Volleyball ready for NCAA Tournament battle with Ohio State

Match will be broadcast for free at UTLadyVols.com

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KNOXVILLE, Tenn. - After earning the school's second-ever at-large bid to the NCAA Tournament on Sunday evening, the Middle Tennessee volleyball team will look to keep the good fortune rolling on Thursday with a match against Big Ten foe Ohio State in the NCAA Tournament First Round. "When we get to the tournament, it doesn't usually matter who our draw is, we're just anxious to get going," head coach Matt Peck said. "But we're always excited to go up against a Big Ten school, and especially a storied program like Ohio State. I know the coach well, and I think it will be an interesting match-up for us." Middle Tennessee is entering Thursday with a 21-11 mark in conference play, having won 19 of the past 21 matches. The Blue Raiders are looking to rebound from opening round exits in the tournament in each of the previous two seasons. Overall, Middle Tennessee is 4-5 in NCAA play under the direction of Peck, and this season marks the second match-up with the Buckeyes over that span. The Blue and White grabbed the opening set from 18th-ranked OSU in 2006 prior to falling in four-set fashion. Ohio State is 19-14 this year, finishing with a 9-11 mark in Big Ten play. With a win, the Blue Raiders would take on either 14th-seeded Tennessee or Duke on Friday. This year marks the first time that Middle Tennessee has been able to stay in the state of Tennessee for NCAA play, a change that Peck definitely welcomes. "I was happy to hear we wouldn't have to go up north this year," Peck said. "This is a little bit more familiar territory for us, and it's going to be nice to have our fans and band here tomorrow. I think that will be huge for us, and I'm looking forward to it." Middle Tennessee is playing in Knoxville for the first time since 2002, which saw the Blue Raiders fall in five-set fashion to the Volunteers in a regular season match-up. Thursday's match will be available for streaming online here, and tickets may be purchased through the Tennessee ticket office at 1-800-332-VOLS. First serve is set for 3:30 p.m. Central.

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