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 for26th 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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