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Women's basketball ready for Monday's exhibition action

Blue Raiders face Kentucky Wesleyan at Murphy Center

Athletic Communications

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - After more than two weeks of preseason practice the Middle Tennessee women's basketball team finally will get to play a real game. That the outcome and stats do not count is irrelevant where the players are concerned.

The Blue Raiders face Kentucky Wesleyan in their first of two exhibition games at Murphy Center Monday at 7 p.m.

"We are ready to get started," said sophomore forward [Emily Queen](#), who enjoyed a solid debut season that garnered consideration for Sun Belt Freshman of the Year honors. "Our team is still learning and getting better. We have some good new players who are going to be asked to contribute early so we are all still working to get on the same page and develop chemistry. We are not where we need to be but we are still ready to get out there in a game against a different team and see exactly where we are and where we need to go from here."

The Blue Raiders are going for their sixth consecutive postseason appearance in 2008-09, including a fourth straight for fourth-year Head Coach Rick Insell, but the veteran coach says his team is not ready to think about the long term because they have a lot of work yet to accomplish in the short term.

"A lot of people look at the score but the thing I will look at the least Monday is the score," Insell said. "You want to win at everything you do, even if it's a game of checkers, but the one thing I will pay less attention to Monday is the score. We will be going against somebody other than ourselves and that is always exciting, but we are going to focus on executing what we do offensively and defensively and see where we are at the end of the game as far as turnovers are concerned.

"I want to see how good of a job we do closing out on them, different aspects of our defensive schemes and how our press sets worked as a unit. Those are the important things where I am concerned in this first exhibition game."

The exhibition game will mark the first action as Blue Raiders for heralded transfer [Alysha Clark](#), as well as [Tina Stewart](#), [Dana Garrett](#), [Abby Andrews](#), [Shytoria Davis](#) and [Molly McFadden](#); but how much any individual plays likely will be dictated by recent practices, not game situations.

"You have to come to practice and if you give us full effort then you have a chance to get out and play in a game," Insell said. "The same holds true with the exhibition games. I would say all of them will play at some point but we are not going to reward somebody with playing time just because they are on the team. They have to come out every day and show us they want to get better and they are buying into what we are doing offensively and defensively. That guarantees them playing time. Not everybody on our team is doing that right now."

Junior forward [Brandi Brown](#) sat out the last three practices with an injury to her right thumb but she is expected to be ready for action Monday.



Jackie Pickel and the Blue Raiders are eager to get on the court against Lincoln Memorial. The exhibition game is Monday at 7 p.m. (B. Lambert)

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