

Szivos shines in Blue Raider victory

Senior tallies nine kills and four service aces in win at FAU

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BOCA RATON, Fla. - Led by a standout performance from Sun Belt Preseason Player of the Year Maria Szivos, the Middle Tennessee volleyball team picked up its first road victory of the year on Friday with a 3-0 (25-20, 25-14, 25-14) decision over Florida Atlantic at FAU Arena in Boca Raton, Fla. Szivos hit .444 in the match to go along with a team-high nine kills and four service aces. "Maria scored a lot of points for us tonight," head coach Matt Peck said. "Her serve was on, she moved the ball around offensively, and she did a good job blocking. She didn't put up the big attack numbers, but she had a great night for us."



Oyinlola Oladinni was second on the team with eight kills at a .583 rate, and both Ashley Adams and Alyssa Wistrick added seven. As a team, Middle Tennessee (4-9, 2-1 SBC) out-hit the Owls, .350 to .116 and tallied 38 kills to FAU's 29. The Blue Raiders were especially potent in the service game. In addition to Szivos four aces, Lindsey Purvis set a career high with three. Morgan Peterson, Kendall Howard and Brynne Henderson tallied one apiece, and the Blue Raiders posted 10 collectively, a season high. Defensively, the Blue and White were led by Kendall Howard's match-high 12 digs, and Purvis was second on the team with six. Lindsay Cheatham held down the defense at the net with five blocks, and both Szivos and Oladinni chipped in two. The Blue Raiders out-hit FAU .379 to .273 to come from behind and take home the opening set, 25-20. Middle Tennessee opened with the first point of the match, but the Owls responded with the ensuing three, and held on to a slim margin until the Blue Raiders tied it up at 13-13 on a Florida Atlantic ball handling error. The two teams would tie four more times before MT took the lead for good at 18-17 on a Szivos kill. Another Szivos kill moments later extended the lead out to 20-17, and the Blue Raiders wouldn't look back. The second set was tight in the early goings as well, but a mammoth 11-point run turned what was an 11-7 FAU lead into an 18-11 deficit. Szivos tallied three service aces on the run, helping Middle Tennessee to an impressive 25-14 win. "It was a huge run for us," Peck said. "We've had some nice runs this season that we've followed up with some unforced errors. Honestly, we've had some trouble holding onto leads this season, and being able stretch out a lead is a good sign for us going forward." Similar

to the first two sets, Florida Atlantic kept it close for a while, but once again, the Blue Raiders put together a strong run en route to another 25-14 victory. With the score tight at 15-13, Brynne Henderson followed up a Szivos kill by holding serve for six straight points to put it out of reach. Brandi Waller capped the decisive run by bookending a block with a pair of kills. Both Middle Tennessee and FAU tallied 12 kills in the third set, but the Blue Raiders only had one attack error in the frame, outhitting the Owls .423 to .029. Both Szivos and Adams had four kills and combined to hit .500. The Blue Raiders will continue their Florida road swing on Sunday when Middle Tennessee takes on FIU in Miami on Sunday. First serve is set for 11 a.m.

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