

May 14, 2009

Men's golf in familiar position after first round of Central Regional

Blue Raiders staring at large deficit

Athletic Communications

ALVATON, Ky. - If there is a positive to Middle Tennessee's standing following the first round of the NCAA Division I Men's Golf Central Regional it is the fact the Blue Raiders are experienced at playing from behind.

Middle Tennessee shot 22-over 310 on the grueling Olde Stone Golf Course and is in 12th place, 28 shots behind first-round leader Washington (282). Defending national champion UCLA and Georgia Tech are tied for second at 4-over 292. The top five teams advance into the NCAA Division I National Championship. Middle Tennessee is 14 shots out of fifth.

The Blue Raiders rallied from a 12 shot deficit after the first round to win the 2009 Sun Belt Championship and they have faced similar situations against tough fields throughout the season - just not on this difficult of a course.

"We can still make up enough ground to advance, there's no doubt about that, but we have to play better (Friday)," Middle Tennessee second-year Head Coach Whit Turnbow said. "We have some things to work out (Thursday night) and I know we will bounce back. We have faced greater deficits and situations so we know these guys are resilient and will make a run."

Chas Narramore, Craig Smith and **Jason Millard** each shot 5-over 77 and are tied for 44th. **Kent Bulle** and **Rick Cochran** shot 7-over 79 and are tied for 58th. Washington's Nick Taylor leads the tournament at 5-under 67.

There were good moments and the Blue Raiders are hoping for more of them in the second round. Narramore had a solid round going before closing with three bogeys in his last four holes. The senior standout was 2-over through 14 holes and had a string of five straight pars and six in the previous seven holes before a bogey on the par-4 No. 6.

Smith, who missed last year's postseason run with a back injury, had several stellar moments after a tough go of it on the back nine, but he made up for it on the front. Smith made the turn at 7-over after opening on the back nine and he had slipped to 9-over with two bogeys in his first three holes on the front; however, he found his rhythm down the stretch and demonstrated flashes of the greatness he exhibited on his way to SBC Player and Freshman of the Year honors as a freshman in 2007.

Smith shot par on No. 4 and then reeled off four straight birdies and closed with a par to play the front at 2-under.

Millard also enjoyed a strong front nine on the strength of two birdies. He was 1-under on the front and over his last 12 holes after starting at 6-over through his first six holes.

Cochran and Bulle also were stronger on the front to salvage their round but Middle Tennessee will need better scoring throughout the lineup if it is to make another memorable comeback in a postseason event.

Bulle will tee off at 9:20 a.m., followed by Cochran (9:30), Smith (9:40), Millard (9:50) and Narramore (10:00). Middle Tennessee will be paired with Vanderbilt and Cleveland State.



Craig Smith reeled off four straight birdies during one stretch at the NCAA Men's Golf Central Regional Thursday. (MT)

**2009 NCAA Central Regional
The Club at Olde Stone, Par-72
Bowling Green, Ky.**

First round team scores

1 Washington 282 -6
T2 Georgia Tech 292 +4
T2 UCLA 292 +4
4 N.C. State 294 +6
T5 Louisville 296 +8
T5 Mississippi 296 +8
7 Duke 298 +10
8 East Tennessee 299 +11
9 Ohio State 300 +12
10 Vanderbilt 305 +17
11 Cleveland State 308 +20
12 Middle Tennessee 310 +22
13 Austin Peay 315 +27
14 Bucknell 317 +29

12 MT Team Scores (310)

T44 **Chas Narramore** 39-38 77 +5
T44 **Jason Millard** 35-42 77 +5
T44 **Craig Smith** 34-43 77 +5
T58 **Rick Cochran** 37-42 79 +7
T58 **Kent Bulle** 39-40 79 +7

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