

April 18, 2005

Blue Raiders In Third After First Round of SBC Golf Championships

MT Media Relations

PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. - Even though Middle Tennessee's players believe they could have played even better than they did in the opening-round of the Sun Belt Golf Championships Monday, they still survived and find themselves in prime position after 18 holes of the 56-hole event at the PGA Village.

The Blue Raiders fired a team-total 294 and are in third place entering Tuesday's second round, just two strokes out of second and five strokes off the pace set by Louisiana-Lafayette, which shot a 289.

"You can't win it the first day but you can sure lose it," Middle Tennessee coach Johnny Moore said. "If you would have told me we would shoot a 294 on the first day I would have taken it. All of our players contributed and I'm tickled with our play in the first round."

Senior [Kenny Green](#) led the Blue Raiders with a 1-under-par 71, which is tied for fourth lowest individual score, but Middle Tennessee had a strong showing from all of its players in the first round on the North Course at PGA Village. Freshman [Nick Bailes](#) finished with a 1-over-par 73 and is tied for 11th, while [Josh Nelms](#) and [Patrick McLennan](#) finished with 75s. [Blake Bivens](#) finished his day with a 77.

"We all have been playing better toward the end of the spring," said Green, who was consistent throughout and finished with three birdies. "We are in the thick of things and it's good to be in this position. Personally, I hit my driver real well today so I was in good position all day and tried not to make too many mistakes. I tried to hit as many greens as I could and when I had a birdie chance I tried to make it and take advantage of the opportunities I had."

The average score for the day was 75.33 so four of Middle Tennessee's five players shot the course average or better, and the Blue Raiders took advantage of their big hitters by shooting 3-under on the par 5s, including an eagle from Bailes on the fourth hole.

"I think all of us had a really good start but not a great finish and we gave a few up on the last few holes," Bailes said. "Personally, I made a lot of mistakes. If I can limit those to a few mistakes instead of the six or seven I made (Monday) then I believe I can get to around par (Tuesday). I would like for our team to be in the lead after the second round and five shots on this course is easily doable."

Middle Tennessee was one of the field's most consistent teams with one eagle, 14 birdies and 52 pars, which explains why the Blue Raiders find themselves in contention after 18 holes.

Green finished with 13 pars and three birdies in one of the strongest rounds of any individual player. McLennan, who triple bogeyed the fourth hole, came on strong and played 1-under over the final 14 holes. McLennan finished with four birdies in the first round.

Bailes shot 1-under on the par 3 holes and 3-under on the par 5s for his solid round of golf.

"We hit a lot of fairway bunkers today, which you can't do," Moore said. "We got away with it because we got some bogeys out of it and a few pars. We have to stay out of those fairway bunkers (Tuesday), but I like our situation. Our guys are playing with a lot of confidence and that's so important in this game."

Individual

T4. [Kenny Green](#) 37-34 71
T11. [Nick Bailes](#) 35-38 73
T21. [Josh Nelms](#) 39-36 75
T21. [Patrick McLennan](#) 37-38 75
T32. [Blake Bivens](#) 40-37 77

Team

Louisiana-Lafayette 289
2. New Mexico State 292
3. Middle Tennessee 294



Middle Tennessee senior Kenny Green tees off during first-round action of the Sun Belt Golf Championships Monday. Green fired a 1-under-71 and is tied for fourth. (MT)

4. New Orleans 295
5. South Alabama 296
6. Arkansas-Little Rock 298
7. Denver 299
8. Arkansas State 302
9. Western Kentucky 305
10. North Texas 307

Printed on May 23, 2012

Original URL: <http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/3959>