

Volleyball ends skid with 3-0 rout of UALR

Blue Raiders will continue Sun Belt play next week

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

The Middle Tennessee volleyball team put together one of their most complete showings this season on Sunday afternoon with a 3-0 (25-13, 25-13, 25-21) rout of UALR at Alumni Memorial Gym. "We knew that UALR was coming in here after playing a close five sets against Western on Friday, and I'm proud of our performance today," head coach Matt Peck said. "I think it serves as a reminder that when we're playing well, we're still a hard team to beat. We're back on track, and I hope we can keep it rolling over these upcoming matches." Led by 12 kills from Ashley Adams, the Blue Raiders posted 43 with a .341 attack percentage while holding the Trojans 22 at a -.022 rate. Oyinlola Oladinni was second on the team with nine, and the duo of Oladinni and Adams combined to hit .429 for the match. "We expect a lot from both Oyinlola



and Ashley, and today they both delivered," Peck said. "They got a lot of kills and were offensive weapons today. Really, all of our attackers had a strong day, and the key was that we passed really well. We've worked on that a lot, and I think it's starting to show." Alyssa Wistrick also added eight kills, and Maria Szivos put together a strong overall outing with seven to go along with seven assists, seven digs and six block assists. After seeing her first extended playing time this season on Friday, Morgan Peterson tallied a season-high 33 assists. The sophomore also chipped in a trio of kills, seven digs and three block assists. "I talked to the coaches earlier this week, and they told me what they expected out of me," Peterson said. "I needed to be a better leader on the floor and bring energy, and I really think I stepped my game up in that area today. I think my sets were more

consistent as well, and I was definitely connecting with the hitters more." "All three of our setters bring different things to the match," Peck said. "We've been experimenting a little bit, and Morgan has really worked on some of the things we've talked about, especially her accuracy. Morgan was outstanding with her blocking as well, and she did a great job with her serve." The Blue Raider block had its strongest day of the season, combining for 15 total blocks, led by Oladinni's eight. Both Adams and Lindsay Cheatham tallied five. "We've worked a lot on blocking in practice," Peck said. "It didn't show as much in the earlier part of the season, but you have to remember that all of our middles missed the spring with injuries and surgeries. Their blocking is now starting to come back, and we've been focusing on it a lot." Middle Tennessee combined for 39 digs, led by Kendall Howard's seven. Brynne Henderson added six, and Lindsay Purvis posted five. After some close early play, Middle Tennessee utilized some big runs to run away with the opening stanza in 25-13 fashion. With the game tied at 4-4, Adams and Oladinni each tallied a kill before combining for a block to hand the Blue Raiders the lead for good. The duo tallied eight kills in the frame, and Middle Tennessee out-hit UALR .423 to .000. Peterson keyed a mammoth run in the second set to lead the Blue and White to a 25-13 victory. After finding themselves down 11-4 in the early goings, UALR slowly began inching back into the match, cutting the deficit to four at 16-12. However, Peterson would hold serve for seven consecutive points, putting the threat to bed. Middle Tennessee's block also came alive in the set, helping the Blue Raiders out-hit the Trojans .400 to -.188. Both Szivos and Oladinni had three block assists in the set, and Cheatham and Adams each recorded two. The third set looked like it would be more of the same early as Middle Tennessee ran out to an early 6-1 lead, but UALR trudged back, cutting it to within one on four separate occasions, including at 22-21. An attack error and an Adams kill set up match point, and the Blue Raiders closed the door emphatically as Adams, Peterson and Oladinni combined for the match-deciding block. Middle Tennessee posted 17 kills in the frame, and received three or more from five different players. Peterson dished out 14 helpers. The win ended a seven-match losing skid for the Blue Raiders, improving the team's overall record to 3-9, including 1-1 in Sun Belt play. Middle Tennessee will now prepare for a three-match road swing that features trips to Florida Atlantic, FIU and Western Kentucky.

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