Blue Raiders Split First Day of Tournament

Rocafort records win over USA's No. 8 Baker

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CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas - Sophomore Marc Rocafort led the Middle Tennessee as it split on the opening day of the HEB Invitational. Rocafort defeated South Alabama's Jack Baker, who is ranked No. 8, on the way to guiding the Blue Raiders (5-9) to a 4-1 win over the Jaguars. Rocafort won his match -3, 2-6, 6-2 over Baker sealing the win for Middle Tennessee. Middle Tennessee lost its first match of the day 5-2 to No. 39 Texas Tech (9-1) but rebounded later in the afternoon for the win over South Alabama (2-6). "We have lost a lot of matches but are working hard and keep believing in ourselves. It was a huge match for Rocafort at No. 1 beating the No. 8 player in the country. I am really proud of these guys. They played really well today," head coach David McNamara said Against the Red Raiders, Middle Tennessee won the doubles point to begin the match and freshman Richard Cowden won his singles match to add to the Blue Raider scoring. Middle Tennessee won the doubles point as Cowden teamed with freshman John Peers to defeat Michael Breler and Sinisa Markovic 9-7. The Blue Raiders then clinched the point as sophomore Joao Paoliello and freshman Chris Nowak won their match 8-4 over Milos Kustudija and Ilya Babinciuc. Rocafort teamed with junior Morgan Richard in No. 1 doubles falling 8-6 to Bojan Szumanski and Christian Rojmar, who are ranked No. 2 in the country in doubles. Cowden posted the only other win for the Blue Raiders as he defeated Babinciuc 6-1, 0-6, 6-4 in No. 4 singles. "It was a tough match. We won the doubles point and had our chances in the singles. With just an hour and 45 minutes before we played again we had to get over our sorrows and get back out there and play," McNamara said. Middle Tennessee answered the call by defeating South Alabama. The doubles matches were not played as the match began with singles and was clinched by Middle Tennessee so the doubles point was not needed. "It was a pretty huge win for us we needed a win after the losses we've had. We have played a brutal schedule considering the number of ranked teams we have played. All of the teams are playing really well right now and I am glad we could pull out a win," McNamara said. Nowak posted the first win as South Alabama did not have enough players to play the match. Then Cowden lost to R.J. Nagel 6-1, 6-2 which tied the match at

1. Paoliello won his match 6-1, 6-3 over Aaron Krisan giving the Blue Raiders a 2-1 lead. Middle Tennessee then pulled away as Peers defeated Marek Sramek 7-6 (2), 6-4 in No. 2 singles and then clinched the match with Rocafort's win. Middle Tennessee will be back in action at the HEB Invitational at 9 a.m. when it plays the winner of Nebraska vs. Western Michigan. **#39 Texas Tech 5, #62 Middle Tennessee 2**

Singles
1. Bojan Szumanski (TTU) def. Marc Rocafort (MT) 3-6, 7-6 (8-6), 6-2
2. Sinisa Markovic (TTU) def. John Peers (MT) 7-6 (7-4), 7-6 (9-7)
3. Lenoir Ramos (TTU) def. Morgan Richard (MT) 6-4, 4-6, 6-5
4. Richard Cowden (MT) def. Ilya Babinciuc (TTU) 6-1, 0-6, 6-4
5. Christian Rojmar (TTU) def. Joao Paoliello (MT) 6-2, 6-2
6. Michael Breler (TTU) def. Chris Nowak (MT) 6-0, 6-1

Doubles
1. #2 Christian Rojmar/Bojan Szumanski (TTU) def. Morgan Richard/Marc Rocafort (MT) 8-6
2. John Peers/Richard Cowden (MT) def. Michael Breler/Sinisa Markovic (TTU) 9-7
3. Joao Paoliello/Chris Nowak (MT) def. Milos Kustudija/Ilya Babinciuc (TTU) 8-4

Match Notes:
Middle Tennessee 4-9; National ranking #62
Texas Tech Universit 9-1; National ranking #39
Order of finish: Doubles (3,1,2); Singles (6,5,4,2,1)

#62 Middle Tennessee 4, #61 South Alabama 1

Singles
1. Marc Rocafort (MT) def. #8 Jack Baker (USA) 6-3, 2-6, 6-2
2. John Peers (MT) def. Marek Sramek (USA) 7-6 (6-2), 6-4
3. Morgan Richard (MT) vs. Robert Hodel (USA) 6-2, 1-6, 1-2, unfinished
4. R.J. Nagel (USA) def. Richard Cowden (MT) 6-1, 6-2
5. Joao Paoliello (MT) def. Aaron Krisan (USA) 6-1, 6-3
6. Chris Nowak (MT) def. No player (USA), by default

Match Notes:
South Alabama 2-6; National ranking #61
Middle Tennessee 5-9; National ranking #62
Order of finish: Singles (6,4,5,2,1)

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