

August 12, 2007

## Soccer has blend of experience, youth Squad goes through first practice Sunday

*MT Media Relations*

**MURFREESBORO, Tenn.** - Middle Tennessee's soccer team hit the field for its first practice of fall camp with 13 veterans and eight newcomers taking part in the initial workout Sunday evening.

The Blue Raiders are coming off a school-record 17 wins in 2006 and return a high percentage of their goal scorers from an offense that finished last season ranked No. 3 nationally. In fact, the high-scoring forward tandem of **Kala Morgan** and **Holly Grogan** is back after forming one of the nation's top-scoring duos last season.

Morgan finished the season ranked second nationally for points per game and third for goals per game. Her 22 goals set the Middle Tennessee single-season record. Grogan also had a sensational year as she finished ranked No. 7 nationally in points, 12th in assists, and 16th in goals per game. Her 12 assists were a new single-season record and led the Sun Belt.

While the point producers are back, including dynamic forward **Jen Threlkeld**, who battled injuries to turn in an outstanding rookie season, Middle Tennessee will have to work hard to replace defensive stalwarts Katy Rayburn and Sara Wohlhueter from the backline.

Senior defender **Ingrid Christensen**, an All-Sun Belt performer, is a returning starter, as is keeper **Erynn Murray**, and senior **Kaley Forrest** has been a durable and consistent midfielder throughout her career, but there are several holes to fill otherwise.

"Our team is very young with several new faces but we have the potential to be a good team," Middle Tennessee coach Aston Rhoden said. "Our new players, despite their youth, have good experience at the high school, club, and International levels.


"We have several players back who scored a majority of the goals for us last year, but the backline is virtually new with (Christensen and Murray) the only returning starters. It's great to score goals but you have to be able to defend, as well. We have to make sure we more than adequately replace the players we lost who helped prevent goals from being scored on us."

That process began at Sunday night's practice and will continue through the fall camp as Rhoden seeks the right chemistry.

"The start of camp and a new season is always exciting but what is really exciting about the start of this camp is that you do have young players and because of that you have a lot of room to grow," Rhoden said. "You have a lot of flexibility in the way you want to play and that's what is exciting. It's always exciting to see how quickly they get involved along with the returning players.

"How quickly the new players learn the strengths of the veterans, and vice versa, will determine how good we can be. We will have to get to that fairly quickly. Getting on the same page as far as style of play and system of play is important. That is the biggest key when you are talking about youth."



The Middle Tennessee soccer team went through the first practice of fall camp Sunday. (MT) 

The Blue Raiders return to the practice field Monday at 7:40 a.m.

---

*Printed on December 1, 2008*

*Original URL: <http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/26901>*