Volleyball wins 3-1 over BYU

Blue Raiders will play No. 6 Illinois for tournament title

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CHAMPAIGN, Ill. - Facing their first deficit of the season, the Middle Tennessee volleyball team rebounded from a close first set loss to take home the next three for a 3-1 victory (20-25, 25-22, 25-14, 26-24) over Brigham Young in their second match of the State Farm Illini Classic in Champaign, Ill. "I think it was a good match for us, we tried something different there at the start, and it didn't really work well," said head coach Matt Peck. "We got back to what worked for us yesterday, and I think we started to run our offense more. We did a nice job blocking. I don't think we passed as well as we could have, but it was a good match for us. They're a tall and experienced team from a very good conference, and it was a good win." As was the case in the 2007 NCAA Tournament Sweet 16 match against BYU, Izabela Kozon impressed with a match-high 16 kills to go along with eight digs. Maria Szivos was second on the team with 10 kills, and showed off her service game with four aces. Morgan Peterson directed the offense to a career-high 40 assists. Defensively, Middle Tennessee was led by Brynne Henderson with a match-high 11 digs. Peterson and Kendall Howard each were second on the team, chipping in 10. The Blue Raiders also looked sharp at the net, combining for ten blocks to BYU's 5.5. Stacy Oladinni tallied a match-high in the category with one solo block and four assists. Brigham Young took home the first set in a hard-fought affair, 20-25. The leads would switch back and forth until late in the match, when a number of attack and receiving errors by the Blue Raiders propelled the Cougars to a five-point lead at 18-23, a margin that would hold steady until the end. BYU also outhit MT .257 to .114 in the opening set. Middle Tennessee would tie up the match

with a 25-22 victory in the second set. Kozon led the way with seven kills, and Szivos pitched in four of her own to go along with three service aces. The Blue Raiders opened an early lead, and after extending it to 16-12 to force a BYU timeout, the Cougars took four of the next five points to cut the deficit to one at 17-16. MT answered with four consecutive points, including back-to-back service aces to go up five, and hung on to tie the match at 1-1. Middle Tennessee would come out of the break on fire, never trailing in a dominating 25-14 third set win. The Blue Raiders grabbed an early lead, thanks in part to a dominating start from Lindsay Cheatham, who accounted for 4.5 of the team's first 11 points. Wistrick would help MT take control down the stretch with five kills, and an Oladinni block sealed the deal to give MT a 2-1 lead. The Blue Raiders clinched the match with a dramatic 26-24 fourth set victory. After Middle Tennessee raced out to an early lead, the Cougars came back to take a temporary edge at 11-10. The two sides would swap leads as the match wore on until BYU went up two points at 23-21. Kozon would lead the late MT charge collecting three kills in the next four serves to tie the set at 24. A Szivos kill set up the match point, which was converted with a Kozon and Cheatham block. Middle Tennessee will now face host Illinois in the championship match of the State Farm Illini Classic. The sixth-ranked Fighting Illini enter the match after winning 3-1 over BYU and 3-0 over South Carolina. The match is scheduled to begin at 7 PM.

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