

# MT defeats Notre Dame, falls to UNC in Saturday twinbill

## Ross and Howard named to Blue Raider Bash all-tournament team

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### MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

The Middle Tennessee volleyball team split a twinbill against a pair of ACC foes on Saturday at Alumni Memorial Gym, defeating Notre Dame, 3-1, before falling to North Carolina, in the nightcap. The Blue Raiders' record through the first weekend of play stands at 2-1.

"We're a really young team, so I thought we came out and played a really great match against Notre Dame," said head volleyball coach Matt Peck. "It wasn't as dynamic as the San Francisco match as far as offense goes, but we did

other things better. We passed better. We served tougher. Our block was working a lot better. I was very pleased with that performance. Chelsea Ross had a great match. Rachel Shaughnessy's blocking was outstanding."

MT opened the second day of action at the Blue Raider Bash by hosting the Irish, who received votes in the most recent AVCA coaches' poll. The Raiders dropped the first set, 25-23, despite outhitting Notre Dame .250-.121 in the opening stanza.

Similar to their season-opening win vs. San Francisco on Friday, the Raiders bounced back from a first set loss with a strong second set. MT set the tone wire-to-wire, opening up a 6-1 lead before an Irish timeout. Notre Dame would inch closer at 15-11, but a 6-0 run by the Raiders opened the lead up to 21-11. The final two points of the set for the Raiders would come on Notre Dame service errors, as MT's 25-17 win in the second set would send the teams to the 10-minute intermission knotted at one.

The third set would be separated by no more than one point up until a pair of timely blocks by



sophomore Rachel Shaughnessy. With MT leading 9-8, Shaughnessy teamed with sophomore Chelsea Ross and redshirt-junior Monet Marshall on consecutive plays to extend the lead to 11-8 and force an Irish timeout.

Shaughnessy would join freshman Jale Hervey for another block to give MT a 13-10 lead. Neither team gained much separation throughout the third set, with Notre Dame pulling to within 22-21 on a block. MT would rattle off the next three points - capped off by a Kendall Howard ace - to take a 2-1 lead with a 25-21 decision in the third set.

Notre Dame led 14-11 in the fourth set before kills by Marshall and Hervey pulled MT to within 14-13. On the next play, it was Shaughnessy again, this time with a block solo to bring the set even. The back-and-forth continued until five straight Raider points put Notre Dame on the ropes at 24-18. The Irish would battle back with three straight points to cut the deficit to 24-21, leading to a timeout by Coach Peck. Out of the timeout, an Irish setting error ended the match, with MT winning the match, 3-1.

The Raiders would return to action in the final match of the night, as the two undefeated teams of the tournament squared off. The Tar Heels - also in the "receiving votes" category in the most recent AVCA poll - and Raiders battled back and forth for the opening of the match, with MT down 10-9 before UNC rattled off a 7-2 run, burning both Raider timeouts in the process. The Tar Heels led by as many as eight (23-15) before taking the first set, 25-18.

MT opened up a 6-4 lead in the second set with a pair of kills from Ross and another from Hervey, looking to change the tone from the end of the first set. From that point, UNC went on a 16-5 run that changed the complexion of the set and match, holding set point at 24-13.

A service error would bring the Raiders to within 24-14 before sophomore Tyler Richardson recorded blocks with Ross and sophomore Shelby Anderton to cut the deficit to 24-16. A UNC kill on the ensuing play would give the Tar Heels a 25-16 second set win, and a 2-0 lead at the break.

The third set in no way resembled the second, as it was an evenly-matched affair that saw the Raiders leading 15-14 after junior Ailime de Freitas set up Richardson for a pair of kills. UNC would tie the set at 16-16 before posting a 9-2 run to close out the match with a three-set victory.

"I think if we get two or three people having a really good match at the same time, we're going to be pretty darn good," Peck added. "We just got out of system too much tonight against North Carolina. They're a very good team. They weren't in the top 25, but they were one of the top teams receiving votes. Their composure showed."

Ross and Howard were named to the Blue Raider Bash all-tournament team, along with Notre Dame's Toni Alugbue, San Francisco's Malina Terrell, and North Carolina's Kayla Berringer, Jovana Bjelica and tournament MVP Leigh Andrew.

The Raiders return to action Tuesday, Sept. 3, when they travel to Carbondale, Ill. for a 6:00 match at Southern Illinois.