

Blue Raiders run out 3-0 winners over UL-Monroe

Three first-half goals prove the difference

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Middle Tennessee scored a goal just 23 seconds into the match and never looked back as they rolled to a 3-0 victory over the Louisiana-Monroe Warhawks at Blue Raider Field on Friday night. The Blue Raiders (8-5-2, 6-1-0) were coming off a 1-0 win on the road against the Arkansas-Little Rock Trojans last Sunday. Jen Threlkeld provided the game-winning header off a corner kick in the 74th minute in a match that saw Middle Tennessee rebound from their first conference loss of the season against Arkansas State two days earlier. Louisiana-Monroe was looking to



rebound after a 2-1 defeat at home to Florida International last weekend. The Warhawks have not won since a hard-fought 3-2 victory over North Texas on September 23. They came into the match sitting in a season-low 11th position in the Sun Belt Conference standings. Middle Tennessee went ahead almost immediately after the opening kickoff when forward Threlkeld struck a cross that fell to the feet of midfielder Hope Suominen. The freshman smacked a well-hit strike past a helpless Warhawk goalkeeper Mallory George and into the back of the net from six yards. "It is always great to get an early goal because it certainly gives the team confidence and makes the opposing team have to chase the game from early on in the match," said Head Coach Aston Rhoden. The Blue Raiders doubled their advantage just five minutes later through a Shan Jones strike. Midfielder Vanessa Mueggler received a ball in the box and hit a perfectly weighted pass to an overlapping Jones. The freshman dribbled onto her right foot and fired it to the near post from five yards for team-leading 10th goal of the season. Middle Tennessee rounded out the scoring in the 33rd minute on another long pass. Suominen played a nice ball over the top of the Warhawk defense and into the run of an unmarked Heather McDonnell. The forward cleverly chipped the on-rushing goalkeeper and into the back of the net from 25 yards for her second goal of the campaign. The Blue Raiders almost widened their advantage to 4-0 in the 51st minute. Threlkeld found herself in space on the far

side and was tripped from behind as she raced into the box for a penalty. Defender Nenita Burgess sent the resulting spot kick over bar. "Louisiana-Monroe is a very good team. It was great that we were able to sustain our lead throughout them match despite some late pressure," Rhoden said. "We now look forward to a very strong Louisiana-Lafayette team on Sunday." Middle Tennessee consistently found themselves behind the high line employed by the visiting defense and the advantage might have been greater if not for being called offside 11 times. The Blue Raiders look to extend their two-match unbeaten run with a match against the Louisiana-Lafayette Ragin' Cajuns at Blue Raider Field on Sunday. Kickoff is set for 1 p.m. Live video and statistics will be available on GoBlueRaiders.com.

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