Blue Raiders Defeat No. 43 Rice, 5-2

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Brandon Allan and Kai Schledorn won the deciding doubles match and Schledorn, Andreas Siljestrom and Marco Born all won in singles, as 42nd-ranked Middle Tennessee defeated No. 43 Rice, 5-2, in men's tennis action Saturday afternoon at the Racquet Club of Murfreesboro.

Allan and Schledorn lost a pair of tight matches two weeks ago to Indiana and Georgia Tech in doubles, but got back on the winning track Saturday with a tiebreaker victory at No. 2 doubles to secure the first point of the match. Siljestrom and Schledorn won quickly in singles before Born picked up a win at No. 2 to seal the victory for the Blue Raiders, who moved to 4-2 on the season.

In doubles second-ranked Born and Siljestrom defeated Robert Searle and Tony Hearle, 8-5, at No. 1, with Searle, Rice's top player, turning an ankle in the match and leaving him unavailable for singles.

But Rice's Christop Muller and Ben Harknett evened the doubles with an 8-5 triumph at No. 3 over Rishan Kuruppu and Greg Pollack.

Allan-Schledorn were finally able to pull out a close match, edging Filip Zivojinovic and Ralph Knupfer at No. 2, 9-8 (4), giving the Blue Raiders the early 1-0 lead.

Siljestrom, ranked 50th in singles, won 6-3, 6-2, over Harknett at No. 1, and Schledorn finished at almost the same time with a 6-4, 6-1, triumph over Zivojinovic at No. 4.

Rice's Haerle defeated Allan at No. 3, 6-4, 6-1, but Born finished off Knupfer at No. 2, 7-6 (2), 6-4, for the team victory.

Rice's Rodrigo Gabriel defeated Morgan Richard at No. 6, 7-5, 6-4, while Kuruppu outlasted Muller at No. 5, 6-3, 7-6 (13).

"It's nice for the win, but were not playing all that well right now, at least not where we're capable of playing," head coach Dale Short said. This is a game of confidence and we needed the W and got it today. That's the most important thing.

"I think it's something we can build on. We're not hitting on all cylinders, as I've said before. We've been stuck in neutral in this early part of the season, but the hard work from the guys this week paid off in tight situations."

Middle Tennessee and 40th-ranked Minnesota will play doubles tonight at 7:30 p.m. at the Racquet Club and will finish the match with singles action Sunday at 1 p.m.

#42 Middle Tennessee 5, #43 Rice 2

SINGLES

1. (50) Andreas Siljestrom (MT) def. Ben Harknett (RU), 6-3, 6-2
2. Marco Born (MT) def. Ralph Knupfer (RU), 7-6 (2), 6-4
3. Tony Haerle (RU) def. Brandon Allan (MT), 6-4, 6-1
4. Kai Schledorn (MT) def. Filip Zivojinovic (RU), 6-2, 6-2
5. Rishan Kuruppu (MT) def. Christoph Muller (RU). 6-3, 7-6 (13)
6. Rodrigo Gabriel (RU) def. Morgan Richard (MT), 7-5, 6-4

Order of Finish: 1,4,3,2*,6,5

DOUBLES

1. (2) Born-Siljestrom (MT) def. Robert Searle-Haerle (RU), 8-6
2. Allan-Schledorn (MT) def. Zivojinovic-Knupfer (RU), 9-8 (4)
3. Muller-Harknett (RU) def. Pollack-Kuruppu (MT), 8-5

Order of Finish: 1,3,2*

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