

Blue Raiders set for SBC Championships

Tip set for 12:30 p.m. Saturday against No. 9 seed New Orleans

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HOT SPRINGS, Ark. - Middle Tennessee women's basketball will seek its third Sun Belt Conference Tournament title in four seasons when it opens play at 12:30 p.m. Saturday as the league's top seed versus No. 9 seed New Orleans. The contest will be the first of four women's games on the day in the quarterfinal round at the Summit Arena in Hot Springs, Ark.

The Blue Raiders ended the regular season as the league's East Division champions following a 17-1 SBC mark, claiming the division by a league-record seven games. Middle Tennessee posted a 25-5 overall record during the campaign and have won 20 of their last 21 games.

Led by Sun Belt Player of the Year and Newcomer of the Year in Alysha Clark, the Lady Raiders will be looking for their second victory against the

Privateers this season. UNO won its opening-round contest Wednesday at No. 8 seed Florida Atlantic to advance to the eight-team tournament at the neutral site location.

Clark, the nation's leading scorer at 27.0 ppg, poured in 23 points and added 10 rebounds in the 87-53 triumph at New Orleans Jan. 24, 2009. Brandi Brown, a Third Team All-Sun Belt choice, contributed a career-best 28 points on the strength of six 3-pointers.



Chelsia Lymon, the Defensive Player of the Year, added nine points on three 3-pointers as the Blue Raiders opened a 44-18 halftime advantage.

The two teams have met twice previously in Sun Belt Tournament action, both prior to the league's Coach of the Year Rick Insell taking the reigns of the MT program. Middle Tennessee captured wins in both meetings, a 69-55 triumph in the quarterfinal round March 9, 2003, and then a 73-30 victory in the opening round March 4, 2005.

The MT-UNO winner will then play in the semifinals against the team, which advances from the No. 4 Troy/No. 5 South Alabama matchup. The semifinal contest is set for 12:30 p.m. Monday.

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