

April 4, 2004

Blue Raiders Shoot Season-Low 859, Finish Fourth At LSU

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BATON ROUGE, La. - Middle Tennessee's golf team turned in its best score of the year to finish fourth at the LSU Spring Invitational Sunday. The Blue Raiders shot a three-day total 5-under-par 859, and set a tournament record with a 14-under 274 in the first round Friday at University Club.

Three-time defending champion LSU made it four straight championships by shooting 278 in the final round to overcome a 12-stroke deficit after the first 36 holes. The Tigers shot a three-day total 351 to beat out Furman (352) by one stroke. Jacksonville State (855) was third, followed by Middle Tennessee.

"We knew LSU would make a run and they did to win it," Middle Tennessee coach Johnny Moore said. "We just couldn't hold up under the LSU barrage, but I was pleased with our play this weekend. You don't know how you are going to react to being out front until you are there, and I think we handled it pretty well. This is something on which to build."

Middle Tennessee's previous low this year was a three-round total of 865 at the Fall Beach Classic in Gulf Shores, Ala., Oct. 27-28, but the improving Blue Raiders easily outdid that performance against the 17-team field in Baton Rouge, La.

Four Blue Raider linksters, led by junior **Blake Bivens**, had their best tournament scores of the spring. Bivens (66-73-74) shot a 213 to finish tied for 13th. His previous best this spring was a 227 in the USF Invitation. The sixth-place finish is tied for Bivens' high this season. He also was sixth in the Raising Cane Classic last fall.

Charlie Gibson has been riding a surge of momentum and enjoyed another top 20 finish at LSU. Gibson's 214 was his best of the spring as he tied for 16th. **Chris Webb** led the Blue Raiders with a 1-under 71 Sunday and tied for 26th with a three-day-total of 216 to establish a new low for the spring, while **Josh Nelms** finished 36th with a 219, also his lowest score this spring.

Bivens, Gibson and Webb all shot par or better for the tournament, while Nelms was just 3-over.

Middle Tennessee will play in the Arkansas State Indian Classic, April 12-13.

TEAM SCORES

- 1 LSU 288-285-278 851 -13
- 2 Furman 278-283-291 852 -12
- 3 Jacksonville State 287-284-284 855 -9
- 4 Middle Tennessee 274-291-294 859 -5**
- 5 Charlotte 286-281-295 862 -2
- Central Florida 292-282-288 862 -2
- 7 South Florida 293-282-290 865 +1
- Louisiana-Lafayette 290-284-291 865 +1
- 9 Tulane 288-290-289 867 +3
- 10 Xavier 292-284-294 870 +6
- 11 South Alabama 286-290-297 873 +9
- 12 Memphis 292-289-296 877 +13
- 13 Arkansas-Little Rock 290-291-297 878 +14

14 Arkansas State 297-294-290 881 +17
15 Southern Mississippi 302-291-293 886 +22
16 Maryland 295-303-295 893 +29
17 Mississippi State 305-296-294 895 +31

MT SCORES 859

T 13 **Blake Bivens** 66-73-74 213 -3
T 16 **Charlie Gibson** 71-68-75 214 -2
T 26 **Chris Webb** 69-76-71 216 E
T36 **Josh Nelms** 68-74-77 219 +3
T72 **Kenny Green** 75-78-74 227 +11

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