Blue Raiders Hang On For Victory

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - The 28th-ranked Middle Tennessee Blue Raiders struggled after winning the first three points of the match, but staved off a late rally to defeat North Carolina State, 6-1, Saturday afternoon at the Racquet Club. Middle Tennessee opened the match with a solid effort in doubles, winning all three matches. The ninth-ranked tandem of Oliver Foreman and Robert Gustafsson defeated N.C. State's Matt Lucas and Reinaldo Valor, 8-4, at the No. 1 position, and the 34th-ranked duo of Daniel Klemetz and Kirk Jackson delivered the team point with an 8-3 victory over John Davis and Michael Carducci. A new pairing at No. 3 for the Blue Raiders, Rishan Kuruppu and Trevor Short, struggled to start but eventually won 8-5 against RJ Murray and Ryan Boward. The singles action began very positively for the Blue Raiders, with 12th-ranked Klemetz winning 6-2, 6-1, over Lucas at the No. 1 position. Foreman took the first set from Carducci, 6-2, and looked to be cruising, and Staniak finished off Valor, 6-3, 7-5, at the No. 3 spot, giving Middle Tennessee a commanding 3-0 lead with Foreman ahead a set. But Carducci would not go away and Short had his hands full with Boward at No. 4, dropping the first set, 6-1, before rallying to tie the match at one set apiece. Carducci won the second set from Foreman in a tiebreaker, giving the visiting Wolfpack life, albeit on life support. At 5-5 and 30-all in the third set, Short's right leg began cramping. The sophomore lost the next two

points and eventually was broken, giving Boward a 6-1, 4-6, 7-5 victory at No. 4, and cutting the Blue Raider lead to 3-1. But only minutes later Foreman gutted out a three-set win to give Middle Tennessee the deciding point, finishing the match with an ace to take a 6-2, 6-7 (4), 7-5 victory. The Blue Raiders won at No. 5 and 6 for the final points of the match, with Jackson taking a 7-6 (5), 6-4 victory at No. 5 and Kuruppu defeating Shane Sealy, 6-2, 6-2. "We competed very well and I am very happy with the victory," Middle Tennessee head coach Dale Short said. "North Carolina State was better than I thought, and their coach said it was the best they have played this season. We will have to make it through Sunday, because Indiana is very tough." The Blue Raiders host 54th-ranked Indiana Sunday at 10 a.m. The Hoosiers are led by 87th-rated singles player Milan Rakvica, who stands 6-1 this season. The Hoosiers had a three-match winning streak snapped last Sunday, dropping a 4-3 decision to 32nd-ranked Vanderbilt at home. Middle Tennessee will end its current three-match homestand against 25th-rated Georgia Tech at noon on February 24. **RESULTS**

Singles

(12) Daniel Klemetz (MT) def. Matt Lucas (NCSU) - 6-2, 6-1
(102) Oliver Foreman (MT) def. Michael Carducci (NCSU) - 6-2, 6-7 (4), 7-5
Michael Staniak (MT) def. Reinaldo Valor (NCSU) - 6-3, 7-5
Ryan Boward (NCSU) def. Trevor Short (MT) - 6-1, 4-6, 7-5
Kirk Jackson (MT) RJ Murray (NCSU) - 7-6 (5), 6-4
Rishan Kuruppu (MT) Shane Sealy (NCSU) - 6-2, 6-2

Doubles

(9) Foreman/Gustafsson def. Lucas/Valor - 8-4
(34) Klemetz/Jackson def. John Davis/Carducci - 8-3
Short/Kuruppu def. Murray/Boward - 8-5

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