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Adams believes women's golf team has what it takes

SBC Golf Championships begin Monday


MT Media Relations

MUSCLE SHOALS, Ala. - Chris Adams may be taking Middle Tennessee to the Sun Belt Conference Women's Golf Championship for the first time this week; however, the veteran coach is no stranger to the league's championship after coaching at member school Arkansas State the previous five years.

She believes Sun Belt Conference women's golf is as tough as it has been in her six years in the league but Adams also believes Middle Tennessee has what it takes to win the championship.

"We are due and I like our chances," Adams said. "I think all of our players have confidence going into the tournament and we have five players who could have been our No. 1 player at any time this spring. We just have to put it all together for three days but I do like our chances."



Chris Adams believes Middle Tennessee can contend for this year's SBC Women's Golf title. (MT) 

Adams took over as Middle Tennessee's coach in the spring after Rachael Short resigned to pursue other opportunities after the fall season. Adams admits it was probably a tough adjustment for the players and the new coach but she believes the transition has been made with success and the time has come to put the results to work on the course at the Robert Jones Trail.

"The players had to get use to me and I have enjoyed the ride so far," Adams said. "It was a learning experience for the players and me but they have gained trust in me. It's a tough transition in the middle of the year but I have enjoyed myself and I believe in each of them. We have a competitive group."

Middle Tennessee finished fourth in the SBC Championships last season and winning its first title will not be easy this year, particularly with six league teams rated among the Top 100 nationally, including No. 11 Denver. Middle Tennessee is ranked No. 89 by Golfstat.

"This is the most competitive the league has been in my six years," Adams said. "Clearly anybody can win but just based on the rankings you look at Denver and see where they are but it still takes three days of good golf from four players. We have what it takes."

Middle Tennessee is led by seniors **Taryn Durham** and **Jamey Dillard**. Durham is a three-time all-Sun Belt selection and she was SBC low medalist in 2006. She enters this year's tournament with a 75.4 stroke average and posted a low round of 66 in the fall. Durham has not had the type of spring that becomes customary for the standout; however, she finished on a strong note at the Canes and Cardinal Classic, April 8.

"There is no pressure for Taryn because she is a very good player," Adams said. "She is gaining confidence and getting each day. She had just lost a little of her distance and lost a little confidence in her swing but she started getting back to form the past few weeks and she is playing well right now. People in our league know how competitive she is and what a die-hard golfer she is."

While Durham is a key to Middle Tennessee's success, Dillard has been a pleasant surprise this spring after playing in just one fall tournament. The senior has a 78.94 stroke average and has consistently been one of the team's top scorers throughout the spring season. Junior **Leigh Wilkins**, sophomore **Clara Leathers** and freshman **Morgan Hale** round out the Middle Tennessee lineup.

"We turned in our lowest score of the spring in our last event so I think all the players have confidence going into the tournament," Adams said. "I've enjoyed watching our players grow and develop in some areas this spring. Now is the time to put it all together."

Middle Tennessee's women will play a practice round Sunday afternoon before beginning the 54-hole event Monday morning. The tournament champion will be crowned Wednesday afternoon.

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