Volleyball drops season opener to No. 15 Colorado State

Adams posts 17 kills in loss

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FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. - Despite late rallies in both the second and third set, the Middle Tennessee volleyball team dropped their first match of the season 3-0 to No. 15 Colorado State at Barnhill Arena on Saturday in Fayetteville, Ark. "I think it was a typical first match of the season," head coach Matt Peck said. "It definitely showed that Colorado State had played last night and worked out some of the bugs. We did some very good things, but we obviously have a lot of work to do. We had some unforced errors, and when you're playing a top 15 team in the country, they're going to take advantage of your mistakes." All-Sun Belt Preseason Team member Ashley Adams posted a match-high 17 kills to lead the way for the Blue Raiders. Oyinlola Oladinni was second on the team with seven, and Maria Szivos chipped in another six. "Ashley is just a different player this year," Peck said. "We've seen it in training camp. She's more confident, we're getting her the ball she needs, and she really delivered today against a very good team. She was outstanding today, and I expect very good things from her as the season goes on." As a team the Blue Raiders posted 44 kills to the Rams' 42, but CSU only registered nine attack errors and outhit MT .311 to .190. On defense, Brynne Henderson recorded a match high 15 digs, but the Blue Raiders were out-blocked 12.5 to 2.0 at the net. Middle Tennessee actually opened up the season with an Oladinni and Morgan Peterson block on the first play of the match, but Middle Tennessee

ultimately dropped the set 25-19. It was back and forth early on with the Blue Raiders grabbing a slim 11-10 lead on the heels of three consecutive Adams kills. However, CSU went on a five-point run just a few minutes later to go up 19-14 and wouldn't look back. Adams posted six kills in the second set, but Colorado State managed 15 to just one attack error on the way to a 25-23 second set win. It was a tight affair for much of the frame with nine ties, but after grabbing a 10-9 lead early, Middle Tennessee wouldn't lead again. The Blue Raiders very nearly forced a fourth set, but a late comeback rally fell short as CSU hung on for a 26-24 victory. The Rams opened up a 10-4 lead, and appeared well on their way. Szivos and Adams willed Middle Tennessee back into it down the stretch, setting up a potential set point with an Adams kill to make it 24-23. However, it wasn't in the cards as Colorado State tallied the final three points of the match. "One of the things that we have to learn as a team is how to play well when we're behind," Peck said. "We could've easily folded, but we turned it around, and we were aggressive. I think the team realizes that if we could've got going sooner, we'd be still playing the match. So that's a good sign for us, without any question." Middle Tennessee will look to rebound this evening when they take on host and Southeastern Conference opponent Arkansas at 7 p.m. at Barnhill Arena.

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