Blue Raiders fall 3-2 to No. 22 St. Louis

Yancey leads team with 15 kills

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee's hopes for an upset on Saturday afternoon over No. 22 St. Louis were dashed as the Billikens edged the Blue Raiders 3-2 (25-17, 18-25, 25-17, 23-25, 9-15). The Blue Raiders (25-7) won the first and third sets and had its chances in the fourth set before SLU (28-4) edged ahead to force the fifth set. SLU never looked back in the final set after taking an early lead. "I thought we played well enough to win the match. We outplayed them in almost every category and I don't think the final result reflects how well we played," head coach Matt Peck said. "I think the test will be if we can snap back and beat UConn tonight to improve our chances of receiving an at-large bid." Junior Janay Yancey led Middle Tennessee throughout the match ending the day with a career high 15 kills for a .609 attack percentage. Yancey also guided the defense with three block assists and one solo block. "Janay had a career match tonight and she is our most improved player. She has worked very hard this season and I hop in postseason she has an opportunity to shine," Peck said. Adding depth to the offense were sophomore Izabela Kozon and senior Ashley Asberry with 14 and 13 kills, respectively. Defensively, Asberry along with junior Leslie Clark added four block assists each to the Blue Raiders

nine total blocks. SLU was led offensively by Sammi McCloud who had 21 kills, four block assists and 12 digs. Bridget Fonke added 15 kills and 15 digs of her own in the match. As a team, the Blue Raiders had 65 kills for a .291 attack percentage with SLU having 59 kills for a .255 attack percentage. Middle Tennessee also had 72 digs led by junior Ashley Waugh with 17 and 61 assists with Clark having 49 assists. Middle Tennessee jumped out to an early 8-3 lead over the Billikens to begin the match and held on to it at the halfway mark leading 15-9. The Blue Raiders continued control the set cruising to the win to take the lead in the match. In the second set, SLU took its first lead of the match 7-6 and never looked back. It led by as many as seven-points late before winning to tie the match at 1 and force a fourth set. After two sets, the Blue Raiders posted a hitting percentage of .333 with no one in double-digit kills. Each team had two blocks but SLU had four more kills with 29 as it posted a .314 attack percentage. Middle Tennessee and SLU traded points to begin the third set before the Blue Raiders began to pull away. The Blue Raiders took a five-point lead, 20-15 after a block assist by Yancey, Oladinni and Kozon. The two teams traded points in set four before SLU took a 14-11 lead. The Blue Raiders did not give up batting back and after two big plays by Yancey tied the set at 15. The two continued to trade points with the Blue Raiders taking a late one-point lead, 22-21. SLU took the set after a block error and an attack error by the Blue Raiders to stay alive and tie the match at two. The Billikens took control of the fifth set taking an early 5-0 lead. SLU never looked back in the set cruising to the win. The Blue Raiders will round out the regular season later today when it faces UConn at 7 p.m. Admission to all home matches at Alumni Memorial Gym is free.

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