Women’s tennis wins home-opening thriller

MT downs Chattanooga 4-3

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. – The Blue Raider women’s tennis team defeated Chattanooga 4-3 in a terrific match on a windy but otherwise beautiful Thursday afternoon at the Buck Bouldin Tennis Center. The wind played havoc on the players all afternoon, leading to numerous double faults and a high number of unforced errors. Despite the conditions, though, both squads managed to thrill fans with some impressive play. Chattanooga took control early in the doubles competition as the senior combo of Emily Hangstefer and Brianna Wishing got out to an early lead on Middle Tennessee’s Taylor Coffey and Alex Dachos and went on to an 8-3 victory on the No. 3 court. On Court 2, Chattanooga’s Jenna Nurik and Shaina Singh defeated the Blue Raider duo of Nayara Moraes and Flavia Nagayama to clinch the doubles point for the Lady Mocs. The Blue Raider No. 1 team of Marietta Bigus and Lexi Brand met Kaylene Chadwell and Alexa Flynn on Court 1. After both sides traded games early in the match, the Chattanooga (4-1) twosome took control en route to an 8-4 win and a doubles

sweep for Chattanooga. In singles play, it appeared the Lady Mocs would cruise to victory as they won four of six opening sets. However, the Blue Raiders fought back to take the second sets of all four of those matches. The Lady Mocs, however, still were able to take the first completed match. After winning the first set 6-2, Middle Tennessee's Yuiri Nomoto was unable to carry her momentum through the next two sets as she was knocked off by Nurik 2-6, 6-4, 6-1. The Blue Raiders picked up their first point of the overall match on Court 5 as Bigus took down Singh 7-6, 7-5 to cut the Lady Moc lead to 2-1. Brand continued the momentum swing as she responded from losing the first set to Chattanooga's Flynn 5-7 by battling back to take the next two sets and consequently the match 5-7, 7-5, 6-4. Moraes provided Middle Tennessee (5-3) with another comeback victory on Court 4. Managing to win just a single game in the first set, the freshman scrapped back to capture the match 1-6, 6-3, 6-4 and give the Blue Raiders a 3-2 lead in the overall match. As darkness began to set in, the remaining two matches were moved to lit courts. Losing the first set 5-7, the Blue Raider Coffey evened her match with Claire Mulyadi by winning the second 6-3. Tied at 4-4 in the third, the Lady Moc freshman managed to take the final two points and claim the match 7-5, 3-6, 6-4 and square the overall team competition at 3-3. In what would end up being the deciding match, Chattanooga's Chadwell won the first set against Nagayama 6-4. The Blue Raider sophomore responded, though, to even the match with a 6-4 second-set victory. With tensions high, the third set evened at 4-4 before Nagayama held serve to take a 5-4 lead. She then built a 40-15 advantage in the final game and then induced Chadwell to hit a return into the net, giving the match to Nagayama 4-6, 6-4, 6-4 and the overall team victory to Middle Tennessee 4-3. "This was simply a great college tennis match," said Middle Tennessee head coach Shelley Godwin. "I am really proud of how we battled back after losing the doubles point. We kept fighting and never gave in and were eventually able to come up with a really big win." Middle Tennessee will look to stretch their winning streak to three when they head to Nashville to face No. 18 Vanderbilt on Sunday at 4 p.m. CT.

Middle Tennessee 4, Chattanooga 3

Singles competition

1. Jenna Nurik (Chattanooga) def. Yuiri Nomoto (Middle Tennessee) 2-6, 6-4, 6-1

2. Lexi Brand (Middle Tennessee) def. Alexa Flynn (Chattanooga) 5-7, 7-5, 6-4

3. Flavia Nagayama (Middle Tennessee) def. Kaylene Chadwell (Chattanooga) 4-6, 6-4, 6-4

4. Nayara Moraes (Middle Tennessee) def. Emily Hangstefer (Chattanooga) 1-6, 6-3, 6-4

5. Marietta Bigus (Middle Tennessee) def. Shaina Singh (Chattanooga) 7-6, 7-5

6. Claire Mulyadi (Chattanooga) def. Taylor Coffey (Middle Tennessee) 7-5, 3-6, 6-4

Doubles competition

1. Kaylene Chadwell/Alexa Flynn (Chattanooga) def. Marietta Bigus/Lexi Brand (Middle Tennessee) 8-4

2. Jenna Nurik/Shaina Singh (Chattanooga) def. Nayara Moraes/Flavia Nagayama (Middle Tennessee) 8-4

3. Emily Hangstefer/Brianna Wishing (Chattanooga) def. Taylor Coffey/Alex Dachos (Middle Tennessee) 8-3

Match Notes:

Chattanooga: 4-1

Middle Tennessee: 5-3

Order of finish: Doubles (3,2,1); Singles (1,5,2,4,6,3)

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