

February 15, 2007

Blue Raiders Head to the Desert

Will play in tournament at No. 4 Arizona

MT Media Relations

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee travels to Tucson, Ariz., Friday to participate in the Worth Wildcat Tournament hosted by 4th ranked University of Arizona.

- [Audio Report](#)

The Blue Raiders are looking to rebound from its 1-4 start at the Easton Tiger Classic last week. Middle Tennessee's lone win was a 6-0 blanking of Centenary College.

Freshman lefty hurler Lindsey Vander Lugt was a bright spot for the Blue Raiders. The Olympia, Wash., native saw action in all five games, starting three and coming in as a reliever in two. She tossed 19.1 innings in the tournament and didn't yield a walk. She also recorded 13 strikeouts, with eight of them coming in her first win of the season against Centenary and also carries a 1.45 ERA. The eight strikeouts against the Ladies were the most by a Blue Raider pitcher in two years.

Middle Tennessee will look to be more offensive this weekend, as the Blue Raiders were shut out in their last two games - falling 1-0 to Memphis and 2-0 to No. 9 LSU. The club has just three hits in its last 14 innings.

Though the Blue Raiders struggled at the plate, Middle Tennessee did get some offensive production from sophomore [Justine Cerda](#). The infielder was voted to the Easton Tiger Classic All-Tournament team after going 4-for-12 and knocking in three RBI.

Two Blue Raider players have an Arizona connection worth noting.

Senior shortstop [Shelby Stiner](#) hails from Peoria, Ariz. She spent her first two years of collegiate softball playing at Paradise Valley Community College and Glendale Community College, both in Arizona, before transferring to Middle Tennessee. Stiner will have a large contingency at the games in Arizona, with many of her friends and family seeing her play in a Middle Tennessee uniform for the first time.

The University of Arizona coaching staff and a few players as well, may remember junior Ashley Cline. The transfer from the University of Tennessee scored the winning run against the Wildcats in the 2005 College World Series as a member of the Lady Vol squad. Her sweeping slide to secure a 1-0 victory for UT was named the Pontiac Game Changing Performance by ESPN.

Middle Tennessee will face Virginia, Temple, Texas Tech and close out the round robin portion of the tournament with No. 4 Arizona. The Blue Raiders will face Temple and Texas Tech for the first time. The club is tied at two wins with the Cavaliers with the Blue Raiders winning the last meeting 5-4 in 2002.

The Blue Raider's single meeting with Arizona is tied to the NCAA Regional Tournament. Middle Tennessee faced the Wildcats in 2000 in the NCAA Tournament after capturing the Ohio Valley Conference title to earn the automatic bid. The Blue Raiders lost to Arizona 8-0 in the tournament. Consequently the team left the OVC after that season to enter the Sun Belt Conference.

Virginia is 3-2 to start the season, defeating Arkansas 4-1 in the consolation game at the Best Western Invitational hosted by South Florida. Pitcher Karla Wilburn leads the club with a 2-2 record and a 1.27 ERA and 20 strikeouts.

Texas Tech is also 3-2 to start the season. The Red Raiders return to Arizona after opening the season at the Kajikawa Classic in Tempe, Ariz. The team fell to Oregon 4-2 in the final day of the tournament.

Defending national champion Arizona suffered two losses to start the season at the Kajikawa Classic. The Wildcats lost an extra inning event to Florida 3-1 and then lost to No. 13 Texas A&M 3-2. Arizona is 4-2 to start the season.

Temple opens its season at the Worth Wildcat Tournament. The Owls were 22-23 in 2006 and are predicted to finish fifth in the Atlantic 10.

Middle Tennessee opens the tournament on Friday at 12 p.m. against Virginia. The Blue Raiders face Temple at 2 p.m. Saturday action begins with Texas Tech at 2 p.m. and Arizona at 6 p.m.



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