

Volleyball wins at Louisiana 3-1

Blue Raiders snap losing streak with 36-34 win in fourth set

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LAFAYETTE, La. - The Middle Tennessee volleyball team snapped its losing streak Saturday with a 3-1 (25-18, 15-25, 26-24, 36-34) win over the Louisiana Ragin' Cajuns at Earl K. Long Gym. Freshman outside hitter Chelsea Ross led all players with 19 kills and 16 digs.

Senior Brandi Waller had a career-high 17 kills. Freshman setter Shelby Anderton had her first career double-double of 50 assists and 10 digs.

Tyler Richardson hit .615 with nine kills and had a match-high eight blocks.



Middle Tennessee (4-14, 1-2 Sun Belt) jumped out to an 8-3 lead in the opening set on three Waller kills and a block by Ross and Rachel Shaughnessy. The Blue Raiders grew the lead to six at 12-6 on a Katie Bange kill. Middle Tennessee hit a blistering .654 in the first set, winning 25-18 on a Ross kill. The Blue Raiders had 19 kills on 26 attempts with two errors in the first set. Waller had six kills on six attempts as Shaughnessy and Richardson each had three kills on four attempts.

Louisiana (9-10, 1-2) started the second set on a 7-3 run capped off by a Taylor Meade service ace. Just like the Blue Raiders did the set prior, the Ragin' Cajuns just kept pulling away. Louisiana's lead grew to eight at 14-6 on a block by Mandi Gavin and Tonice White. Trailing 19-12, Middle Tennessee went on a three-point run capped off by a Bange kill to get within four, 19-15. That was as close as the Blue Raiders got to Louisiana in the set. The Ragin' Cajuns won the last six points to win the set 25-15.

The Blue Raiders controlled the early part of the third set, taking a 7-4 lead on a Ross kill. Louisiana got within two at 9-7, but back-to-back Ross kills put Middle Tennessee up 12-7. The Ragin' Cajuns battle back and got within one at 13-12 on a kill by Kelly Wiesmann. After a Richardson kill made the score 15-13, Louisiana used a Blair Claypoole kill and a Gavin ace to take a 16-15 lead. The Ragin' Cajuns led 20-16 when a Richardson kill and Bri McCombs service ace got the Blue Raiders within two, 20-18. Middle Tennessee tied the set at 23-23 on a Louisiana error, then took a 24-23 lead on a block by Bange and Richardson. The Ragin' Cajuns fought off a set point to tie at 24-24, but the Blue Raiders won the set 26-24 on kills by Richardson and Waller.

The fourth set was close the whole way, with no team having a lead of more than three points. With the set tied 9-9, Middle Tennessee went on a three-point run highlighted by a block by Bange and Richardson to take a 12-9 lead. Louisiana battled back to tie the set 13-13 on a Claypoole kill. The lead would change hands twice before a Ragin' Cajuns service error and Shaughnessy kill gave the Blue Raiders an 18-16 edge. Louisiana then evened the set 18-18 on kills by White and Gavin. The two sides traded points up to 21-21. Consecutive kills by Waller put Middle Tennessee ahead 23-21. Wiesmann came back with a Ragin' Cajuns kill, starting a three-point run that gave Louisiana set point at 24-23. Middle Tennessee fought it off with a Waller kill, then fought off two more set points to tie the set 26-26.

The Blue Raiders had their first match point opportunity at 27-26 after a Ross kill, but Louisiana tied the set 27-27. The Ragin' Cajuns attempted to stay in the match with a set points at 29-28 but a Bange kill tied the set 29-29. Middle Tennessee had another match point at 30-29 after a block by Bange and Richardson, but an error tied the set 30-30. In a set that had 23 ties and 10 lead changes, the Blue Raiders earned the last lead change when a Louisiana error put Middle Tennessee ahead 35-34. Ross served match point and the Blue Raiders defense forced a Ragin' Cajuns error, giving Middle Tennessee the set 36-34 and the match 3-1.

Middle Tennessee hit .285 for the match and held Louisiana to a .184 mark. The Blue Raiders also had a 59-46 advantage in digs and an 11-7 edge in blocks. The win is the Blue Raiders' seventh in a row over the Ragin' Cajuns. White and Lavinia Tataran each had 13 kills to lead Louisiana.

The Blue Raiders return to Alumni Memorial Gym on Tuesday, Oct. 2 for a 7 p.m. match against #23 WKU. The match is a "pink-out" for breast cancer awareness.

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