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## Men's basketball to play host to Tennessee In-state showcase scheduled for Nov. 21

*MT Media Relations*



Men's basketball coach Kermit Davis has announced the Blue Raiders will play Tennessee at Murphy Center, Nov. 21. (MT)

**MURFREESBORO, Tenn.** - The Middle Tennessee men's basketball team will play host to national power Tennessee during an in-state showdown, Nov. 21, as part of the 2008-09 season-ticket package.

It will mark Tennessee's first visit to Murfreesboro for a regular-season contest. The only other meeting between the teams at Middle Tennessee's Murphy Center took place in 1988 when the Blue Raiders beat the Volunteers, 85-80, in the first round of the National Invitation Tournament.

"Our players will be looking forward to it and our fans should be looking forward to it, and give us an excellent opportunity to compete with an outstanding team like Tennessee at home," Middle Tennessee head men's basketball coach Kermit Davis said. "It also speaks volumes for (Tennessee coach) Bruce Pearl to bring the Volunteers to Murphy Center."

The contest will pit teams with lofty expectations in 2008-09. The Vols are projected to be a preseason Top 10 team after returning two starters and seven letterwinners from last season's Sweet 16 team that fashioned a 31-5 overall mark.

Middle Tennessee returns five starters and 10 letterwinners from a team that reached the Sun Belt Conference Championship game before falling to eventual Sweet 16 participant Western Kentucky. Most preseason publications are expected to tab the Blue Raiders the favorites to win the Sun Belt in 2008-09.

"It's a long way away but I know every player and coach on our team will expect to compete at a very high level of basketball," Davis said, adding, "and I know every Blue Raider fan coming to the game will expect the same thing. I think it will be a great chance for our team to see exactly where we are early against one of the best basketball teams in college basketball."

The upcoming game is the third of a five-year contract between the teams. The first two games were in Knoxville. Tennessee will play Middle Tennessee at the Sommet Center in downtown Nashville in 2009-10 as the Blue Raiders' home game and the final game of the contract has Middle Tennessee at Tennessee in 2010-11.

Tennessee holds a 6-1 advantage in the series that began in 1988. The Blue Raiders are 1-0 against Tennessee at Murphy Center, 0-5 against the Vols in Knoxville and 0-1 on a neutral court.

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