

April 19, 2005

## Ecstasy and Agony: 18th Hole Difference In Blue Raiders' Second Round

MT Media Relations

**PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla.** - Anyone who has played the game of golf realizes one hole can turn a bad round into a good one, or vice versa, and if there is any doubt ask any member of Middle Tennessee's team.

The Blue Raiders were 8-over-par and just four strokes off the lead through 17 holes at the Sun Belt Conference Championship at PGA Village Tuesday, but they combined to shoot 8-over on the 18th hole and dropped into fifth place with a two-day total of 598, 12 strokes behind tourney-leader Louisiana-Lafayette's 586.

Suddenly, what was a splendid round of golf soured for Middle Tennessee entering Wednesday's final round.

Wind gusts and tough hole placement made for difficult play on the North Course at PGA Village Tuesday, but the tough trek couldn't curtail Middle Tennessee's pursuit of its first Sun Belt Championship on the links - until the final hole of the day.



Senior Kenny Green watches his putt drop into the cup for a birdie during Tuesday's second round. Green is tied for the tournament lead with a 1-under-par total of 143. (MT)

That's when a double-bogey and a sextuple turned an otherwise solid round into a dismal afternoon.

"We played solid golf all day long under tough conditions," Middle Tennessee coach Johnny Moore said. "The holes were tough and the course was tough. We certainly were beating up on the two teams we were playing with (New Mexico State and Louisiana-Lafayette) and then to have that happen on the last hole, it's tough. We are 8-over with two players on the last hole and we are 15 over for the day, so it all was right there, but they have 18 holes out there and you have to play all 18 of them."

Other than the 18th hole, Middle Tennessee's golfers were outstanding from the outset. Senior [Kenny Green](#) continued his consistent play with another solid round, shooting a 72 in the second round to find himself tied for the lead with a two-day-total 143 heading into what could be the final round of what has been an outstanding Blue Raider career.

Green has fired seven birdies and has 23 pars, which is one off the pace, during his first two rounds.

"I was trying to play real hard and put a score up that my team could use, and I was able to put myself in position to do well individually, too," Green said. "I've just kind of been working to keep the ball in play and not get myself in too much trouble. I've been able to take advantage of that situation. We are not out of this thing as a team. We have twosomes (Wednesday) so we need to go out and post a good score early and see what happens. That's about all we can do."

Redshirt freshman [Nick Bailes](#) also has been steady with a two-day 149, which is tied for 15th overall. Bailes leads the team in par-3 scoring with a 1-under. [Josh Nelms](#) is third on the team with a 154, as is [Blake Bivens](#), while [Patrick McLennan](#) stands at 155 through two rounds.

The Blue Raiders lead the tournament in par-3 scoring with a plus-10 and they are tied for the most pars among the field with 105. Although Middle Tennessee has a wealth of ground to make up Wednesday, no one is throwing in the towel on the difficult course.

"I think we just have to go out, play the course and see what happens," Moore said. "We have a lot of ground to make up but anything is possible. We just have to approach the final round with a positive approach and take it from there."

### Individual

T1 [Kenny Green](#) 71-72 143

T15 [Nick Bailes](#) 73-76 149

T32 [Josh Nelms](#) 75-79 154

T32 [Blake Bivens](#) 77-77 154

T36 [Patrick McLennan](#) 75-80 155

### Team

Louisiana-Lafayette 289-297 586

2. South Alabama 296-291 587

3. New Orleans 295-298 593

4. Denver 299-297 596

**5. Middle Tennessee 294-304 598**

6. Arkansas-Little Rock 298-309 607
7. Arkansas State 302-306 608
8. New Mexico State 292-317 609
9. North Texas 307-303 610
10. Western Kentucky 305-306 611

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