Blue Raiders battle on opening day in pair of tournaments

Trio of freshmen win opening-round matches

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ATLANTA, Ga./TULSA, Okla. – Middle Tennessee men's tennis opened action at the Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) All-American Championships and Georgia Tech Fall Invitational on Saturday. A trio of freshmen stepped up for the Blue Raiders, each winning in their opening match of the day. Freshman Ettore Zito defeated Liberty's Shea Thomas, 6-4, 6-2, in his first prequalifying match at the ITA championships held at Tulsa's Case Tennis Center. Zito fell in his second match to Bradley's Juan Diego Cuadrado, 6-1, 6-3. Zito will now await the qualifying doubles match with partner Ben Davis, slated for Tuesday. Prior to Tuesday's doubles match, Davis will play in a qualifying singles match on Monday. Senior Matt Langley also fell in singles action at the ITA championships, dropping 6-2 and 6-1 sets to Texas A&M's Jeremy Efferding. At the Georgia Tech Fall Invitational, freshmen Forrest Edwards, Marlon Brand and Cameron Dickerson each advanced to the Round of 16 in their respective main draw. Edwards battled Furman's Alex Christ to the third set before capturing the 7-5, 1-6, 6-1 victory. He dropped his second match to Alabama's Daniil Proskura, 6-3, 6-2. Brand advanced to the Round of 16 after his opponent withdrew before dropping a 6-4, 6-3 decision to Georgia's Eric Diaz. Brand will face Chris Cooprider (UNC Wilmington) in the consolation draw on Sunday at 11:30 a.m. CT. Dickerson won in straight sets (6-1, 6-4) over Matt Kealy (UNCW), then fell to Georgia's Will Reynolds, 6-2, 6-3.

Sophomore Dimitri Pippos rounded out Saturday's singles action with a 6-4, 6-3 loss to Furman's Joel Cook. Pippos will face Zach Hublitz (UNCW) on Sunday at 8:30 a.m. in the consolation draw. In doubles action, Brand/Edwards fell to Christ/Cook, 8-5, and Dickerson/Pippos lost to Peter Nagovnak/Colton Norton (Tennessee), 8-2. Both tandems will play on Sunday in the consolation draw. **2011 ITA ALL-AMERICAN CHAMPIONSHIPS (PREQUALIFYING)**

Ettore Zito def. Shea Thomas (Liberty) 6-4, 6-2

Juan Diego Cuadrado (Bradley) def. Ettore Zito, 6-1, 6-3

Jeremy Efferding (Texas A&M) def. Matt Langley 6-2, 6-1 **GEORGIA TECH FALL INVITATIONAL**

Forrest Edwards def. Alex Christ (Furman) 7-5, 1-6, 6-1

Daniil Proskura (Alabama) def. Forrest Edwards 6-3, 6-2

Marlon Brand def. Vikram Hundal (GT) WD

Eric Diaz (UGA) def. Marlon Brand 6-4, 6-3

Cameron Dickerson def. Matt Kealy (UNCW) 6-1, 6-4

Will Reynolds (UGA) def. Cameron Dickerson 6-2, 6-3

Joel Cook (Furman) def. Dimitri Pippos 6-4, 6-3

Alex Christ/Joel Cook (Furman) def. Marlon Brand/Forrest Edwards 8-5

Peter Nagovnak/Colton Norton (Tennessee) def. Cameron Dickerson/Dimitri Pippos 8-2

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