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Moving Day at SBC Championships critical for Blue Raider men's golf

Bulle two shots off individual lead following strong opening round

Athletic Communications



Junior Kent Bulle shot a 1-under 71 and is two shots off the individual lead after the first round of the SBC Championships. (B. Lambert) 

HOUSTON - Moving Day at the SBC Championships will be critical for the Middle Tennessee men's golf team if they are to make a run at the league championship at Cypresswood Golf Club in Houston.

Photos: [First Round Gallery](#)

The Blue Raiders opened with a 7-over 295 on the Tradition Course and find themselves 12 shots behind first-round leader South Alabama, which tamed the course with a 5-under 283 during Monday's opening round. Middle Tennessee is sixth overall but just five shots separate second through sixth.

"We have a lot of work to do and we have some ground to make up but we know we can do that," Middle Tennessee second-year coach Whit Turnbow said. "We did not start very well but it is a 54-hole tournament, not an 18-hole tournament and (Tuesday) is a big day for us as we need to start making up some ground going into the final round."

Junior **Kent Bulle** turned in a strong showing in his opening round, shooting 1-under 71 and is tied for seventh and just two shots off South Alabama's Jack Hiluta's individual lead of 3-under 69. Aside of Bulle, no other Blue Raider broke into the Top 15 following the first round.

Rick Cochran is tied for 20th with a 2-over 74, **Jason Millard** and **Chas Narramore** are tied for 30th at 3-over 75 and **Craig Smith** is tied for 49th with a 7-over 79 in the first round.

"We know we are capable of playing much better as a team and that's our determination going into the second round," Bulle said. "We still have a lot of golf in front of us and this tournament is far from over. We've proven that before but we have to put together a solid round (Tuesday)."

Middle Tennessee was 13 shots off the pace after the first round of the SBC Championships in 2007 before putting together a furious comeback that saw it tie for the lead on the final day before falling one shot short in a playoff with Louisiana-Lafayette. All but one of the current five players in the lineup was part of that comeback effort.

"We've got the guys to do it and they know they can do it," Turnbow said. "That's the key. They know they can do it. We just have to put today behind us and come back tomorrow and get to work."

Bulle managed the course well, sinking three birdies and avoiding any big numbers. He added 13 pars and just two bogeys to put together his strong opening round that put him in contention for medalist honors. He was 1-over through the first three holes but played the rest of his round at 2-under.

Otherwise, it was an uncharacteristic overall team performance as Middle Tennessee had a combined 18 bogeys, one double and one triple. There were just nine birdies and two players - Bulle and Cochran - combined for six of those.

SBC Men's Championship

Houston, Texas

Cypresswood Golf Club- Tradition Course, Par-72

First Round Team Scores

1 South Alabama 283 -5

2 UALR 290 +2

2 Arkansas State 290 +2

4 Denver 291 +3

5 New Orleans 294 +6

6 Middle Tennessee 295 +7

7 North Texas 297 +9

T8 Louisiana-Lafayette 298 +10

T8 Troy 298 +10

10 WKU 300 +12

11 Florida Atlantic 305 +17

12 ULM 306 +18

6 MT Team Scores (295)

T7 **Kent Bulle** 35-36 71 -1

T20 **Rick Cochran** 35-39 74 +2

T30 **Jason Millard** 38-37 75 +3

T30 **Chas Narramore** 36-39 75 +3

T49 **Craig Smith** 40-39 79 +7

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