

Blue Raiders win battle 3-2 over rival Hilltoppers

MT opens league play 1-0

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

The Blue Raiders battled on Friday night and came from behind to beat rival Western Kentucky 3-2 (22-25, 25-20, 24-26, 25-20, 15-8) to open Sun Belt action. "This was big for us because we beat one of the teams picked at the top of the conference, and we won a five-set match, which we had not done so far this season," head coach Matt Peck said. Middle Tennessee had a number of highlights on the night as senior Ashley Mead and Izabela Kozon continue to close in on the 1,000 kill mark in their careers. Mead ended the night with a team high 17 kills while Kozon notched eight of her own. Middle Tennessee ended the night with 53 kills for a hitting percentage of .215 while holding Western Kentucky to just 49 kills and a .061 attack percentage. In addition to the record-setting efforts of Mead and Kozon, sophomore Stacy Oladinni had 12 kills and senior Janay Yancey added eight. Yancey also led the defensive attack



at the net with a career-high 14 block assists. As a team, the Blue Raiders had 20.5 total blocks on the night. Senior Leslie Clark set up the Blue Raider attack with 47 assists. Senior Ashley Waugh led the back row defense with 12 digs while Clark added 10 digs of her own. The Hilltoppers came from behind to win the first set, 25-22, but Middle Tennessee rallied to grab the second set 25-20 to knot the match 1-1. Mead closed the set with a kill, to join the 1000 kill club. Western Kentucky scored the

last three points to claim a 26-24 win in the third set and a 2-1 lead in the match. For the Raiders, the highlight was Kozon's 1000th career kill, as she joined Mead on the elite list. Not to be denied, Middle Tennessee turned the tables on WKU in the fourth set. The Hilltoppers took a 16-13 lead, but the Blue Raiders went on a 12-4 run to win the set 25-20 and tie the match at 2. In the deciding fifth set, the Raiders took it to the Hilltoppers in decisive fashion, posting a 15-8 win and taking the hard-fought match 3-2. Middle Tennessee's win was the third in a row, and raised their record to 8-6. Western fell to 10-5. The Blue Raiders will be back in action next weekend when they travel to Florida, playing at Florida Atlantic on Friday, Oct. 2 at 6 p.m., before facing pre-season Sun Belt favorite Florida International on Sunday, Oct. 4 at 12 p.m.

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