

# Middle Tennessee advances to Sun Belt Championship match after 3-0 win over North Texas

## Blue Raiders will be playing in their sixth title match since 2005

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**MIAMI** - It will be familiar territory for the Middle Tennessee volleyball team on Saturday as the Blue Raiders will once again be playing for a Sun Belt Tournament Championship after defeating North Texas 3-0 (25-16, 25-13, 25-20) in the semifinals on Friday evening at U.S. Century Bank Arena in Miami. Maria Szivos led the way for the Blue and White, hitting at a .462 rate with a match-high 15 kills, eight digs and a pair of service aces. Oyinlola Oladinni was also a force to be reckoned with, posting 11 kills on just 14 attempts. Both Alyssa Wistrick



and Lindsay Cheatham were remarkably efficient as well as each hit .500 on the way to eight and six kills, respectively. As a team the Blue and White out-hit the Mean Green .443 to .158 and recorded 48 kills to NT's 33. Morgan Peterson was charged with directing the offense, dishing out 36 assists and picking up 10 digs for her third double-double of the season. Lindsay Cheatham and Peterson led the defense at the net with five blocks apiece, and the Blue Raiders out-blocked North Texas 9.5 to 0.0. Oladinni and Szivos combined for 10 kills on just 12 swings in the first set as the Blue Raiders out-hit North Texas .500 to .200 to win the opening frame 25-16. Cheatham got things going early with a pair of blocks and a kill to help MT to a 5-0 start in the frame. Szivos took over with three kills over a 4-0 spurt to push the margin to nine at 12-3, and Middle Tennessee would never look back. It was more of the same in the second set as Middle Tennessee hit .517 and cruised to a 25-13 victory. Oladinni and Szivos were once again the primary sources of offense as each posted five kills, hitting .571 and .625, respectively. The Blue Raiders never trailed in the third frame, but they had to weather a late Mean Green rally to win 25-20. Adams hammered down a pair of kills over the course of a 5-1 run to start the set, and added two more in a run later in the frame to give MT a 17-9 advantage. The Mean Green methodically worked their way back into the match, pulling within four

at 21-17, but an attack error and kills from Wistrick and Oladinni set up match point. Adams slammed it shut moments later, sending the Blue Raiders to the title match for the third straight season. Adams finished the match with seven kills. Middle Tennessee, who will be making their sixth appearance in the title match since 2005, will be taking on the winner of Western Kentucky and FIU. The Blue Raiders are 4-1 in the match over that time span, last falling in five sets to the Hilltoppers in 2005. First serve Saturday's Sun Belt Championship match is set for noon, and it will be broadcast live at ESPN3.com.

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