Middle Tennessee notches season-opening win over South Carolina, 3-0

Kozon, Oladinni and Szivos combine for 25 kills

August 27, 2010 · Athletic Communications

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. - As has been the case over the past six years, the Middle Tennessee volleyball team walked away with a win in their season opener, defeating South Carolina 3-0 (25-23, 25-12, 25-23) in the State Farm Illini Classic on the campus of the University of Illinois. "It was a typical first match for us," said head coach Matt Peck. "I don't think we ran our offense, but we were effective. We served tough and we passed well, which is what you need at the beginning of the year, and I think we broke their team down. I liked coming back from behind in game three. We saw some really good things out there and some things we need to work on tomorrow." After each earned a spot on the Preseason All-Sun Belt team on Thursday, Izabela Kozon, Stacy Oladinni and Maria Szivos led the way offensively. Kozon, an All-SBC First Team performer in 2009, collected a match-high 10 kills. Oladinni and Szivos chipped in eight and seven kills, respectively, with Szivos hitting a blistering .778. Morgan Peterson made an impressive debut performance at setter and

dished out a match-high 31 assists. Defensively, the Seymour, Tenn., native also tied Brynne Henderson for the team-high in digs with 11. The Blue Raiders edged out the Gamecocks in an opening set nail-biter. Middle Tennessee jumped out to an early lead, as Kozon helped engineer a six-point run with her serving to go up 8-3 lead. As the set wore on, South Carolina inched back into it, cutting the deficit to one at 22-21. However, a pair of timely kills from Oladinni and Peterson and a Gamecock service error finished it off, 25-23. Middle Tennessee went up 2-0 with an impressive second set victory, winning 25-12. After grabbing an early 8-4 lead, the Blue Raiders took control of the match by recording eight of the next nine points to go up 16-5. The Gamecocks went on a three-point run of their own, but the serving of Oladinni put the game out of reach. The junior recorded two service aces to put MT up 21-9. After swapping some points, an attack error by USC's Taylor Bruns ended the set 25-12. The Blue Raiders would seal the deal with a dramatic third set victory, 25-23. Kozon and Szivos led the way, recording six and four kills in the set, respectively. South Carolina would hop out to an early lead, but MT would tie the set at 11, eventually taking a 16-12 lead. However, the Gamecocks kept fighting, tying the set late at 23-23, but Middle Tennessee closed out the match with a Kozon kill and a Lindsay Cheatham block. The Blue Raiders will now look to build on Friday's performance with a pair of matches Saturday against Brigham Young at noon and sixth-ranked Illinois at 7 PM.

Printed on May 23, 2013
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/47411