Blue Raiders roll past South Alabama 4-0

Pick up fifth-straight win with impressive performance

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee scored two goals in each half and used suffocating defensive pressure to shut down the opposition as they extended their unbeaten start in the Sun Belt to four matches with a 4-0 shutout over the South Alabama Jaguars at Blue Raider Field on Sunday afternoon. The Blue Raiders were coming off a solid 2-0 victory over the Troy Trojans on Friday evening. Shan Jones and Vanessa Mueggler were on hand for a pair of second-half strikes as the home side outshot the Trojans 26-9, including holding a 14-4 advantage at the break. South Alabama began conference play with two wins against Arkansas State and Arkansas-Little Rock last weekend, before falling 3-0 to Western Kentucky in Bowling Green, Ky. on Friday night. Middle Tennessee came out firing on all cylinders as they forced the Jaguars back with several attacking waves after the opening kickoff. Forward Jones nearly gave the home side the advantage in the 11th minute but shot just wide of the far post after finding herself all alone with Jaguar goalkeeper Kelsie Langford. Forward Jen Threlkeld started things off for the Blue Raiders in the 25th minute. Sophomore Mueggler served in a good in-swinging corner that found the junior at the back post. Threlkeld rose high in the air above two defenders to nod home her first goal of the season. The goal scorer turned provider just five minutes later to double the Middle Tennessee advantage. The Carrollton, Texas native nailed a ball over the top of the Jaguar backline from well insider the Blue Raider half and into the path of Jones. The speedy freshman took three touches and calmly finished to the far post for her team-leading eighth goal of the season. The Welsh forward has scored seven goals in the Middle Tennessee's last nine matches. "Our objective in the first half was denying the opposition early services and we did a good job," Blue Raider Head Coach Aston Rhoden said. "We need to make sure we impose our style of play early in the match. We did just that and it led to two good goals." Mueggler made it 3-0 in favor of the home side in the 80th minute. Substitute Kim Farrant tracked down a ball on the far side and beat Jaguar defender Kasey Crowe to the end line before cutting back and delivering a perfect pass to Mueggler who slotted home from seven yards. Hope Suominen rounded out the scoring with her first-career goal as a Blue Raider in the 82nd minute. The talented midfielder received a clever flick-on header by Farrant before sprinting clear of the South Alabama backline and coolly finishing to the

far post. "I was pleased with overall team effort. Everyone who came into match did a great job and it was a good team win for us," Rhoden said. "We now have to look towards two tough matches in Arkansas next weekend." Sophomore goalkeeper Kela Casiple picked up her 13th career shutout to move her into a tie with former Blue Raider Danielle Perreault for second all-time in school history. Middle Tennessee has now won five-straight matches after winning just one of it's first seven contests and currently sits in a tie with Denver atop the conference standings. The defense has allowed just a single goal during the same five-match span. "When you have 12 new players in any squad and have several playing a lot of minutes then it is going to take some time," Rhoden said. "We have turned the corner and are starting to develop chemistry and rhythm on and off the field. It has payed off with some good results as of late." The Blue Raiders return to action when they travel to Jonesboro, Ark. to take on Arkansas State on Friday afternoon. Kickoff is slated for 4 p.m. Live audio will be available on GoBlueRaiders.com.

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