Blue Raiders lose heartbreaker to FIU 3-2

Mead, Kozon each notch 20 kills

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MIAMI - Middle Tennessee lost the first two sets of its match with East Division lead Florida International on Friday night before battling back to force a fifth set but could not clinch it falling 3-2 (22-25, 21-25, 25-21, 25-23, 19-21). The Blue Raiders (21-5, 11-3 SBC) continued to fight in the match and while it held a large lead over FIU (24-4, 14-1 SBC) to begin the fifth set it could not pull it out in the final point rallies. At the eight-point break in the fifth set, the Blue Raiders lead 8-5 and then increased the lead by two more as soon as they switched sides of the court to take a five-point lead. The Golden Panthers quickly rebounded cutting the lead to two-points and continued to keep it close. Senior Ashley Asberry ended the night with 12 block assists, for the second time this season ending a match just one block assist shy of her career high. The team had 19 total blocks with freshman Stacy Oladinni adding a career high nine block assists of her own. Offensively, the Blue Raiders were led by junior Ashley Mead and sophomore Izabela Kozon who each had 20 kills in the match. Asberry added 11 kills as the only other Middle Tennessee player to notch double-digit kills. It is the fourth double-double for Asberry this season. Kozon had a double-double of her own as she added a career high 17 digs to help guide the passers. Junior Ashley Waugh added 16 digs of her own to add assistance to the defense. Top FIU outside hitter Yarimar Rosa had 25 kills on the night to lead the offense with Isadora Rangel and Andrea Lakovic adding 14 and 10 kills respectively. Lakovic also had 10 block assists on the night. Middle Tennessee had a total of 67 kills on the night for an attack percentage of .238 with the defense recording 19 total blocks. FIU had just on more kill on the night for a .180 attack percentage and 13 total blocks. The Golden Panthers served well in the match with six

service aces compared to the Blue Raiders who had just two. Middle Tennessee also had 11 service errors on the night as FIU had just seven. The Blue Raiders began the match by jumping out to a quick 10-4 lead over FIU. The two teams continued to trade points and while the Golden Panthers closed the gap the Blue Raiders remained ahead by two, 20-18. Then FIU went on a 7-2 run to take the set and a lead in the match. In the second set, FIU took a small lead before the two began to trade points back and forth. Middle Tennessee tied the match at 11 but FIU won a couple of points and then took a late 20-16 lead. The Golden Panthers won the set and took a 2-0 lead in the match after a block by Rosa and Sabrina Gonzalez. After two sets the Blue Raiders had a higher hitting percentage at .188 with 23 kills but FIU had six more kills, 29, for a .155 attack percentage. Mead led Middle Tennessee at the break with six kills followed by Yancey with five. Yancey had an attack percentage of .556 with no errors in nine attempts. The Blue Raiders held Rosa to a team high nine kills in the two sets for a .033 attach percentage as she had eight errors in 30 attempts. Defensively, Middle Tennessee had nine blocks in the match lead by Asberry who had five block assists with Yancey and Clark adding four each as FIU had just five blocks. The Blue Raiders came back from the set break strong taking an early 16-6 lead. FIU battled back closing the gap to four-points, 20-16 but Middle Tennessee held on for the win to keep the match alive. In the fourth set, the lead traded back and forth before the Blue Raiders pulled ahead 12-9. The two teams continued to trade points with neither taking the lead as the set tied at 20. Middle Tennessee continued to control the floor as it took the win to take the match to a fifth set. Headed into the final set of the match, Mead led the team with 16 kills followed by Kozon with 15. Asberry added to the assault on the defensive end with 12 block assists as the team put up 17 blocks. Middle Tennessee will be back in action on Saturday, Nov. 8 at 6 p.m. when it plays Florida Atlantic at FAU Arena in Boca Raton, Fla.

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