Blue Raiders triumph 1-0 over UL-Lafayette

Pick up third-straight shutout win

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee went ahead through a Shan Jones strike just five minutes into the match in route to their third straight shutout as they defeated the Louisiana-Lafayette Ragin' Cajuns 1-0 at Blue Raider Field on Sunday afternoon. The Blue Raiders used three first-half goals, including Hope Suominen's strike just 23 seconds in, to defeat Louisiana-Monroe on Friday evening. The win cemented their second-place position in the Sun Belt Conference standings. The home side had outscored the opposition 12-1 in the last six matches coming into today's game. Louisiana-Lafayette dropped a 3-0 decision to Western Kentucky on Friday night and came into the afternoon in sixth place in the Sun Belt. The Ragin' Cajuns were looking to get their season back on track, having not picked up a victory since their 3-1 win over Arkansas-Little Rock on Oct. 5. Middle Tennessee came out strong from the opening whistle, dominating possession in the midfield and capitalizing off the pace of forwards Jen Threlkeld, Heather McDonnell and Shan Jones. It was the speedy Jones who was on hand to put the Blue Raiders ahead just five minutes into the contest. The forward ran onto a deflected Suominen pass just outside the area and glanced towards goal to see four defenders standing between her and the back of the net. The freshman was undeterred, racing into box past all four before slotting the ball to the near post for her team-leading 11th goal of the season. The strike put her in a tie for eighth place in school history for most goals in campaign. The Ragin' Cajuns were

able to maintain the majority of possession as they tried to equalize, but the Blue Raider defense held strong despite a few shaky moments near the close of the half. The best chance for the visitors to tie the match came in the 35th minute. Forward Kellie Jestes found herself with room to shoot inside the Middle Tennessee area, but her drive fell into the arms of Blue Raider goalkeeper Kela Casiple. It looked as if the Blue Raiders were set to double their advantage in the early going of the second half but they were prevented from completing several counter-attacking opportunities due to impressive goalkeeping of Louisiana-Lafayette's Amanda Moorefield. The freshman made eight saves in her first-career start. Not to be outdone, Blue Raider goalkeeper Casiple made nine saves in the match to move into third-place all-time for most shutouts in a season. The Middle Tennessee defense is now tied for second in school history for most shutouts in a year. "We knew it was going to be a tough game. Louisiana-Lafayette created some problems for us and we were fortunate to get an early lead," said Head Coach Aston Rhoden. "It is good to see the team create chances and we had several opportunities to extend the lead. At this point in the season it is about getting the result and moving towards the next game." The Blue Raiders almost put another one on the scoreboard in the 77th minute when they drove a cross into the box from the far side. It was Moorefield who was on hand with a spectacular save to tip the resulting header over the bar and preserve the Blue Raider one-goal advantage. Middle Tennessee returns to action when they travel to face rival North Texas on Friday evening. Kickoff is scheduled for 7 p.m. Live statistics will be available by selecting the appropriate link on GoBlueRaiders.com.

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