Middle Tennessee notches fifth straight win

Adams posts 12 kills in sweep of South Alabama

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Fueled by 12 kills from Ashley Adams, the Middle Tennessee volleyball team picked up its fifth consecutive victory on Friday night with a 3-0 (25-20, 25-19, 25-21) decision over South Alabama at Alumni Memorial Gym. "I kind of expected it to be a closer match today after the big win at Western Kentucky earlier this week," head coach Matt Peck said. "We didn't play as well as we would've liked, but Ashley was solid and she really turned it on for us in game three. She had some big kills there right at the end." Adams led the match in kills and hit at a .364 rate as the Blue Raiders (7-9, 5-1 Sun Belt) out-hit the Jaguars .280 to .140. Maria Szivos was second on the team with eight kills to go along with seven digs. The trio of Lindsay Cheatham, Brandi Waller and Oyinlola Oladinni combined for 19 kills to just one attack error, hitting at a .500 clip. Defensively, Kendall Howard led the team in digs with 13, and Brynne Henderson totaled five to move within seven of becoming just the ninth member of the Middle Tennessee 1,000 Dig Club. At the net, both Adams and Oladinni posted three blocks, and Morgan Peterson chipped in two. Led by four kills apiece from Adams and Szivos, Middle Tennessee out-hit South Alabama .281 to .079 to take home the first set in 25-20 fashion. The Jaguars came out of the gates strong, running up an early 7-2 lead, but Alyssa Wistrick kick-started a 6-1 run with a kill to tie it up at 8-8. The two sides would tie four more times, including at 14-14, but a pair of attack errors and a Szivos kill gave MT a three-point edge that would not be relinquished down the stretch. Middle Tennessee took advantage of another mid-set run to take

home the second frame, 25-19. The Blue Raiders came back from an early deficit to tie things up at 13-13 and force a Jaguar timeout. After USA regained the lead a point later, Waller spearheaded a five point Middle Tennessee run to grab the 18-14 lead. The junior, who came off the bench earlier in the set, posted four kills in the run, and Middle Tennessee didn't look back. "Brandi came in and really energized the team," Peck said. "She connected well and she made some big plays for us. Sometimes you need to bring someone off the bench cold to come in and ignite the team, and Brandi did a great job with that." Ashley Adams caught fire in the third set with five kills and a solo block, leading Middle Tennessee to the 25-21 victory. Waller once again played a vital role in establishing some breathing room, posting a pair of kills over a 4-1 run to turn an 8-8 tie into a 12-9 advantage. Cheatham and Adams combined for seven kills from there on out, handing Middle Tennessee their fourth 3-0 victory in five matches. The Blue Raiders will look to keep it rolling tomorrow with a match against Troy. The Trojans are entering with a 12-7 record, and first serve at Alumni Memorial Gym is set for 7 p.m.

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