Blue Raiders rally for 3-2 win over Hilltoppers

MT trailed 0-2 before Asberry and team took home win

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - For the second time this season Middle Tennessee pulled out at 3-2 (25-27, 23-25, 25-20, 25-17, 15-11) win after trailing 0-2 to begin the match as it defeated rival Western Kentucky on Monday night. Senior Ashley Asberry led Middle Tennessee in the comeback as she recorded 16 kills and 10 block assists and two solo blocks on the night. After two sets, the Murfreesboro, Tenn., native had just six kills and three block assists but turned it on the lead to lead in the Blue Raider rally. "Ashley started to take control of the match and while I don't think it was one of her best offensive matches she really stepped it up on the block. She did a nice job stepping in a leading the team. She is a very competitive and emotional player and never gave up. She truly loves competing in whatever she is doing and tonight was her night to win a big match for us. She did a lot to really help us win that match," Peck said. Middle Tennessee's last 0-2 comeback was against Duke in the UT-Arlington Invitational on Sept. 13. The Blue Raiders have now won seven-straight matches improving to 17-3 on the season and 7-1 in Sun Belt Conference action. To begin play, Middle Tennessee trailed 11-5 and while it continued to fight the Blue Raiders trailed by four, 17-13. Then in the second set, WKU jumped out to a 15-12 lead at the halfway point and held on taking a late four-point lead, 19-15 before the Blue Raiders tied it at 22. The Hilltoppers held on to take a 2-0 lead in the match with the win. "I looked at our team in the first tow games and

they looked nervous and I didn't know why. We are playing at home against our biggest rival and we had no reason to be nervous. I told them after game two this match is over. I'm looking at your faces and this match is over," head coach Matt Peck said. In the third set the Blue Raiders got it together taking a 16-12 lead and then WKU called a time out trailing 19-14. Middle Tennessee caught a break as a service error by WKU's Kelly Hoffmeyer handed it a 25-20 win keeping the match alive. "One thing that motivates our team is getting mad. Sometimes they don't get mad at the other team so I let them get mad at me. I told them I thought we were being out played and they were shaking their heads to I told them to prove it. They stepped up their game tremendously in the match and we started to do some good things," Peck said. Junior Lauren Britton who had not played since the Blue Raiders lost to WKU in September stepped in to help the defense. The Murfreesboro, Tenn., ended the night with seven digs while junior libero Ashley Waugh added 14 digs to lead the defense throughout the night. Junior Ashley Mead added 16 kills of her own followed by sophomore Izabela Kozon with 10. As a team, Middle Tennessee had 62 kills on the night for a .301 hitting percentage as WKU had the same number of kills but only posted an attack percentage of .205. The Blue Raiders also had 20 blocks on the night notching some at critical points in the match while the Hilltoppers had nine. Middle Tennessee continued the momentum into the fourth set as it jumped out to an early 8-3 lead forcing the Hilltoppers to take and early timeout. Then WKU closed the gap to three, 15-12, but could not close it out as it then trailed 23-17. The Blue Raiders kept the spark alive taking a 6-3 lead in the fifth set and then pulling ahead 8-4 at the eight-point break. The Blue Raiders will be back in action this weekend as they play host to UL-Lafayette, UL-Monroe and New Orleans on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Admission to all home volleyball matches is free.

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