Middle Tennessee rallies to knock off Northern Iowa

Blue Raiders have won three-straight matches

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. – Despite dropping the doubles point, Middle Tennessee women's tennis mounted five singles wins Tuesday afternoon to pull out a 5-2 come-from-behind victory over visiting Northern Iowa at the on-campus Buck Bouldin Tennis Center. "What an unbelievable effort by our girls to pull out this match," head coach Shelley Godwin said. "We showed great poise, determination and focus in singles to get the win. We knew Northern Iowa would be a tough opponent and to be able to come out on top is a testament to the hard work we have been putting in lately." The Panthers started the day by sweeping all three doubles matches. The Blue Raiders put up a solid effort in all three contests, including falling just 8-7 in the No. 2 meeting between senior Marietta Bigus and junior Yuiri Nomoto against UNI's Jessica Kunzelmann and Nina Pfahler. Middle Tennessee responded with five first-set singles triumphs on its way to the match victory in the first-ever match against Northern Iowa (10-5). Sophomore Flavia Nagayama started the comeback with her 6-3, 6-2 decision over Kunzelmann at the No. 3 slot and then Bigus continued the momentum with a 6-2, 7-5 win over Krissy Lankelma to knot the overall score at 2-2. Nomoto gave the Blue Raiders a 3-2 edge with her 6-2, 7-5 victory against Pfahler during the No. 1 meeting. Freshman Nayara Moraes clinched the match for Middle Tennessee (8-4), although she was stretched to a tiebreaker in both of her sets against Chelsea Moore. Moraes handed her opponent a

7-6, 7-5 setback to extend the Blue Raiders' current win streak to three. Lexi Brand put the finishing touches on the contest with a three-set, back-and-forth, affair with Cassandra Dix at the No. 2 position. Brand and Dix traded set victories before the MT junior pulled away in the third for a 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 triumph. The match was the second of four straight at home for Middle Tennessee. The Blue Raiders return to action at 2 p.m. next Tuesday, March 20, when they play host to Austin Peay.

Middle Tennessee 5, Northern Iowa 2

Singles

No. 1 Yuiri Nomoto (MT) def. Nina Pfahler (UNI) 6-2, 7-5
No. 2 Lexi Brand (MT) def. Cassandra Dix (UNI) 6-3, 3-6, 6-3
No. 3 Flavia Nagayama (MT) def. Jessica Kunzelmann (UNI) 6-3, 6-2
No. 4 Nayara Moraes (MT) def. Chelsea Moore (UNI) 7-6, 7-5
No. 5 Marietta Bigus (MT) def. Krissy Lankelma (UNI) 6-2, 7-5
No. 6 Stefania Sampaio (UNI) def. Taylor Coffey (MT) 6-2, 6-0

Doubles

No. 1 Dix/Lankelma (UNI) def. Brand/Moraes (MT) 8-2
No. 2 Kunzelmann/Phahler (UNI) def. Bigus/Nomoto (MT) 8-7
No. 3 Moore/Sampaio (UNI) def. Alex Dachos/Nagayama (MT) 8-5

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