Volleyball wins Sun Belt crown with sweep of Western Kentucky

Blue Raiders claim first Sun Belt regular season title since 2007

November 12, 2010 · Athletic Communications

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. - For the first time since the 2007 season, the Middle Tennessee volleyball team can claim the Sun Belt regular season championship, sweeping rival Western Kentucky 3-0 (25-21, 25-22, 25-19) on Friday evening at E.A. Diddle Arena in Bowling Green, Ky. "Our team played well tonight," head coach Matt Peck said. "Western played us close in each set, but once we got a lead, we just pulled ahead and played really well. I think our blocking was outstanding tonight and our offense was working well. This was a great match for us heading into the conference tournament next week." With the win, Middle Tennessee moved to 16-1 in conference play, securing the number one seed in next week's Sun Belt Tournament. "It's great to win the title," Peck said. "I think that loss earlier this season to FIU helped motivate us tonight. Winning the championship is a great accomplishment for us and something to be proud of, but now we have to focus on the tournament next week." The Blue Raiders (25-5, 15-1 SBC) have now won eight consecutive matches and 22 of their last 23. Izabela Kozon, the reigning Sun Belt Player of the Week, posted the match high in kills with 12 and hit at a .370 clip. Maria Szivos tallied eight kills and both Ashley Adams and Lindsay Cheatham recorded seven. As a team the Blue Raiders posted 38 kills to WKU's 39, but MT held the edge in attack percentage, .330 to .163. Angela Peyton put up the match high in assists with 34. Defensively,

Middle Tennessee notched 15.0 total blocks to Western Kentucky's 3.0. Adams tallied five blocks on the night, including three of the solo variety. Stacy Oladinni recorded five block assists. Brynne Henderson had the match high in digs with nine and Peyton was second with six. Led by Kozon's five kills, the Blue Raiders won the opening stanza, 25-21. The frame was tight in the early goings, but Middle Tennessee ran off four consecutive points to grab a 14-9 lead and would stretch it out to 17-11, but Western Kentucky used a pair of runs of their own to cut the deficit to one at 20-19. However, MT responded with three consecutive kills from Oladinni, Kozon and Cheatham to put the set out of reach and grab an early 1-0 lead. The Blue Raiders doubled their match lead with a 25-22 second set victory. Once again, each side battled it out in the early part of the set, but after the Hilltoppers took a slim 16-15 edge, Middle Tennessee answered with five straight points and wouldn't look back. Both Kozon and Cheatham supplied the offense in the frame, combining for eight kills. Another mid-set run proved to be the difference as the Blue Raiders completed the sweep, 25-19. Following five lead changes and 11 ties, Middle Tennessee took control of the set with an 8-2 run to take a commanding 23-17 lead. Moments later, a Tiffany Elmore attack error sealed the deal. Middle Tennessee will now prepare to host the Sun Belt Championship Tournament at Alumni Memorial Gym next week. Eight teams will participate in the event with matches beginning at noon on Thursday. The Blue Raiders are tentatively set to open play in the tournament at 5 p.m.

Printed on March 11, 2014
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/49304