Raiders Drop Another Close One, 4-3

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee won the doubles point, two singles matches and led two other singles matches but dropped three straight at the end, as the 37th-ranked Blue Raiders fell, 4-3, to No. 71 South Alabama in the consolation match Saturday at the HEB Invitational in Corpus Christi, Texas. The Blue Raiders (6-4) lost their second straight and fourth 4-3 decision this season, this one after taking the doubles point and leading 3-1 in the match overall. Two other matches had Blue Raiders up a set in singles, but once again Middle Tennessee could not find a way to close out the match. "We're not a very confident team right now," head coach Dale Short said. "We were up 3-1 and lost the last three. We're not used to winning these close matches. We have the talent but we really need to win a close team match or two to get over the hump. The only good thing is that it's happening now and not six weeks from now." In doubles the Blue Raiders squeezed out the match's first point with a tiebreaker win at No. 3. Marco Born and Andreas Siljestrom, ranked No. 2 nationally, won 8-4 at No. 1 over R.J. Nagel and Monte Tucker, but USA's Jack Baker and Robert Hodel defeated Brandon Allan and Kai Schledorn, 8-5, at No. 2. That left the doubles to Middle Tennessee's Greg Pollack and Morgan Richard, who took care of USA's Sam Huffman and Filip Kricka, 9-8. In singles the Blue Raiders jumped out early but did not finish well. Born defeated Tucker, 6-4, 7-5, at No. 2, and Allan won 4-6, 6-3, 6-1, over Marek Sramek at No. 3. USA's Nagel took care of Richard, 6-1, 6-2, at No. 6, leaving Middle Tennessee with a 3-1 advantage in the match. Siljestrom, ranked 50th in doubles, and Schledorn, were both up a set at Nos. 1 and 4, respectively, while Rishan Kuruppu was locked in a tight match at No. 5. Kuruppu fell to Mark Gellard, 5-7, 4-6, before Schledorn dropped 6-3, 2-6, 4-6, decision to Hodel. Siljestrom eventually succumb to Baker, 6-1, 6-7, 2-6. Middle Tennessee will travel to California this week and take on Fresno State on Wednesday and San Diego on Friday, both in Fresno, Calif. **#71 South Alabama 4, #37 Middle Tennessee 3**

SINGLES

1. Jack Baker (USA) def. (50) Andreas Siljestrom (MT), 1-6, 7-6, 6-2
2. Marco Born (MT) def. Monte Tucker (USA), 6-4, 7-5

3. Brandon Allan (MT) def. Marek Sramek (USA), 4-6, 6-3, 6-1
4. Robert Hodel (USA) def. Kai Schledorn (MT), 3-6, 6-2, 6-4
5. Mark Gellard (USA) def. Rishan Kuruppu (MT), 7-5, 6-4
6. R.J. Nagel (MT) def. Morgan Richard (USA), 6-1, 6-2

DOUBLES

1. (2) Born-Siljestrom (MT) def. Nagel-Tucker (USA), 8-4
2. Hodel-Baker (USA) def. Allan-Schledorn (MT), 8-5
3. Greg Pollack-Richard (MT) def. Sam Huffman-Filip Kricka (USA), 9-8

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