Volleyball drops five-set match at VCU

Tyler Richardson puts down career-high 11 blocks

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RICHMOND, Va. - The Middle Tennessee volleyball team lost a five-set heartbreaker at VCU Monday afternoon 3-2 (25-18, 21-25, 25-21, 21-25, 10-15) at Verizon Wireless Arena at the Siegel Center.

Senior outside hitter Ashley Adams led the Blue Raiders with 20 kills, hitting .400 for the match. Chelsea Ross added 19 kills. Redshirt-Freshman middle blocker was in on a career-high 11 blocks, becoming the first Middle Tennessee player since Janay Yancey in 2009 to be in on at least 10 blocks in a single match.

Middle Tennessee (3-5) opened the match on a 5-0 run, capped off by back-to-back blocks by Tyler Richardson and Katie Bange. After a Jasmine Waters kill got VCU (6-1) on the board, a Richardson kill started a 4-0 Blue Raiders run that put them ahead 9-1 and forced a Rams timeout. Middle Tennessee led by as much as 10 in the first set when a Bange kill and a block by Adams and Richardson made the score 16-6. VCU used a 5-1 run late in the set to get within six at 23-17 but Adams put down kills on consecutive points to give the Blue Raiders the set 25-17. Middle Tennessee hit .321 in the opening frame with five blocks, holding the Rams to .029.

The two teams traded points and the lead early in the second set with VCU taking a 9-7 lead on a Kristin Boyd kill. The Rams grew the lead to four at 16-12 following a pair of Blue Raiders errors. A VCU error then sparked a 3-0 Middle Tennessee run as an Adams kill made the score 16-15. The Blue Raiders tied the set 20-20 on a Ross kill, but Romana Kriskova put VCU up 21-20 with her fourth kill of the set. With the set tied 21-21, VCU won the last four points to even the match 1-1. The Rams hit .343 in the second set to Middle Tennessee's .250.

The Blue Raiders got off to a slow start in the third, falling behind 6-2. Adams and Shade then put down consecutive kills to make the score 6-4. VCU led 12-7 when Middle Tennessee ran off four straight points, capped off by a Ross ace, to get within one at 12-11. The Blue Raiders tied the set 13-13 on a Ross kill and took a 14-13 lead on an Adams kill. The lead grew to two as Richardson and Shade blocked a Boyd attack to put the score at 16-14. VCU came back and tied the set 17-17 on kills by Boyd and Anett Farkas. The Rams led 21-20 when a Ross' sixth kill of the set tied it at 21-21. VCU then committed errors on each of the next four points, giving the Blue Raiders a 25-21 win

in the third set and a 2-1 advantage in the match.

Middle Tennessee trailed early in the fourth set 5-2, but an Adams kill sparked a 5-0 Blue Raiders run that made the score 7-5. The Blue Raiders led 11-8 when a Martina Samadan kill started a four-point VCU run and put the Rams up 12-11. The two teams then traded points up to a 17-17 tie. The Rams then got a block from Jasmine Waters and Cecilia Aragao to start a three-point VCU run to give them a 20-17 lead. Middle Tennessee got within two at 22-20 on a Brandi Waller kill, but VCU took three of the last four points to even the match 2-2 with a 25-21 win in the fourth set.

VCU used the momentum from winning the fourth set to take the first seven points of the fifth set. Middle Tennessee got on the board with a Waller kill, making the score 7-1. The Blue Raiders then won the next two points to get to 7-3. With the score 10-5, Middle Tennessee went on a 3-0 run capped off by a Shade kill to make the score 10-8. Waters then got a kill for VCU to start a four point Rams run to give VCU match point at 14-8. The Blue Raiders fought off two match points with kills by Ross, but VCU took the set 15-10 and the match 3-2.

VCU hit .277 for the match and was over .400 in the last two sets. Middle Tennessee hit .246 for the match and had a 47-42 advantage in digs and a 11-9 advantage in blocks. Boyd and Farkas each had 15 kills to lead the Rams offense with Aragao dishing out 48 assists.

MT is back in action on Friday, Sept. 7 when it takes on Western Michigan in the Carolina Volleyball Classic hosted by North Carolina. First serve is at 3 p.m. The Blue Raiders will also take on LSU and the host Tar Heels that weekend.

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