Middle Tennessee Defeats Gophers 6-1

Cowden clinches match for MT; Blue Raiders win two straight over ranked opponents

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MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. - Middle Tennessee continued its momentum from Saturday's win into Sunday's match taking a 6-1 win over No. 40 Minnesota. Middle Tennessee improves to 4-2 on the season with wins over two nationally ranked teams in as many days. The Blue Raiders defeated No. 66 Denver 4-3 on Saturday. Minnesota falls to 0-2 on the season after Sunday's loss and a loss to Denver on Friday. To begin the match, Middle Tennessee won the doubles point 2-1 taking a 1-0 lead in the match. Sophomore Joao Paoliello and freshman Richard Cowden won the first match of the day 8-4 over Adam Altepeter and Pierre Dumas. Then junior Morgan Richard and freshman John Peers defeated Raoul Schwark and Chi-Lang Pham 9-8 (7-2) in No. 1 singles to clinch the point. Sophomore Marc Rocafort and freshman Chris Nowak played a close match with Minnesota's Dino Bilankov and Derek Peterson but fell 9-7. Minnesota tied the match 1-1 as Bilankov defeated Richard 6-2, 6-1 with the beginning of singles play but the Blue Raiders did not let it affect them. Rocafort and Nowak posted wins at the No. 1 and No. 5 positions respectively giving Middle Tennessee a 3-1 advantage in the match. Rocafort won his match with No. 46 Schwark 6-2, 6-4 while Nowak topped Altepeter 7-5, 6-2. Cowden avoided a third set by defeating Pham in a tie-breaker 6-1, 7-6 (7-4) to clinch the match for the Blue Raiders. Then Paoliello won his match with Peterson in three sets 6-2, 3-6, 6-0 extending the lead 5-1. "I am very proud of the way the guys

competed this weekend. It is nice to see wins across the board and not just the same guys winning," head coach David McNamara said. "I think this will give us confidence going into next weekend." Peers rounded out play in the match with his three-set win over Dumas 4-6, 6-2, 6-1. Middle Tennessee will be back in action Feb. 9 and 10 as it plays host to New Mexico and East Tennessee at the Racquet Club. The Blue Raiders will play No. 54 New Mexico on Saturday, Feb. 9 at 2 p.m. Then on Sunday, Feb. 10 Middle Tennessee will face No. 49 East Tennessee at 2 p.m. Admission to matches at the Racquet Club are free. **Singles**

1. Marc Rocafort (MT) def. #46 Raoul Schwark (MINN) 6-2, 6-4

2. Dino Bilankov (MINN) def. Morgan Richard (MT) 6-2, 6-1

3. John Peers (MT) def. Pierre Dumas (MINN) 4-6, 6-2, 6-1

4. Richard Cowden (MT) def. Chi-Lang Pham (MINN) 6-1, 7-6 (7-4)

5. Chris Nowak (MT) def. Adam Altepeter (MINN) 7-5, 6-2

6. Joao Paoliello (MT) def. Derek Peterson (MINN) 6-2, 3-6, 6-0

Doubles

1. Richard/ Peers (MT) def. Raoul Schwark/Chi-Lang Pham (MINN) 9-8 (7-2)

2. Paoliello/ Cowden (MT) def. Adam Altepeter/Pierre Dumas (MINN) 8-4

3. Dino Bilankov/Derek Peterson (MINN) def. Nowak/ Rocafort (MT) 9-7

Match Notes:

Middle Tennessee 4-2; National ranking #59

University of Minnesota 0-2; National ranking #40

Order of finish: Doubles (2, 1, 3); Singles (2, 1, 5, 4, 6, 3)

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