

## Men's Tennis in Nail-Biter, 4-3

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**MOBILE, Ala.** - Middle Tennessee's Kirk Jackson won the deciding match at No. 1 singles to give the third-seeded and 61st-ranked Blue Raiders a 4-3 win over sixth-seeded New Mexico State in the quarterfinals of the Sun Belt Championships Friday afternoon at the Mobile Tennis Center. Middle Tennessee won the doubles point but had to fight until the final match in singles to survive the Aggies. Jackson was broken early in the third set by Ben Archer-Clowes after the two split sets. Jackson battled back, took a lead at 5-4 and then again at 6-5. The senior won the match when Archer-Clowes could not

continue because of cramps with Jackson holding match point. "It's really great for Kirk to win a match like that and give us the win," Middle Tennessee head coach Dale Short said. "Kirk has really struggled this year but played much better down the stretch. He really came up big for us in a match where both players played very well." The win was Jackson's fourth straight down the stretch, including a pair of victories over ranked opponents. The Blue Raiders were forced to win the final match on the court when the Aggies overcame losing the doubles point. Middle Tennessee got off to a good start, winning the doubles point with victories at Nos. 1 and 3. At No. 1 the 57th-ranked tandem of Brandon Allan and Kai Schledorn struggled through the first four games before reeling off six consecutive games to win 8-2 over NMSU's Archer-Clowes and Trevor Lyon. At No. 3 Aidan Fitzgerald and Andreas Siljestrom had little trouble, getting an early break and never looking back in also winning 8-2 over Christian Halligan and Stjepan Beg. NMSU got singles wins at Nos. 2-4, while the Blue Raiders got victories at the bottom two spots in the order, setting up the decider at the top spot. Aggie Danilo Ziuanovic defeated 82nd-ranked Siljestrom, 7-5, 6-3, at No. 2, while NMSU's Luis Avila won 7-5, 6-1, over Schledorn at No. 3. Halligan took care of Allan at No. 4, 6-4, 6-3. Middle Tennessee's Anant Sitaram won 6-4, 6-2, over Beg at No. 5, with Rishan Kuruppu taking a 7-6 (5), 6-2, decision over Lyon at No. 6. "We were sort of short-handed because Trevor [Short] has been sick most of the week, and the heat bothered some of our guys a bit, especially the freshmen," Short added. "But it feels great to come out on top after being on the short end of these close matches so many times this year." Middle Tennessee advances to the semifinals for the fourth straight year and will take on 56th-ranked and second-seeded Louisiana-Lafayette at 9 a.m. Saturday at the Lubel

Memorial Tennis Courts on Saturday. The Blue Raiders defeated the Ragin' Cajuns, 4-3, in Murfreesboro on April 2. **#61 MIDDLE TENNESSEE 4, NEW MEXICO STATE 3**

**SINGLES**

1. Kirk Jackson (MT) def. Ben Archer-Clowes (NMSU), 6-1, 3-6, 6-5, default
2. Danilo Zivanovic (NMSU) def. (82) Andreas Siljestrom (MT), 7-5, 6-3
3. Luis Avila (NMSU) def. Kai Schledorn (MT), 7-5, 6-1
4. Christian Halligan (NMSU) def. Brandon Allan (MT), 6-4, 6-3
5. Anant Sitaram (MT) def. Stjepan Beg (NMSU), 6-4, 6-2
6. Rishan Kuruppu (MT) def. Tyler Lyon (NMSU), 7-6 (5), 6-2

**DOUBLES**

1. (57) Allan-Schledorn (MT) def. Archer-Clowes-Lyon (NMSU), 8-2
2. Trevor Short-Jackson (MT) vs. Avila-Zivanovic (NMSU), DNF
3. Aidan Fitzgerald-Siljestrom (MT) def. Halligan-Beg (NMSU), 8-2

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