Blue Raiders capture USF Invitational championship

Successfully defend title with strong three-day performance

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TAMPA, Fla. - Middle Tennessee continued its hot start to the spring golf season by successfully defending its title at the Ron Smith/University of South Florida Invitational Sunday afternoon. The Blue Raiders shot a 1-over 289 in the final round to win the tournament by 12 strokes over second-place Jacksonville State. Middle Tennessee has improved its showing in all three tournaments of what has been a sterling start to the spring campaign, finishing fourth in its first tournament, third in the second, and capturing the title at Lake Jovita Golf and Country Club with three solid rounds this weekend. "The guys are playing with a great deal of confidence and that's so big in this game," said Head Coach Johnny Moore, who has led the Blue Raiders to 15 tournament titles. "We started out strong (Sunday) and kind of put some distance between us and the field and went from there. I'm very pleased with not only how we played in this tournament, but how well and consistently we have played all spring." Four Blue Raiders, led by sophomore Chas Narramore and freshman Craig Smith were among the top 88 players in the field. Narramore and Smith led the Blue Raider charge and tied for seventh overall, while Bart Barnes turned in the highest finish of his Middle Tennessee career, tying for 10th overall, and Kent Bulle tied for 13th overall. Narramore was at his best Sunday as he tied his career-low with a 4-under 68 on the strength of two eagles. The Kingston, Tenn., native led the tournament in par-4 scoring with a 1-under. Smith was also solid Sunday but he was also the most consistent player throughout the weekend with a 1-over 217. He carded a 73 in the opening round and followed with two even rounds of 72 in the second and third rounds. Smith was 8-under on par-5 scoring, which was second among all individuals. Barnes continued his senior crusade with another fine outing, finishing with a 218 and knocking in a

tournament-high 13 birdies, and he was also among the leaders in par-3 and par-4 scoring. Bulle was also constant throughout with a 3-over 219 for the three-day event. As a team, Middle Tennessee led the tournament with 46 birdies and four eagles, while also leading the field in par-4 and par-5 scoring. **Ron Smith/USF Invitational**

Final Team Scores

1 Middle Tennessee 288-292-289 = 869 +5

2 Jacksonville State 302-290-289 = 881 +17

3 Columbus State 296-302-285 = 883 +19

4 Florida Southern 300-293-291 = 884 +20

5 Nebraska 299-293-294 = 886 +22

6 Troy 302-290-296 = 888 +24

7 New Orleans 298-295-296 = 889 +25

8 Rhode Island 298-301-295 = 894 +30

9 Marquette 299-297-301 = 897 +33

10 Austin Peay 307-294-298 = 899 +35

11 Missouri State 307-294-306 = 907 +43

12 DePaul 306-310-293 909 +45

13 Marshall 313-299-297 = 910 +46

14 South Florida 304-310-299 = 913 +49

15 Florida Atlantic 311-302-301 = 914 +50

16 Bowling Green 309-313-297 = 919 +55

Oral Roberts 305-315-299 = 919 +55

MT Team Scores

1 Middle Tennessee 869

T7 Chas Narramore 72-77-68 = 217

T7 Craig Smith 73-72-72 = 217

T10 Bart Barnes 71-72-75 = 218

T13 Kent Bulle 72-73-74 = 219

T54 Nick Bailes 76-75-79 = 230

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