Volleyball falls at FIU, 3-1

Adams and Szivos reach double digit kills in loss

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MIAMI - After posting wins in each of the last 14 matches, the Middle Tennessee volleyball team fell to FIU 3-1 (23-25, 25-22, 23-25, 19-25) on Friday night at U.S. Century Bank Arena in Miami. The Blue Raiders (17-5, 8-1 SBC) were led by Ashley Adams and Maria Szivos with 13 and 12 kills, respectively, and Angela Peyton tallied the team high in assists with 28. However, Middle Tennessee was outhit on the evening, .154 to .258. Defensively, Brynne Henderson tied a career-high in digs with 21, and Peyton was second on the team with a career-high 13. Lindsay Cheatham tied the match high in blocks with five, and Stacy Oladinni accounted for four stoppers. Izabela Kozon, one of the most decorated players in Middle Tennessee history, suffered an ankle injury early in the first set and did not return. The senior outside hitter entered the match with the team lead in kills and kills per set, and has earned the Sun Belt Player of Week on three occasions this season. Middle Tennessee fell 23-25 in the opening frame, marking the first time that the Blue Raiders have dropped a set since a win over FIU on October 1. The set featured 12 ties and four lead changes as both sides battled back-and-forth, but the Panthers ran off four consecutive points to take a late 22-19 lead, holding on to go up 1-0. The Blue Raiders evened the match in the second frame with an intense 25-22 victory. After opening up a 10-5 lead, the Panthers recorded six of the next seven scores to even up the affair at 11. Once again, each side would battle back and forth, with FIU seeming to find an answer for every MT run, but after the Panthers pulled within one at 23-22, Middle Tennessee notched the final two points, culminating with a Szivos kill. The drama continued

in the third set, as an impressive Middle Tennessee comeback bid came up just short, 23-25. FIU appeared to have control in the early goings, taking a 13-6 edge, but the Blue Raiders closed the deficit to within one late at 23-24. A Sabrina Gonzalez kill sealed the deal to hand the Panthers a 2-1 advantage in the match. The Blue Raiders fell in the fourth set in wire-to-wire fashion, 19-25. Middle Tennessee kept it close early, but the Panthers recorded five consecutive points to stretch a slim lead to seven at 13-20, putting it out of reach for MT. Middle Tennessee will end their four-match road stretch tomorrow at Florida Atlantic at 6 p.m.

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