

# Middle Tennessee falls to Duke in home opener, 3-1

## Angela Peyton tallies 35 assists in home debut

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### MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Middle Tennessee lost to Duke 3-1 (14-25, 25-20, 21-25, 20-25) in their opening match of the Blue Raider Bash on Friday evening at Alumni Memorial Gym. "We didn't have a good first game," said head coach Matt Peck. "We made some changes in game two, which worked a lot better. I think we made it competitive, but I never really had a good feel for this match. Tomorrow



we have two matches against two really good teams. We need to pick up our play." Angela Peyton led the way for the Blue Raiders. Taking on the primary setting role midway through the match, the freshman tallied 35 assists to tie for the match high. The native of Houston, Texas, was also a catalyst defensively, chipping in nine digs. Izabela Kozon tied for the match high with 14 kills, marking the sixth consecutive time the senior has led the Blue Raiders in the category. Ashley Adams earned significant playing time in her first appearance of the season, posting 10 kills. Defensively, Brynne Henderson once again led the team in digs with 10. Adams tied for the team lead in blocks with Brandi Waller, each contributing 5 block assists. In the first set, Amanda Robertson held serve for five consecutive points to jump out to an early 4-9 lead. As the set wore on, the Blue Devils continued to inch their advantage further, culminating with a Christiana Gray kill and block assist to take a commanding 19-9 lead before winning 25-14. Middle Tennessee would go into the break tied at 1-1 after coming back to win the second stanza. The Blue Raiders took an early edge before four consecutive attack errors gave Duke a 10-7 lead. Thanks to some impeccable play by Adams down the stretch, MT clawed back into the set and took a temporary advantage at 18-17. Back to back kills by Kozon gave Middle Tennessee the lead for good at 20-19 and an Adams kill would ultimately seal the deal at 25-20. Duke began the third frame on fire, scoring seven of the set's first eight points, and never once trailed. MT gradually fought their way back, but couldn't get the necessary run going, eventually falling 21-25. In the final set, Ali McCurdy keyed an important series for the Blue Devils as they stretched a 9-7 lead out to 16-7. The freshman managed to hold serve for seven consecutive points and gave Duke a lead that would not be challenged down the stretch, ending 25-20. Middle Tennessee will continue play in the Blue Raider Bash on Saturday with matches against Southern Miss at 11 AM and Auburn at 7 PM. The tournament will conclude play with a match against Miami (Fla.) Sunday at 1 PM. All matches will take place in Alumni Memorial Gym.

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