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## Linksters complete third round, forced to play waiting game Blue Raiders tied for 17th when play is suspended at National Championships

MT Media Relations

**WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind.** - Middle Tennessee played two different games at the NCAA National Golf Championships Friday and it was hard to decipher which was more difficult - its third round on a day when the course was at its toughest yet or the waiting game that followed.

And the waiting game will continue into Saturday morning.

- [Live Leaderboard](#)
- **Photos:** [National Championships Round 3](#)

Play was suspended late in the third round resulting from severe weather in West Lafayette, Ind., including wind gusts between 60-to-80 miles per hour and tornado watches throughout the evening. Teams still on the course were evacuated and sent into Mackey Arena - Purdue University's basketball facility.

Middle Tennessee was tied for 17th when play was suspended. The top 15 teams make the cut and play in the final round. All teams and individuals who were unable to complete the third round will do so with a 6 a.m. (Central) shotgun start. All ties will be determined immediately following and the top 15 teams will begin play with revised tee times beginning at 10 a.m.

"The weather was difficult out there but fortunately we missed that," said Kent Bulle, who turned in his best round at the National Championships with a 6-over 78. "The waiting may have been even tougher and we still have to wait. It's probably going to be a sleepless night but we still have a shot."

The Blue Raiders shot 22-over 311 Friday and were tied for 17th, along with UC-Irvine, when play was suspended. Texas is 16th at 48-over, while Auburn is in 14th at 45-over with three holes remaining. San Diego State is also still on the course and in 12th at 40-over with five holes remaining. Those appear to be the top teams Middle Tennessee will be watching as its destiny is decided.

"It is going to be interesting Saturday morning," Middle Tennessee Head Coach Whit Turnbow said. "We did the best we would and if we make the cut, great, that would be icing on the cake, but if we don't we have had a great year and we will hold our heads high. It's out of our hands now. I'm proud of our guys. They really battled all day. The conditions are so tough that all you can do is go out there and do your best because when you are out there nobody really knows what a good score is going to be."

[Jason Millard's](#) 1-over 73 would be considered a good score Friday and any other day during the week. The freshman from Murfreesboro continued his week-long assault on the course and has put himself in position to play for the individual national championship in the event the team does not make the cut. The top six individuals not on an advancing team will advance and Millard stands tied for 13th overall, but third among individuals on teams who were not above the cut line when play was suspended.

On a day when the Blue Raiders shot their highest round of the tournament, Millard was the exception.

He secured four birdies and played his six closing holes at 3-under, including back-to-back birdies on the final two holes.

"I tend to play better on harder courses and I don't know what it is about that," said Millard, who stands 6-over 222 through three rounds. "I played two of the best rounds I have played in a really long time the last two days. I have expectations and I think I have exceeded them. I definitely could have done better, but I think I have played well."

Millard's mindset is on his team making the cut but if the Blue Raiders fall short of that goal, the rookie will be ready to contend.

"We came here as a team and that is the way we want to be playing Saturday," Millard said. "I didn't even know about the individuals advancing anyway, but I would have never thought I would have a chance to be there the last day as one of the six individuals who could advance. I really never have given thought to that. I've only thought about the team making the cut."

Turnbow said his youngest player has matured throughout the season but has taken his game to a higher level this week.

"(Millard) is not a freshman anymore," Turnbow said. "You are talking about 156 of the very best players in the country and for him to have a chance to finish in the Top 20 is phenomenal. He deserves everything he can achieve here. Some of the things you would expect a freshman to have trouble with, just being at the National Championships, the atmosphere, the pressure; it hasn't bothered



Freshman Jason Millard chips onto the green on No. 14 during the third round of the NCAA National Championships. Millard is tied for 13th overall. (Tony Stinnett)

him a bit. He has kept his head level and not let his emotions get to up or down. He has played great."

Millard and Bulle, a sophomore, are big reasons Middle Tennessee is on the verge of making the cut. While Millard closed at 3-under on his six closing holes, Bulle played his final five holes at 1-under to turn in his best score of the week.

"I just tried to battle through it and help the team today," Bulle said. "The tough is very difficult and it played extremely hard today but we have given ourselves a chance and that's all you can ask. We have proven we can play with the best teams in the country this week and it would be nice to have another round left in us. Regardless of what happens we can feel good about our accomplishments here."

Rick Cochran and [Chas Narramore](#) were each 8-over 80 Friday and Nick Bailes was 9-over.

The Blue Raiders will arrive at the course at 8 a.m., Saturday and prepare either for a playoff or the final round in the event they become the first team to play on the final day of its respective national championship in the school's history (at the Division I level).

#### **NCAA National Championships**

##### **Kampen Course, Par-72**

**NOTE: Play was suspended in the third round and will resume Saturday morning.**

##### **T17 MT Scores (311)**

T13 [Jason Millard](#) 77-72-73 222 +6

T54 Rick Cochran 75-73-80 228 +12

T85 Kent Bulle 77-77-78 232 +16

T120 [Chas Narramore](#) 80-76-70 236 +20

T134 Nick Bailes 86-72-81 239 +23

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