Peers leads Blue Raiders against Vanderbilt

Junior defeats top ranked Lipman

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - The Blue Raiders fell to No. 39 Vanderbilt 5-2 on Sunday with a number of Blue Raiders performing well in the match. The Blue Raiders opened play with doubles with Vanderbilt taking the point after sweeping the matches. Middle Tennessee's doubles teams played well overall with juniors John Peers and Kyle Wishing facing Adam Baker and Alex Zotov falling 8-6. Vijay Paul and Alex DiValerio faced a battle with sophomore Richard Cowden and freshman Shaun Waters but pulled out the win 8-7 (10). "The message to the team for the remainder of the season is we have to keep competing and fighting both as a team and individually. We are showing this and continuing to get better but it will take everyone doing it individually," head coach David McNamara said. "It was there to be won today and in two other matches against teams in the top 40 and all because of a point here and there that went the other way. We have to use the opportunities when they come up and not let them get away." Vanderbilt extended its lead to two after No. 94 Zotov defeated senior Alex McCann 6-2, 6-4. Peers continued his impressive string of wins as he defeated No. 39 Ryan Lipman 6-2, 6-3 to cut the lead to one, 2-1. Cowden won his first set 6-3 over Paul but lost the next two, 6-4, 6-0 as the Commodores closed to within one for the win. Baker then clinched the match for Vanderbilt with his 6-3, 6-2 win over Waters. Melo and sophomore Matthew Langley rounded out play for the Blue Raiders. Melo won his first set 6-4 over Bryant Salcedo but lost the match after falling 6-4, 6-2 in the final two sets. Langley defeated DiValerio 6-1, 7-6 (4) to add another point for the Blue Raiders. "We are very close and I feel positive and optimistic about where the team is headed. We have to keep believing, fighting and gutting it out," McNamara said. "We have a big weekend coming up at Corpus Christi in the HEB Invitational. In the last seven matches, the team has won the doubles point in five so things are going in right direction and we just have to keep putting in the effort and working hard." The Blue Raiders will be back in action Friday and Saturday March 5-6 when it participates in the HEB Invitational in Corpus Christi, Texas. When information is available on match times and opponents for the tournament it will be posted on goblueraiders.com.

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