

# Blue Raiders Fall, 4-3, at No. 22 Vandy

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## **MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -**

The 58th-ranked Middle Tennessee Blue Raiders won a trio of three-set matches over ranked opponents but fell just short of upsetting 22nd-ranked Vanderbilt Wednesday, falling 4-3 to the Commodores at the Brownlee O. Currey, Jr., Tennis Center in Nashville, Tenn. The match started outdoors but rain forced singles matches inside with five duals on the court. The Blue Raiders won three of those final five matches, as five of the six duals went to three sets in perhaps the closest match in the history of the series. "I am very proud of our guys and encouraged by

the way we played on the road against one of the best teams in the nation," Middle Tennessee head coach Dale Short said. "Other than at Ole Miss, this is the best team we've played this year and we showed we can play well on the road against a high-quality opponent." Middle Tennessee got off to a slow start in the match, dropping the doubles point with two straight losses before winning the final doubles match at No. 3. Vanderbilt's Zach Dailey and Lew Smith defeated Kirk Jackson and Trevor Short, 8-4, at No. 2 before the 46th-ranked duo of Chad Harris and Scott Brown gave the Commodores the first point of the match with an 8-4 triumph over No. 49 Brandon Allan and Kai Schledorn at No. 1. Middle Tennessee's Andreas Siljestrom and Aidan Fitzgerald won their second straight doubles tilt with a 9-7 victory over Matt Lockin and Greg Sossaman at No. 3. In singles the Commodores got a quick victory before the rain forced the match inside, a factor that helped both clubs according to Coach Short. "The rain came just after Anant [Sitaram] lost at No. 6. That probably hurt a couple of our guys but it also helped Andreas [Siljestrom] in his match, as well," Short said. VU's Nathan Sachs defeated Sitaram, 6-3, 6-4, at No. 6. Smith then defeated Fitzgerald at No. 5, 6-1, 2-6, 7-5, at No. 5 in only the third singles match for Fitzgerald this year. The win gave the Commodores a commanding 3-0 lead, but it was the first of five three-setters in singles, and the Blue Raiders would not go quietly. No. 64 Lockin won 4-6, 6-4, 6-3, over Schledorn at No. 3 to give Vanderbilt the dual victory, but the final three singles matches would provide the Blue Raiders with confidence not only in this match but in the coming weeks. Siljestrom, who moved into the rankings this week at No. 120 and was named the Sun Belt Conference Player of the Week on Wednesday, got a 3-6, 7-6 (5), 6-2, win over 24th-ranked Harris at No. 1, by far Siljestrom's biggest triumph of the

season. Jackson defeated No. 65 Brown at No. 2, 3-6, 7-6 (5), 6-4, before Trevor Short won a pair of tiebreakers to gain a victory at No. 4 over 76th-ranked Dailey, 7-6 (6), 3-6, 7-6 (10). "All three of our wins were very big for each player's confidence," Dale Short added. "For Siljestrom he played very well against Harris and for Short and Jackson, they have not been playing well and this should give both some confidence as we play Tulane and UAB this weekend and then get ready for the conference tournament." The Blue Raiders host 22nd-ranked Tulane Saturday at noon at the Buck Bouldin Tennis Center. The match has been designated as Wally Tidwell Fan Day, with a new gazebo scheduled for dedication prior to the match. The first 50 fans at the match will receive a free Middle Tennessee Tennis t-shirt. **#22 Vanderbilt 4, #58 Middle Tennessee 3**

#### **SINGLES**

1. (120) Andreas Siljestrom (MT) def. No. 24 Chad Harris (VU), 3-6, 7-6 (5), 6-2
2. Kirk Jackson (MT) def. (65) Scott Brown (VU), 3-6, 7-6 (5), 6-4
3. (64) Matt Lockin (VU) def. Kai Schledorn (MT), 4-6, 6-4, 6-3
4. Trevor Short (MT) def. (76) Zach Dailey (VU), 7-6 (6), 3-6, 7-6 (10)
5. Lew Smith (VU) vs. Aidan Fitzgerald (MT), 6-1, 2-6, 7-5
6. Nathan Sachs (VU) def. Anant Sitaram (MT), 6-3, 6-4

#### **DOUBLES**

1. (46) Harris-Brown (VU) def. (49) Allen-Schledorn (MT), 8-4
2. Dailey-Smith (VU) def. Jackson-Short (MT), 8-4
3. Fitzgerald-Siljestrom (MT) def. Lockin-Sossaman (VU), 9-7

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