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# Tennis Coach Dale Short Announces Retirement

## Named OVC Player of the Year, then led the squad as a coach to unprecedented heights

*MT Media Relations*

Head coach Dale Short announced his retirement this week effective at the end of the season after leading the Middle Tennessee program for 20 years. (MT)

**MURFREESBORO, Tenn.** - From the moment he stepped onto the campus as a two-sport athlete at Middle Tennessee, Dale Short impacted the Blue Raider athletics program; however, his legacy was built on the tennis courts as a stellar player and a highly-decorated coach.

He earned Ohio Valley Conference Player of the Year honors twice as a standout on the court, and then he returned to coach his alma mater's tennis program and spent the next 20 years building it into a consistent national power.

His coaching career has included an impressive run of conference championships and NCAA tournament appearances; however, one of the greatest runs in Middle Tennessee athletic history will come to a close at the conclusion of the 2007 season.

Short, a native of Murfreesboro and a former All-State performer at Oakland High School, has announced his retirement effective at the end of this season.

"We are so appreciative of the contributions Dale Short has made to athletics at Middle Tennessee," Middle Tennessee President Sidney McPhee said. "He has built our tennis program into one of the best in the country and his players have consistently done well on the tennis court and in the academic setting.

"He has had a significant impact on the lives of so many people, not only those who played for him at Middle Tennessee, but he has also enhanced the overall tennis community in Murfreesboro during his remarkable career. We look forward to his continued involvement with the University. He will be missed in so many ways, but we wish him the best in retirement."

Short earned All-OVC honors as a player at Middle Tennessee in both 1979 and 1980 and was named OVC Player of the Year as a senior. During his playing career, he compiled a 60-25 singles record, a winning percentage of .706 that still ranks fifth all-time at Middle Tennessee. When the OVC celebrated its 40th anniversary in 1988, he was named to the league's all-time tennis team.

"Dale's departure leaves a big hole in our athletics department," said Chris Massaro, Director of Athletics. "He has been Mr. Tennis in the middle Tennessee area for many years. His record is impeccable. He and Ava will be sorely missed, but they will always be Blue Raiders. I will surely lean on Dale for his council through the years."

Short took over the Middle Tennessee tennis program as head coach in 1988, posting 383 victories, 11 regular season championships and nine conference tournament titles. The Blue Raiders have participated in eight of the last 12 NCAA Team Championships and made it to the second round for the second time in school history in 2002. Middle Tennessee claimed its first Sun Belt Conference championship in 2005.

The Blue Raiders have earned NCAA appearances four times since joining the Sun Belt before the 2001 season, earning 11 singles and nine doubles all-conference honors during the six-year stretch. Former Blue Raider Daniel Klemetz played in three straight NCAA Singles Championships from 2001-03, while last year's doubles pairing of **Marco Born** and **Andreas Siljestrom** became the first Blue Raider doubles All-Americans since 1998, earning a national seed at the NCAA Doubles Championships.

"It's a very, very difficult decision, and now that the decision is made it's even harder sometimes to think that I'm not going to be around," Short said. "I'm leaving on good terms. I love it at Middle Tennessee. There are no ill feelings on either side. It's just coming from the standpoint of my health, it will take a little pressure off of me there.

"The good thing is that we're not moving out of town. I'm not taking another college coaching job. This is where I played in college, where I coached for 20 years. It's home.

"If the next coach will have me, I'll be around as a volunteer once in a while," he said. "I'll certainly follow the athletic department any way I can. I'm looking forward to a little time to be able to go to the football games, to the basketball games, baseball games, whereas in the past I just didn't have the time because I was dealing with the team. I want to be able to enjoy Middle Tennessee athletics. I want to enjoy life a little more. If they need my help or guidance, I won't be far away."

The Blue Raiders success did not start six years ago. In 1991, Middle Tennessee tennis began a 10-year reign of dominance over the Ohio Valley Conference. With the move to the Sun Belt Conference, Short ended his 13 years in the OVC with an unbelievable

conference record of 87-6. Short capped the school's tenure in the OVC with his 10th consecutive regular season title and ninth tournament championship in 2000. The coach was honored for the eighth time in his career as the OVC Coach of the Year.

The 1994 season marked the first time a Blue Raider tennis player qualified for the NCAA Championships when Paul Goebel and Fred Niemeyer made the field in doubles. The following year, Middle Tennessee made its first-ever appearance in an NCAA Regional, in Gainesville, Fla. In 1996, the Blue Raiders earned a No. 2 seed but were upset in the first round by Alabama in Baton Rouge, La.

The 1997 campaign marked the first win in an NCAA tournament match in school history when the Blue Raiders defeated Florida International as the No. 2 seed in Gainesville, Fla. Middle Tennessee dropped its second round match to Alabama for the second year in a row.

That same year, a school-record four individual players earned berths in the NCAA Tournament, with Niemeyer obtaining the No. 2 seed in singles. Also in 1997, the team earned the highest ranking ever for a Division I sport at Middle Tennessee when Short led his team to a No. 4 national ranking. The Blue Raiders finished the season ranked 17th.

Individuals have made the NCAA Singles or Doubles Championships in 10 of the past 13 seasons, including 1994-98 and 2001-03. Six times during his tenure, Short has had doubles teams ranked in the Top 10 in the country, including All-Americans Siljestrom and Born in 2006.

The doubles tandem of David McNamara and Julius Robberts gave the school its first tennis national title, claiming the 1997 ITA Reebok All-American Hardcourt Championships in Austin, Texas, one of three Collegiate Grand Slam events each year. Born and Siljestrom added to the total in the fall of 2005, claiming the Polo Ralph Lauren ITA All-American Championships in Tulsa, Okla. Klemetz also claimed the singles title at the 2002 Icy Hot/ITA All-American Championships in Chattanooga, Tenn.

During his 20 years at the helm, Short has coached eight All-Americans and one Region III Senior Player of the Year. He has had 49 individuals earn all-conference honors, including all six starters from the 1997 team and nearly the entire team in 1998, when eight Blue Raiders earned all-conference accolades. Eight of his players have been named conference Player of the Year and Kai Schledorn earned Sun Belt Tournament MVP honors in 2005.

From 1991-94, Short served as the head coach for the women's program and promptly led the women to three straight OVC Championships. His record as the women's head coach stands at 63-28.

During the summer of 2001, Short was inducted into the Blue Raider Hall Fame for his accomplishments as a player and as one of the top tennis coaches in the nation.

Short is the director of the Tennessee Junior Qualifying Championships and has served on the Tennessee Tennis Association Junior Committee. He was a member of the NCAA Division I Men's Tennis Regional Advisory and Selection Committee and chairman of the Southeast (NCAA Region III) Coaches Committee.

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