Blue Raiders Drop SBC Opener At FIU

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MIAMI, Fla. - Middle
Tennessee's Sun Belt opener
in the Sunshine state ended in
gloom as Florida International
secured a 3-2 win to remain
perfect against the Blue
Raiders at University Park
Friday night.

Valerie Park's first score of the season - a header to the upper left corner of the goal in the 70th minute - proved to be the decisive goal that allowed Florida International (3-6, 1-0 SBC) to improve to 4-0 against Middle Tennessee (5-4, 0-1) in Miami.

"It's a tough loss, no doubt, but it's only a temporary

setback," Middle Tennessee soccer coach Aston Rhoden said. "We played well, but we just couldn't get the win. Even when it was 3-2 late we had chances to score and couldn't finish."

The loss overshadowed milestone moments for Blue Raider seniors Laura Miguez and Danielle LaDuke, who continued to etch their names in program history. Miguez, who is already the all-time leader in points, goals and assists at Middle Tennessee, assisted on both goals to give her 27 in her stellar career. Miguez also has five assists this season, which is tied for sixth on the single-season list. She also is No. 1 and No. 3 on the single-season assists list.

LaDuke got Middle Tennessee off to a good start when she took a pass from Miguez, went 1-on-1 up the left side, and connected on a roller to the right side less than two minutes into the game. LaDuke's third goal of the season and 23rd of her career tied her with Emily Carter for second on the all-time goals list.

Florida International stormed back with consecutive goals to take a 2-1 lead, but Middle Tennessee got even before the half when freshman Kaley Forrest received a corner kick from Miguez and fired the ball past keeper Madeline Gannon.

The game was a defensive struggle throughout the second half as the teams combined for five shots - three for Middle Tennessee and two for Florida International - but the Golden Panthers hit paydirt in the 70th minute to secure victory.

Middle Tennessee returns to action Monday when it plays Alabama A&M in a make-up game at Blue Raider Field at 3 p.m.

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