

Ray, Kendrick, Bishop Garner All-SBC Honors

Ray earns First Team Accolades; Kendrick, Bishop on Second Team

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MOBILE, Ala. - Middle Tennessee senior Matt Ray was voted to the First Team and senior Wayne Kendrick and sophomore Rawley Bishop both earned Second Team honors, as the Sun Belt announced its all-conference baseball teams Tuesday prior to the start of the league tournament. Ray's honor is the fourth straight for a Blue Raider shortstop, as Jeff Beachum garnered all-league accolades the last three seasons. Kendrick becomes the third Middle Tennessee second baseman honored since the Blue Raiders joined the league, with Josh Renick (2001) and Eric McNamee (2004) the other two. Bishop is also the third first baseman to earn All-SBC accolades, as Josh Archer (2003) and Derek



Phillips also garnered all-league honors. Ray leads the Blue Raiders and is tied for second in the conference in stolen bases with 21. His stolen base total ranks 11th for a single season at Middle Tennessee. The senior transfer from Central Florida struggled early and then missed eight games with a separated shoulder. Since returning from injury on March 23, Ray has batted .374 over 32 games with 14 doubles, 18 RBIs and 30 runs scored. He had a 15-game hitting streak from April 3-May 5, batting .426 (29-for-68) with 11 doubles, 12 RBIs and 17 runs scored. He has hit safely in all but four games in the 32 contests since March 23 and has reached base safely in all but two outings. He was voted the Sun Belt Player of the Week on April 23 after helping the Blue Raiders to a conference series win at South Alabama and a victory over No. 1 Vanderbilt. Ray is batting .364 in Sun Belt games with 25 runs scored in 26 contests. For the season Ray is hitting .339 with 42 runs scored, 16 doubles, 26 RBIs and 27 walks in 45 starts. In his last 24 games (since April 3 versus Tennessee Tech), Ray has reached base in 59 of his 111 plate appearances, or 53 percent of the time. "[Ray] came into the fall and showed hands-down that he was the best shortstop," head coach

Steve Peterson. "He allowed me to keep Kendrick at second base, which allowed us to have a good doubleplay combination. He also solidified the leadoff role. He leads our club in stolen bases, has played a solid shortstop and has really been a big plus for us." Kendrick has been the model of consistency for Middle Tennessee in 2007, hitting safely in 44 of 55 contests this season and making a run at the single-season hits record. The Murfreesboro, Tenn., native heads into this week's Sun Belt Championships just nine hits shy of the single-season record set in 2006 by Jeff Beachum, who racked up 98 hits in 55 contests last year. Kendrick has 30 multi-hit games this season, including 10 three-hit contests and three four-hit outings (Jacksonville State, Belmont and Louisiana-Monroe). He has reached base safely in 48 of the 55 contests. He leads Middle Tennessee in batting average (.399), hits (89), runs scored (54), doubles (19), triples (2), total bases (127) and on-base percentage (.472) and has just 14 strikeouts in 223 at-bats. He is also tied for second on the club in walks (27). Kendrick ranks fourth in the SBC in batting, tied for third in doubles and hits and has added five home runs and 40 RBIs. Kendrick is fourth on the single-season hits list and tied for ninth on the single-season doubles charts at Middle Tennessee. "[Kendrick] is by-far our best player. He has flirted with .400 for most of the year, which is very difficult to do, and made the adjustments offensively he had to make from when his college career started," Peterson said. "Wayne has to overcome his lack of physical size everyday, on and off the field. He's a mentally tough kid. The best way that I describe him is that he's got big man tools in a little man's body and has put up All-American numbers. Whatever success this season brings, he's going to be right in the middle of it." Bishop is tied for fourth in the conference in home runs with 16, a total which ranks ninth on the single-season list at Middle Tennessee. Seven of the 16 homers have come against Sun Belt foes. Bishop has 18 multi-hit games this season and leads the club with 12 multi-RBI contests. He put together a 21-game hitting streak earlier this season, the longest by a Blue Raider since in the last decade. Bishop hit three homers in a contest versus Belmont in April, tying six other players for the school record for home runs in a game. He leads the Blue Raiders in home runs, RBIs (55), slugging percentage (.644) and walks (31) and ranks second on the club in runs scored (48) and total bases (125). The Germantown, Tenn., native has also set the single-season record for hit by pitch at Middle Tennessee. Bishop has been plunked 13 times in 2007, eclipsing the previous mark of 11 set by Josh Renick in 2001. "The best thing going to Rawley is that he works his tail off. He works at everything. He's an honor student and does that because he takes pride in it. He's an all-star player and works hard in the weight room, one of the hardest workers we have there," Peterson said. "He has the opportunity to develop a big, strong body and he's taking advantage of that chance. He's had his ups-and-downs, but he's learning everyday. He has great work habits and deserves to have success because of the way he works at it." Middle Tennessee, the No. 3 seed, opens play in the Sun Belt Championships at 9 a.m. Wednesday against sixth-seeded Florida Atlantic. Righthander Brad Robinson (7-2, 4.40) will face FAU lefthander Joel Schmal (3-1, 5.86). **2007 All-Sun Belt**

Baseball Team

First Team All-Sun Belt

SP T.J. Brewer (Arkansas State, Sr.)

SP Buddy Glass (Louisiana-Lafayette, Jr.)

RP Josh Dew (Troy, Sr.)

C Jonathan Lucroy (Louisiana-Lafayette, Jr.)

1B Jeff Cunningham (South Alabama, Jr.)

2B Johnny Giavotella (New Orleans, So.)

SS Matt Ray (Middle Tennessee, Sr.)

3B William Block (Florida Atlantic, So.)

OF Robbie Widlansky (Florida Atlantic, Jr)

OF James McOwen (Florida International, Jr.)

OF Clint Robinson (Troy, Sr.)

DH Scott Hawkins (Louisiana-Lafayette, So.)

Second Team All-Sun Belt

SP Chris Salberg (Florida Atlantic, Sr.) SP Hunter Moody (Louisiana-Lafayette, Jr.)

RP Danny Farquhar (Louisiana-Lafayette, So.)

C Joel Collins (South Alabama, Jr.)

1B Rawley Bishop (Middle Tennessee, So.)

2B Wayne Kendrick (Middle Tennessee, Sr.)

SS Ryan Hudgins (Arkansas State, Jr.)

3B David Doss (South Alabama, So.)

OF Mike McKenna (Florida Atlantic, Jr.)

OF Daniel Cook (Florida Atlantic, Jr.)

OF Jefferies Tatford (Louisiana-Lafayette, Sr.)

DH Josh Yates (Arkansas State, Sr.)

Player of the Year: Robbie Widlansky (Florida Atlantic, Jr., OF)

Pitcher of the Year: Josh Dew (Troy, Sr., RP)

Newcomer of the Year: Nolan Gisclair (Louisiana-Lafayette, Jr., OF)

Freshman of the Year: Bart Carter (Western Kentucky, Fr., SP)

Coach of the Year: Tony Robichaux (Louisiana-Lafayette)

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