Soccer drops opener at Sooner Invitational

Blue Raiders suffer 5-1 setback against Long Beach

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NORMAN, Okla. - Middle Tennessee fell behind early in its match against Long Beach State and was never able to recover on its way to a 5-1 setback in the opening game of the Sooner Invitational in Norman, Okla. Long Beach State scored three first-half goals on the way to a 3-0 halftime advantage and tacked on two more at the outset of the second half before the Blue Raiders (3-3-1) avoided the shutout late in the match. "Long Beach State is a good team and they jumped on us pretty quickly and pretty much took control in the latter stages of the first half," Middle Tennessee coach Aston Rhoden said. "Our players battled and worked hard. It's a tough loss but this tournament is going to help prepare us for the conference schedule that begins next weekend." Playing without senior forward and leading scorer Holly Grogan (illness), Middle Tennessee's offense never got untracked. In fact, it was a defender who helped the Blue Raiders avoid the shutout when senior Ingrid Christensen scored her second career goal in the 75th minute. By then it was way too late to mount any type of rally as Long Beach State (4-2-1) had built a 5-0 lead. The match was scoreless until Long Beach State scored in the 10th minute and then added its second goal in the 22nd minute and another in the 34th minute to take a 3-0 advantage. Middle Tennessee will play host Oklahoma in the Sooner Invitational Sunday afternoon.

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