

August 20, 2009

## Blue Raider soccer opens regular season Friday

### Middle Tennessee to face Tennessee Tech in opener

*Athletic Communications*

**MURFREESBORO, Tenn.** - Preseason camp will officially come to a close Friday when the Middle Tennessee women's soccer team opens its regular season with a 4 p.m. match in Cookeville, Tenn., against regional foe Tennessee Tech. The Blue Raiders had opened camp August 6 in preparation for their 14th season playing at the varsity level.

"I think they are certainly ready to get out and play again," head coach Aston Rhoden said. "We already had an (exhibition) game against Jacksonville State, they were excited to get out and play. But with that being the first game, there were so many jitters and I am hoping we have let those out. We should be ready to play against what should be a strong opponent in Tennessee Tech."

Middle Tennessee returns 16 letterwinners and seven starters from last season's squad which posted a 9-8-3 overall record, including a 7-3-1 ledger in the Sun Belt. The Blue Raiders were picked to finish fourth this week by the league's head coaches in the preseason poll in the 12-team race.

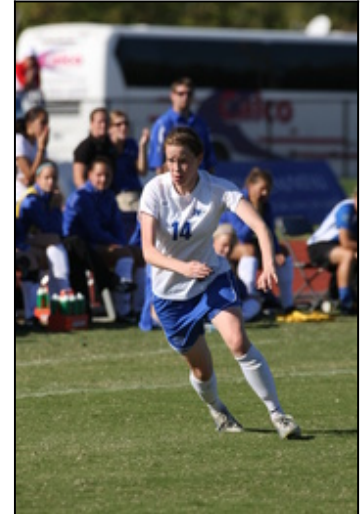
Junior [Fran Howells](#) and sophomore [Shan Jones](#) were selected to the Preseason All-Sun Belt Team. Howells, one of two team captains, was a 2008 All-Sun Belt Second Team choice, while Jones was picked to the league's first team and as its Freshman of the Year last fall.

The Blue Raiders played host to Jacksonville State in an exhibition match Sunday at Dean A. Hayes Track and Soccer Stadium. The game was contested under non-traditional NCAA timing rules with three 30-minute periods and a penalty shootout immediately following, which saw all eligible players for both teams attempting one shot.

Middle Tennessee leads the all-time series against Tennessee Tech, 9-2, having won the first five meetings and four of the last five matchups. In the nine victories, the Blue Raiders have outscored the Golden Eagles 19-1.

Tennessee Tech was selected to finish fifth in the preseason Ohio Valley Conference poll after completing 2008 with a 5-14-1 (3-4-1 OVC) mark. The Golden Eagles enter their second season this fall under head coach Becky Fletcher.

The match can be heard live at <http://www.goblueraiders.com/stream.cfm?load=livesoccer> with Chris Childers handling the play-by-play duties.



Emily Snowden returns to the Blue Raider defensive backline in 2009. (Bradley Lambert)

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