Blue Raiders fall to Ohio State in NCAA Tournament

Cheatham tallies 11 kills and five blocks in loss

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KNOXVILLE, Tenn. - Despite one of Lindsay Cheatham's best performances of the season, the Middle Tennessee volleyball team fell in 3-1 (23-25, 27-25, 21-25, 18-25) fashion on Thursday evening to Ohio State at Thompson-Boling Arena on the campus of the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. "I thought we played great in games one through three, but it just kind of fell apart in the fourth," head coach Matt Peck said. "I thought we challenged them well and we really could have won the first set. Three of our seniors had an outstanding match, especially Lindsay Cheatham. She's been injured all year, but she really put it out there tonight. I'm very proud of her." "It's the last game of my career, so it's kind of tough," Cheatham said. "I really pushed myself to try to get back this year, and I really tried to do all I could tonight. Cheatham finished the match with 11 kills to just one error, hitting at a match-best .526 rate to go along with five block assists. Maria Szivos was also effective on offense, posting 11 kills as well and collecting 10 digs and four blocks on defense. Morgan Peterson tallied a double-double as well with 33 assists and a team-best 14 digs. Oyinlola Oladinni was third on the team in kills with eight, and the La Vergne native became just the 12th player in school history to surpass the 1,000 career kill mark late in the second set. Brandi Waller came off the bench to add seven kills. Ohio State was led by Mari Hole, who posted a match-high 18 kills and 14 digs. Emily Danks hit at .333 clip for 16 kills, and Mariah Booth chipped in 10. Amanda Peterson posted a match-high 52 assists. The opening set featured 11 lead changes and 15 ties, but a late OSU run proved to be too much for Middle

Tennessee as the Buckeyes won 25-23. A Szivos kill and an attack error by OSU's Kellie Barhorst put the Blue Raiders up 23-22 late to force an Ohio State timeout, but the Buckeyes came out strong, ringing up the final three points to grab the 1-0 match lead. Middle Tennessee weathered a fierce comeback attempt by Ohio State in the second frame to take home a 27-25 victory. Led by five kills from Oladinni in the set, the Blue Raiders raced out to a seemingly comfortable 20-14 lead, but a number of errors added up as the Buckeyes ran off five straight points to cut the deficit to one at 20-19. The lead once again seemed safe after MT established some breathing room on a pair of kills by Ashley Adams and Cheatham to go up 23-20. A service error gave MT set point, at 24-22, but a block error and an attack error evened it up again. After trading points, Oladinni slammed the door shut with two more kills. The Blue Raiders were out-hit .265 to .107 after the break as the Buckeyes took home a tight third frame 25-21 before picking up a 25-18 win in the fourth. Middle Tennessee ends the season with a 21-12 record.

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