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Blue Raiders Down Vandals 3-1 Kozon and Mead knock down 13 kills each

MT Athletic Communications



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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee began the 2008 season by defeating Idaho 3-1 on Friday night in the Middle Tennessee Invitational.

The Blue Raiders won the first set 25-20 but then lost the second set 25-23 to even the match at one.

Set three did not prove to be a problem as the Blue Raiders took the set 25-20 but Idaho would not give up. Middle Tennessee pulled out a 25-23 win in the fourth set to take the match and begin the season 1-0.

"I thought Idaho this year would have a very good team and that is why I purposely scheduled them on Friday night. We knew our team wouldn't be quite as sharp. We had a few personnel changes but we ended up winning the match," head coach Matt Peck said. "We blocked well and did some very good things. We still have some things we need to work on however I am always happy when we play a good team in the first match of the season and win. We were challenged and that is the most I could have asked for."

Middle Tennessee is now 4-1 in season openers under Peck and 6-3 since joining the Sun Belt conference in 2000.

As a team the Blue Raiders had 54 kills, eight total blocks and three solo blocks while holding the Vandals to 46 blocks and five total blocks.

Sophomore **Izabela Kozon** guided the offense as she knocked down 13 kills. Kozon also added to the defense with 10 digs and two block assists.

Junior **Ashley Mead** had a big night for the Blue Raiders as well as she tied with Kozon with 13 kills.

Senior **Ashley Asberry** and junior **Sasha McGlothlin** recorded eight and nine kills respectively. McGlothlin also had two block assists and one solo block as Asberry added two block assists and a solo block of her own.

Redshirt-freshman **Stacy Oladinni** added assistance with the block as she had three block assists and one solo block.

"Both Brynne and Stacy did very well. We started to go away from Stacy offensively a little bit I think Leslie thought it is a tight match and I don't want to put that on a freshman. I think people could see tonight Stacy has a lot of potential. She did a great job blocking, got some dumps on us and pushed the ball down. She is going to have a great career I just don't want her to be nervous on the court and I want Leslie to have confidence in her and for her to have confidence in herself," Peck said.

Junior **Ashley Vaughn** anchored the passing as she had 16 digs in the libero position. Freshman **Brynne Henderson** began her collegiate career by recording 10 digs and helping the Blue Raiders win points at crucial times in the match.

"Brynne played like an upperclassman out there. She went after balls, passed well and was very focused. I thought **Katie Brush**, who was a player who didn't play much last year, stepped in and did a great job for us tonight. We had some very non-traditional performers doing great jobs tonight," Peck said.

Junior **Leslie Clark** added 10 digs of her own in addition to 44 assists.

Middle Tennessee will be back in action on Saturday, Aug. 30 at 12:30 p.m. when it faces Southeast Missouri. The Blue Raiders will round out the invitational with South Dakota State at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday.

"Tomorrow will present some very interesting challenges for us but I think we will have worked out some of the bugs and will be the better team," Peck said.

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