Volleyball set to close out regular season against VCU

Blue Raiders hoping for inclusion in the NCAA Tournament

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - With Selection Sunday looming for the Middle Tennessee volleyball team, the Blue Raiders will have one last chance to show off their resumé for the NCAA selection committee, taking on VCU at Alumni Memorial Gym on Saturday. "We scheduled these games for precisely this purpose," head coach Matt Peck said. "If we don't win the conference tournament, and even when we do win in the tournament, this gives us a chance for challenge before we get into NCAA play. VCU is a pretty good team, and they came really close to winning their conference tournament last week. I'm expecting a good match." The match marks the final of regular season for the Blue Raiders (20-11), and a win could go long way in helping Middle Tennessee secure a sixth straight trip to the NCAA Tournament. The Blue Raiders are entering the weekend firmly on the bubble with an RPI of 48, but having won 18 of their last 20 matches and with three wins against opponents in the top 40, MT is in a solid position for an at-large bid, which would be just the second in school history. But before they can make the NCAA's 64-team field, the Blue Raiders have to get past VCU first. The Rams are coming off a dramatic trip to the Colonial Athletic Association championship match, knocking off both the second and third seeds in 3-2 fashion before falling to the top team in five sets. VCU is entering the match with a 17-16 record. Saturday marks just the third-ever meeting between the Rams and the Blue Raiders. The Blue and White are 2-0 in the meetings, including a three-set sweep in Denver last season. The duo of Ashley Adams and Maria Szivos were especially effective in last season's meeting, combining for 22 kills and three blocks. This weekend also marks what could be the final match for seniors Lindsay Cheatham, Brynne Henderson, Oyinlola Oladinni, Maria Szivos and Alyssa Wistrick. The quintet has helped the Blue Raiders to four conference tournament titles and four NCAA Tournament berths since 2007. First serve on Saturday against VCU is set for 1 p.m.

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