Blue Raiders welcome No. 13 Louisville to the Murphy Center

Middle Tennessee will play host to a nationally-ranked opponent for the fourth-straight season.

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee will look to extend its current four-game winning streak in women's basketball action as it welcomes No. 13 Louisville to the Murphy Center for a 7 p.m. Thursday contest. It will mark the first nationally-ranked opponent to play in Murfreesboro this season and the second on the Blue Raiders' early season schedule.

"They have a great program right now," head coach Rick Insell said. "They have some good players and Jeff Walz has done a great job. (Senior forward) Angel McCoughtry is probably the best player in the country. Everybody is talking about her being the No. 1 player in the WNBA Draft.

"Not only her, but they have a supporting cast that has size, lateral quickness and which shoots the ball extremely well. They are well-coached and are in a great conference in the Big East. They were in the conference championship last year against Connecticut and took UConn right down to the wire.

"It should be a great game and we're excited being in it and about them coming to Murfreesboro."

Middle Tennessee (5-1) enters the game after receiving a vote in this week's AP Poll. The ESPN/ *USA Today* Coaches' Poll will be released later Tuesday.

The Blue Raiders are coming off a 79-75 victory at LSU Sunday, in which junior forward Alysha Clark, the Nov. 25 Sun Belt Conference Player of the Week, netted a career-high 37 points to go along with her team-leading 12 rebounds for her third double-double among the first six games and 41st overall of her career.

The Blue Raiders also picked up wins during the week against in-state foe Chattanooga and Arizona.

The NCAA released its first national statistics Monday and MT was first in 3-pointers made per game at 10.2. The Lady Raiders were also among the top 50 programs in nine other categories.

Clark is third for points per game with 24.8, while also placing high for rebounds per game and field goal percentage.

Sophomore Anne Marie Lanning is fourth for 3-point field goals per game.

Louisville enters Thursday's game with an identical 5-1 record with a three-point loss at Nevada in its last game. McCoughtry leads Walz' Cardinals with 22.5 ppg and 9.7 rpg.

UofL leads the all-time series 2-0, including a one-point triumph in the only other meeting in Murfreesboro during the 1992-93 campaign.

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