

March 23, 2009

Blue Raiders reach championship with upset of No. 22 Florida State

Middle Tennessee will face either Indiana/UCLA in Callaway Collegiate Match Play Championship

Athletic Communications

RANCHO SANTA FE, Calif. - The feel-good story of the Callaway Collegiate Match Play Championship is still developing after Middle Tennessee secured its second upset in match play with a 4-1 win against third-seeded Florida State to punch its ticket into Tuesday's title match at the Farms Golf Club in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif.

The Blue Raiders know they are in the championship but their opponent will not be determined until Tuesday morning. The match between top-seeded Indiana and No. 5 UCLA was suspended due to darkness with three matches remaining. Indiana and UCLA will complete their match at 9:30 a.m., with the championship set to follow at 10:15 a.m.

Middle Tennessee, which knocked off No. 2 seed San Diego State in its quarterfinal match Monday morning, bounced back strong against 22nd-ranked Florida State during semifinal action Monday afternoon. The Blue Raiders' 4-1 win against Florida State and run to the final was powered by strong play throughout the lineup.

Chas Narramore gave the Blue Raiders an early lead with a 7 and 6 victory. **Rick Cochran** (4 and 3), **Kent Bulle** (2 and 1) and **Craig Smith** (3 and 2) all won for Middle Tennessee. **Jason Millard** suffered a tough 3 and 1 setback.

"Not a one of my players are surprised we are in this position," Middle Tennessee Head Coach Whit Turnbow said. "We came here to win and we always expect to win but we play a game that is difficult to win all the time. We have played consistent golf and the key is the contributions we have been getting throughout the lineup. Everyone has contributed and that has to be the case in order to have success in an event such as this."

Middle Tennessee earned a spot in the Callaway Collegiate Match Play Championship for the first time based on its finish at the 2008 NCAA Division I National Championship. That experience also helped prepare the Blue Raiders for this event, which features 14 of Golfstat's Top 50 teams. The Blue Raiders entered the tournament ranked 73rd in Golfstat but that ranking is certain to make a substantial jump.


It was business as usual in the semifinals.

The Blue Raiders left little doubt against Florida State as they took a 4-0 lead after one hole and never trailed. Narramore went 3-up three holes into his match and was 6-up against Florida State's Matthew Savage after nine holes. He won by a decisive 7-and-6 margin to give Middle Tennessee the early edge.

Middle Tennessee gained a 2-0 advantage when Cochran disposed of Drew Kittleson, who has earned entry into the 2009 Masters, 4-and-3. Cochran was 2-up through 14 holes but picked up consecutive points on the next two holes to end his match in convincing fashion.

Bulle was all square before Cameron Knight went 1-up seven holes into the match. Bulle evened the match on No. 11 and took the lead for good on 12. Smith turned in another solid effort, controlling his match from the outset on the way to victory.



Chas Narramore blasts out of a bunker at the Callaway Collegiate Match Play Championship Monday. Narramore won both of his matches to help lead Middle Tennessee to the championship. (MT) 

Middle Tennessee has become the event's Cinderella team where patrons attending the Callaway Collegiate Match Play Championship are concerned.

"I've had several people say they are pulling for us because we are the Cinderella, per se," Turnbow said. "We don't feel that way but when you look at the rankings I guess we are. We feel like we belong in the same company as these teams and I'm proud that our guys have proven they belong when the opportunity has been there. I credit our showing at the National Championship for some of our success here because we are not awed by the teams we are playing. It makes no difference which team we are playing to our guys."

Callaway Collegiate Match Play Championship

Rancho Santa Fe, Calif.

The Farms Golf Club, Par-72

Match Play Results

Semifinal Round

Championship Bracket

(1) Indiana vs. (5) UCLA

(7) Middle Tennessee def. (3) Florida State, 4-1

(8) Stanford def. (4) Texas A&M, 3-2

(2) San Diego State def. (6) Texas Tech, 3-2

Consolation Bracket

(12) Alabama def. (16) Duke, 4-1

(10) San Diego def. (14) Louisville, 4-1

(9) Arizona State vs. (13) Charlotte, 3-1-1

(11) Chattanooga vs. (15) UC Irvine, 3-1-1

MT Results

(7) Middle Tennessee def. (3) Florida State, 4-1

Rick Cochran, Middle Tennessee def. Drew Kittleson, Florida State, 4 and 3

Chas Narramore, Middle Tennessee def. Matt Savage, Florida State, 7 and 6

Brooks Koepka, Florida State def. **Jason Millard**, Middle Tennessee, 3 and 1

Kent Bulle, Middle Tennessee def. Cameron Knight, Florida State, 2 and 1

Craig Smith, Middle Tennessee def. Seath Lauer, Florida State, 3 and 2

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