Blue Raiders win home opener

MT wins a pair of marathon tiebreaker matches

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee women's tennis kept its early season winning streak alive, capturing its third victory in as many tries, knocking off UT-Martin 6-1 Sunday afternoon at the Nashboro Village Indoor Courts in Nashville, Tenn. The match served as the home opener for the young program, which features no seniors, four juniors, two sophomores and a freshman.

"I am very proud of our team and the effort we showed today," head coach Melissa Schaub. "For such a young group playing as well as we are this early is a good sign. We are not resting on our laurels yet as we have a long season ahead of us, but it is certainly exciting to start the season off on the right foot thus far."

The Blue Raiders took an early 1-0 lead when they claimed victories in two of the three doubles matches. Each team claimed a win through the opening pair of contests and the point came down to a battle at the No. 1 slot. With both sides trading points and neither gaining much of an advantage, it came down to a tiebreaker. Carla Nava and Yuiri Nomoto, the top tandem for Middle Tennessee (3-0), held serve to win the tiebreaker and clinch the point in the Blue Raiders' favor by defeating Anna Marie Herbold and Jodie Tiley 9-8 (11-9).

The other doubles triumph for MT came at the No. 2 position, as Marietta Bigus and Lexi Brand knocked off the Skyhawks' Ivon Simic and Johanie Van Zyl, 8-2.

The momentum stayed with the Blue Raiders during the first five singles matches, as Bigus and

Brand each sealed straight-set victories over their UT-Martin (1-3) opponents. Bigus provided Middle Tennessee with a 2-0 cushion after handing Alice Laing a 6-0, 6-1 setback at the No. 2 slot.

The Blue Raider lead then swelled to 3-0 when Brand tallied a 6-0, 6-2 decision against Herbold during the No. 4 meeting.

Nava provided the winner's match for Middle Tennessee, as she earned a 6-2, 7-5 victory against Anna Winkelmann to put the Blue Raiders in a lead they could not surrender. The MT junior had to overcome a deficit in the second set to pull out the triumph.

"I feel like the team is playing great and I enjoy competing with them every day," Nava said. "Each day everyone comes out and gives their best effort and it is paying off as we have started the season well."

Nomoto assisted in giving Middle Tennessee more points, as she won the marathon match of the day, taking a 6-2, 6-7 (6-8), 6-3 decision against Tiley in the matchup of the No. 1 players.

Freshman Lisa Maas then captured the first singles win of her collegiate career, garnering a straight-set, 6-0, 6-4 decision against Katie McCall in the No. 6 slot.

The Blue Raiders return to action in one week, at 11 a.m. next Sunday, when they hit the road for Huntington, W.Va., to face Marshall.

Middle Tennessee 6, UT-Martin 1

Singles
No. 1 Yuiri Nomoto (MT) def. Jodie Tiley (UTM) 6-2, 6-7 (6-8), 6-3
No. 2 Marietta Bigus (MT) def. Alice Laing (UTM) 6-0, 6-1
No. 3 Carla Nava (MT) def. Anna Winkelmann (UTM) 6-2, 7-5
No. 4 Lexi Brand (MT) def. Anna Marie Herbold (UTM) 6-0, 6-2
No. 5 Ivon Simic (UTM) def. Alex Dachos (MT) 6-2, 6-4
No. 6 Lisa Maas (MT) def. Katie McCall (UTM) 6-0, 6-4

Doubles
No. 1 Nava/Nomoto (MT) def. Herbold/Tiley (UTM) 9-8 (11-9)
No. 2 Bigus/Brand (MT) def. Johanie Van Zyl/Simic 8-2
No. 3 Dachos/Maas (MT) def. Laing/Winklemann 8-4

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