

Blue Raiders vye for Sun Belt's top spot

Face first-place Denver and fourth-place North Texas

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

The Blue Raiders play arguably their two most important matches of thus far season when they go on the road to take on North Texas and Denver this weekend. The competitive matches will have lasting implications on the Sun Belt Conference regular season crown. The Blue Raiders picked up two home wins over Louisiana-Monroe and Louisiana-Lafayette last weekend to cement their second-place position in the conference standings. Middle Tennessee currently sits a half-game behind Denver with three matches to play, all



which come against teams ranked in the top four of the conference. Middle Tennessee is hitting its stride at the right point in the season, winning eight out of their last nine games overall and pitching three straight shutouts going into this weekend's matches. The Blue Raiders begin the weekend with a match against North Texas (12-2-1, 6-1-1) Friday night at 7 p.m. The Mean Green picked up back-to-back 1-0 victories over Arkansas State and Arkansas-Little Rock last weekend. They find themselves in fourth place in the conference at 6-1-1 and hold a 12-2-1 overall record. Middle Tennessee came out 2-1 winners in Murfreesboro in 2007. The Blue Raiders conclude weekend play with a match against Denver (14-1-2, 7-0-1) Sunday at 1 p.m. The Pioneers sit atop of the Sun Belt at 7-0-1 with three matches remaining after winning 2-0 over Arkansas State and 3-1 over Arkansas-Little Rock over the weekend. Denver is currently undefeated in six matches at home this year. Middle Tennessee defeated the Pioneers 1-0 at Blue Raider Field last season. "This will be a great test for our players. We play two of the top teams in the league that have outstanding records at home," Blue Raider Head Coach Aston Rhoden said. "We are going to have to play our best and I feel like we are playing well at this point in time. Our players will be ready for the strong competition."

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