Blue Raiders Fight to 2-0 Win

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Laura Miguez and Rebecca Rodriguez each tallied a first-half goal and Middle Tennessee survived a very physical match that included two red cards and a yellow cards to take a 2-0 victory over Florida International to open Sun Belt Conference play Friday afternoon at Blue Raider Field. The two teams played an extremely physical match that included 47 fouls, 25 on the visitors. In the 83rd minute each team received a red card after a fight broke out between two FIU players and one Middle Tennessee player. The win is the first conference shutout for the Blue Raiders since joining the Sun Belt in 2000, and also marks the first conference-opening victory for Middle Tennessee since joining the SBC. The Blue Raiders got on the board in the 13th minute when Christina Mascaro crossed a ball into the box. Miguez blasted a shot off FIU keeper Juliana Gomez, but Miguez put in the rebound for her fifth goal of the year and a 1-0 Middle Tennessee advantage. The two squads played a very physical opening 45 minutes, combining for 27 fouls. Middle Tennessee added another goal in the final minute before the half, as Rodriguez ran down a deflected ball near the endline and blasted it off Gomez and into the goal for a 2-0 Blue Raider lead at the break. Neither team mustered quality scoring chances in the second half, but continued the physical play, combining for 20 fouls in the final 45 minutes along with the two red cards. "We always tell the girls to leave it on the field and today they did," Blue Raider head coach Aston Rhoden said. "We had never beaten FIU. This is a new era in Middle Tennessee soccer. We shut them out and got the maximum out of our players for 90 minutes. The defenders and keeper played extremely well. All of the credit goes to this team. This is what conference play is all about." Middle Tennessee steps out of conference Sunday with a 2 p.m. match at Austin Peay, the final road non-conference match of the season for the Blue Raiders.

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