Blue Raider Volleyball Upsets Georgia 3-2

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ATHENS, Ga. - Middle Tennessee volleyball (3-1) pulled off one of the biggest upsets in recent history with a 3-2 (30-19, 22-30, 30-18, 25-30, 15-12) victory over the University of Georgia (1-1) Sunday in the Ramsey Center. Middle Tennessee's victory is a huge "W" for the win column as the Bulldogs were picked third in the SEC preseason poll behind Florida and Tennessee. The win over Georgia is the first time the Blue Raiders have defeated an SEC school since 1987 when the team defeated Kentucky 3-0. The victory evens the two squads record against each other, 1-1, as Georgia won the first meeting in 1978. "I can't explain what a huge win this is for our program," said Head Coach Matt Peck. "Except for game two and four, where we got way behind and couldn't catch up, we really controlled the match and just played exceptionally well." Middle Tennessee begins the season 3-1, the best start for the Blue Raiders since 1995, when the team opened the season 4-0. The Blue Raiders were led by the impressive play of junior Andressa Lyra who led both teams with 28 kills in the match. She also recorded 13 digs for her third double double of the young season. "Andressa has exceeded our expectations in the first four matches of the season," Peck said. "She had a phenomenal match and is going above and beyond what we are asking her to do." Middle Tennessee started game one slowly, spotting the Bulldogs three points before the Blue Raiders could score. A slow start would lead to a strong finish in the first game as Middle Tennessee capitalized on eight Bulldog errors in the first game to win 30-19. Game two would go to Georgia after the Blue Raiders fell in a hole early and the Bulldogs would take game two 30-22. The Blue Raiders would set the tone when the squad came out of the locker room to start

game three. Middle Tennessee opened game three with a 10-2 run over the Bulldogs and never looked back. Lyra closed out game three by winning the Blue Raider's final two points to give Middle Tennessee game three. Middle Tennessee suffered through a lull in game four and Georgia took advantage. Georgia took game four to force a fifth and decisive game five with a 30-25 victory. Georgia looked to be cruising in game five, as the Bulldogs opened the game by winning the first four points. This forced Peck to call a timeout and talk to his team. "I called a timeout to try and calm the team down and get them to re-focus," Peck said. "I told them to just go out there and play their game and see what happened." What happened was the biggest win in Peck's short tenure and a tone being set for the Blue Raider season. Prior to the win, Middle Tennessee had a record of 4-20 over SEC opponents, with three of those wins coming against Vanderbilt, who no longer sponsors volleyball. Middle Tennessee had a strong showing by redshirt sophomore Victoria Monasterolo who had 17 kills and 10 digs for her second double double of the season. Megan Sumrell ended the match with 56 assists and sophomore Alicia Lemau'u had 23 digs. The Blue Raiders return to action on Friday, September 2 when the squad travels to Charlotte, North Carolina to participate in the UNC-Charlotte Tournament. Middle Tennessee will face host UNC-Charlotte on Friday and Delaware and University of Texas-San Antonio on Saturday.

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