Blue Raiders win 15th straight match with a five-set thriller at Troy

Szivos tallies 19 kills and 12 digs in victory

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TROY, Ala. - It certainly wasn't easy on Friday night at Sartain Hall as the Middle Tennessee volleyball team came from behind twice to beat Troy 3-2 for a school record 15th consecutive victory. "Troy played us tough at our place earlier this season, and they really challenged us tonight," head coach Matt Peck said. "In the games we won, we played well, and it's nice to see us come back and win in five. Troy is trying to secure a spot in the conference tournament, and these are the type of matches that can give you trouble." Maria Szivos had a career match for the Blue Raiders both offensively and defensively, posting a career-high 19 kills, 12 digs and a pair of blocks to go along with a .389 attack percentage. "We gave Maria a lot of chances tonight, and she absolutely delivered," Peck said. "She played great on the back row, she served tough, and she just had a great match for us." Ashley Adams was second on the team with 16 kills and tied for the match-high in blocks with six. Oyinlola Oladinni picked up six as well to go along with eight kills of her own. Both Monét Marshall and Morgan Peterson were also effective at the net, posting four blocks as the Blue and White out-blocked the Trojans 13.0 to 7.0. Brynne Henderson anchored the defense with 14 digs, and Halie Vannoy was third on the team with 10. After falling 25-16 in the opening set, the Blue Raiders turned to Szivos in the second set, and the senior responded with seven kills on just nine attempts to help the Blue Raiders out-hit the Trojans .481 to .031 and win in 25-12 fashion. After finding themselves down 4-6 in the early goings, Szivos

posted a pair of kills and a block over the course of a six-point run to hand the Blue and White the 10-6 advantage. Troy pulled with two at 10-8, and Szivos responded once more with three kills over a 3-1 spurt to end the threat for good, sending the match into the break even at 1-1. Troy came out of the break hot, retaking the match lead with a 25-17 third set victory. Szivos was key again in the fourth set with six kills and Adams added another four as Middle Tennessee out-hit Troy .371 to .056 for a wire-to-wire 25-16 win. The Blue Raiders had it going early, running off the frame's first four points, ultimately edging the lead out to six at 16-10. However, Troy wouldn't go away and posted three straight points to pull within three. Alyssa Wistrick helped slam the door on the rally with a kill and Szivos extended the advantage moments later, and MT did not look back. Middle Tennessee never trailed in the deciding set, but it wasn't without drama as Adams came up huge late to ward off a Troy challenge, helping the Blue Raiders to a 15-10 victory. Oladinni and Szivos tallied four kills over the opening eight points as Middle Tennessee swapped sides with an 8-5 lead. As was the case much of the evening, Troy mounted a response, evening it back up at 9-9. Adams gave the lead back to the Blue and White forcefully with a kill and a block. After Troy pulled back within one, Adams kick-started a four-point run to secure the 3-2 win. "Ashley really didn't have the start she would have liked, but she played a great match," Peck said. "I told Ashley when she went in, 'Win us this match right here.' She really came up big for us tonight." Middle Tennessee (17-9, 13-1 Sun Belt) will now prepare to close out the regular season with a trip to South Alabama on Sunday and a home match vs. arch-rival Western Kentucky next week.

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