatic fashion on Friday defeating host Louisville 3-2 (30-28, 18-30, 30-23, 27-30, 15-12). Sophomore Ashley Mead knocked down 19 kills, tying her career high to lead the Blue Raiders in the win. Freshman Izabela Kozon added assistance to Mead with 15 kills of her own for a .419 hitting percentage. "Ashley Mead had a tremendous match. The funny thing is she plays her best in tournament situations. She played great at the conference tournament, especially the match against FIU and Western Kentucky" head coach Matt Peck said. Middle Tennessee extends its win streak to 13 matches with the win and improves to 34-2 on



the season while Louisville ends the year 22-8. This the second consecutive year Middle Tennessee has put Louisville out of the tournament in the first round. "We didn't start out playing so well. I think they were out blocking us 11-0 but we kept our composure. We had a bad game two, great game three and an okay game four but we did what we had to when the pressure was on. This is two great matches we have played against them at their home gym. I couldn't be happier but we need to bring our better game tomorrow," Peck said. Juniors Ashley Adams and Ashley Asberry each had 12 kills and Adams had four block assists to add assistance on defense. Sophomore Sasha McGlothin had 11 kills and also helped on defense with three block assists. The Blue Raiders played just their second fifth game match of the season and are now 2-0 in fifth game matches. Middle Tennessee's

last fifth game match was against Oregon State on Sept. 1. Defensively, sophomore Leslie Clark had 16 digs followed by Kozon with 13 and senior Alicia Lemau'u and Adams with 12. Clark had a 62 of Middle Tennessee's 68 assists. Middle Tennessee took a 3-1 lead to begin the match after two kills by Mead maintaining a two-point lead, 7-5. The Cardinals battled tying the match at 8. Then Louisville gained the momentum midway through game one taking a two-point lead of its own, 15-13. Louisville maintained a three-point lead late, 22-19 but the Blue Raiders fought back to tie the match at 22. The two teams continued to trade points knotting the score again at 24. Scott then posted two kills to give Middle Tennessee the 27-25 lead and then Mead had another kill to put the Blue Raiders up by three. Izabela Kozon notched the winning kill after an assist by Lemau'u, 30-28. Mead ended game one with nine kills for a .643 hitting percentage followed by Asberry and Kozon with four kills each. Middle Tennessee had no blocks in the game but did notch 14 digs led by Kozon with six. To begin the second game, the two teams traded points with Louisville taking an early 8-6 lead. Louisville extended its lead to six 16-10 and while Middle Tennessee battled it could not cut into the lead, 21-13. Louisville continued to keep the Blue Raiders at bay taking an 11-point lead late 29-18 and the won the game to force a fourth game. Middle Tennessee had not posted any blocks through game two while Adams posted a negative .267 hitting percentage with just three kills in the two games. Mead who led the team in game one knocked down just one kill in game two. McGlothin lead the team in the second game with four kills as she had seven kills for a .667 hitting percentage at the break. Each team had 34 kills at the intermission but the Blue Raiders had a .247 hitting percentage while Louisville posted a hitting percentage of .439. Middle Tennessee took a 5-2 lead to begin game three posting its first block of the game from Adams and McGlothin. The Cardinals then tied the game at nine but the Blue Raiders pulled ahead 12-9 after a block by McGlothin, Mead and Clark. Louisville and the Blue Raiders continued to trade points and knot the score but Middle Tennessee took a one-point lead, 15-14. The two kept trading points but the Blue Raiders stayed on top, 20-19. The Blue Raiders extended the lead to three, 23-20 after an ace by Scott. Middle Tennessee won four straight points, three of which came after an ace by Adams to extend the lead to five, 27-22. The Blue Raiders held Louisville to just one more point in the game winning 30-23 as they took a 2-1 lead in the match. Three Blue Raiders had double-digit kills at the conclusion of game three led by Mead with 14. Middle Tennessee also had three-point-five blocks with Kozon having the only solo block for the Blue Raiders in the match. Middle Tennessee also recorded five service aces in game three. Louisville jumped out to a 3-0 lead to begin game four of the match. The Cardinals maintained the lead as Middle Tennessee could only score two-points, 6-2. Louisville did not allow the Blue Raiders to score any more points but scored three more of its own, 9-2. The Blue Raiders cut the lead to three after an ace by sophomore Ashley Waugh and then to one after a kill by Adams, 10-9. Louisville pulled ahead again by three, 13-10 but Middle Tennessee kept the score close, 15-13. The Cardinals again extended the lead, 18-13 and while the Blue Raiders battled they could not catch-up 22-16. The Blue Raiders cut the lead to two, 28-26 after trailing 27-23. It was not enough as Louisville took a 30-27 win to force a fifth game in the match. Adams posted seven kills in game four to help lead the Blue Raiders. Middle Tennessee had seven total blocks through the four games while Louisville had 15 team blocks. Middle Tennessee had 52 digs and 59 assists through four games. In the fifth game, Middle Tennessee took a 3-1 lead after an ace by Waugh. At the eight-point break the Blue Raiders led by four, 8-4. Louisville cut the lead to one, 11-10 but the Blue Raiders gained the momentum to extend the lead again to three, 13-10. Asberry knocked down a kill to give the Blue Raiders a 14-11 lead and then won on an attack error by Louisville. Middle Tennessee will play Hawai'i in the second round on Saturday, Dec. 1 at 6 p.m. The match will mark the first meeting between Hawai'i and Middle Tennessee.

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