Blue Raiders Earn Share of First Soccer Championship

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee sent its five-member senior class out in championship fashion as the Blue Raider soccer team turned back Louisiana-Lafayette, 2-1, to earn a share of the Sun Belt title at Blue Raider Field Sunday. The Blue Raiders (12-4-1) shared the title with North Texas, which beat Florida International 1-0 Sunday, but Middle Tennessee carries the No. 1 seed into this week's Aeropostale Sun Belt Championships in Miami by virtue of the tiebreaker. The championship is the first in the history of Middle Tennessee's soccer program, which started in 1996. Five Blue Raider seniors - Debs Brereton, Ashley Elliott, Danielle LaDuke, Laura Miguez, and Jennifer Northcutt - were honored in a pregame ceremony prior to playing their final home game. "This is what we have worked for all season and it's what our seniors have worked for since our freshman year," said Miguez, who scored a goal and assisted on another. "This is great and it means a lot to all of us. We will enjoy it now but we have to start looking toward the tournament (Monday). We wanted to go out with a championship so much and this is why you work so hard." Miguez got the scoring started with a tap inside the six in the seventh minute and the Blue Raiders made the score stand until the half. Brereton assisted on the first goal. "Louisiana-Lafayette is a very good team and they played a very good game," Middle Tennessee third-year coach Aston Rhoden said. "They make it tough on whoever they play. It was good for us to finish strong. Winning the regular season was our first goal. Our second goal is to win the tournament." Middle Tennessee

didn't wait long to pad its 1-0 lead as Brereton connected for her 16th goal just 14 seconds into the second half when she took a pass from Miguez and tapped in from inside the six. The lead stood until Lyndsey Winters scored on a deflected ball in the 82nd meeting, cutting the margin to 2-1. Middle Tennessee had several opportunities in the final 10 minutes but Ragin' Cajun keeper Anna Brannon came up with several saves to keep her team within reach. The physical game included 27 fouls - 15 on Middle Tennessee and 12 against the Ragin' Cajuns. Three yellow cards also were given, two against Louisiana-Lafayette and one on the Blue Raiders. Middle Tennessee capped the regular season with an 11-game home winning streak and completed the first perfect home schedule in program history. The 12 wins also tied the school record for most single-season triumphs. The Blue Raiders will face Arkansas State in quarterfinal action Wednesday. **NOTES:** Middle Tennessee wins its first conference championship in nine years as a varsity program ... Five seniors - Debs Brereton, Danielle LaDuke, Laura Miguez, Ashley Elliott and Jessica Northcutt - were all honored prior to the game as part of Senior Day activities ... Brereton netted her 16th goal of the season and added an assist. The senior ended the season with eight assists to go with her 16 goals, giving her 40 points. The old single-season mark for goals was 13 and the previous mark for points was 31 ... Brereton's 16 goals also places her fifth on the career goals list . Laura Miguez also netted a goal and handed out an assist, giving her five goals and nine assists this season for 19 points. It is only the second time Miguez has scored a goal and had an assist in the same contest this season, with the other coming September 12 against Tennessee Tech. The Dallas, Texas, native is the career leader at Middle Tennessee in points (87), goals (28) and assists (31) heading into this week's Sun Belt Championships ... The nine assists for Miguez and Brereton ranks tied for third on the single-season list. Brereton's nine helpers also ranks tied for sixth on the all-time list ... Keeper Jenny Manis ends the regular season with a 0.96 goals-against-average, which would rank as the best in school history if the season ended today. Teammate Danielle Perreault's 1.31 GAA last season currently ranks No. 1 ... Manis ran her season record to 12-4-1 for the year, setting a new mark for wins in a season. Perreault's 11 in 2003 was the previous high ... The Blue Raiders tied the school record for wins in a season, tying last season's mark of 12 ... Middle Tennessee ends the home schedule undefeated in nine contests, outscoring its opponents, 47-5, and have won 11 in a row at home dating to last season. The Blue Raiders head into the conference tournament with an eight-match unbeaten streak, the longest unbeaten stretch in one season and tying the longest mark in school history over two years ... Middle Tennessee scored in the first 10 minutes of the first half, its eighth goal this season in the first 10 minutes of a match. The squad also has four goals in the first five minutes of the second half this season, all wins... Middle Tennessee scored first in the match, running its record to 10-3 this season when scoring first.

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