

July 8, 2008

Blue Raiders set to host Lafayette College in Preseason WNIT

Squad will take on Leopards on Saturday, November 15 at Murphy Center

Jo Jo Freeman

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee will face Lafayette College in the first round of the Preseason WNIT on Saturday, November 15, at 7 p.m. at Murphy Center after the 16-team field was announced Monday.

The Blue Raiders have never faced the Leopards on the hardwood and Middle Tennessee has played just one member of the Patriot League, Bucknell, in the program's history. Lafayette finished 2007-08 with a 14-16 overall record, including a 6-8 mark in Patriot League action. The Leopards are led by eighth-year head coach Tammy Smith.

If the Blue Raiders defeat Lafayette, the squad would most likely face Oklahoma in the second round.

North Carolina and Oklahoma headline a field that includes 12 teams that played in the postseason last spring: Arizona State, Cleveland State, Illinois State, Indiana, Liberty, Middle Tennessee, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Robert Morris, VCU, Western Carolina and Xavier. They will be joined in the WNIT field by Ball State, Lafayette, Tulane and UC Riverside.

"This is a big thing for our program to be recognized with the likes of Oklahoma and North Carolina in this national tournament," head coach Rick Insell said. "And it's also a good thing for our fans, to play another home game with the possibility of even more home games later in the tournament."

Middle Tennessee has played in the Preseason WNIT once previously, falling to South Florida to start the 2004-05 season, 70-62, at Murphy Center.

The WNIT will be played in the format introduced in 2007, where each team is guaranteed to play three games in the MTE format. Teams that lose in the first two rounds will play consolation games on the second weekend, November 21-23.

The event opens Friday, Nov. 14 and Saturday, Nov. 15 with first-round games. Second-round games will be played Nov. 16-19, semifinals will be Nov. 19-21 and the championship is set for Sunday, Nov. 23. All games are played on home campuses, which are announced after each round.

In last year's Preseason WNIT, Maryland defeated LSU. Maryland, ranked fifth in the nation, went on to a 33-4 year, while LSU advanced to the Final Four of the NCAA Tournament, won the SEC conference title, and finished 31-6.

First-round Preseason WNIT games


All 2007-08 team records in parentheses

Friday, Nov. 14, 2008

Robert Morris (23-10) at Xavier (24-9), 3 p.m. ET

Western Carolina (25-9) at North Carolina (33-3), 7 p.m. ET



Middle Tennessee will host Lafayette College in the Preseason WNIT on Saturday, November 15. (WNIT) 

VCU (26-8) at Liberty (28-4), 7 p.m. ET

Ball State (15-15) at Indiana (18-15), 7 p.m. ET

Illinois State (26-7) at Tulane (16-14), 8 p.m. ET

Cleveland State (19-14) at Arizona State (22-11), 8 p.m. ET

Saturday, Nov. 15, 2008

UC Riverside (14-16) at Oklahoma (22-9), 3 p.m. ET

Lafayette (14-16) at Middle Tennessee (22-12), 8 p.m. ET

For more information, contact WNIT Assistant Director Renee Carlson at (970) 223-6644 ext. 157, or visit the website at www.womensnit.com.

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