Middle Tennessee soccer opens with shutout victory

Jorgenson nets two goals in MT debut

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COOKEVILLE, Tenn. - The Middle Tennessee soccer team opened its 14th season of varsity competition with a 4-0 shutout triumph at Tennessee Tech Friday afternoon at the Tech Soccer Field in Cookeville, Tenn. The Blue Raiders jumped in front early, netting two goals in the opening 23 minutes, before adding a pair in the second half to clinch the opening match win, their first since 2006.

"It is certainly a better way to start than last year," MT head coach Aston Rhoden said. "We started off this year with four very good goals. I am very pleased with the attacking mindset we had today."

Freshman Whitney Jorgenson got the scoring started at 4:46 on an assist from Hope Suominen. Suominen sent a long through ball to Jorgenson in stride and the rookie beat the Golden Eagle defense and goalkeeper Megan Polk.

"One of our goals was to get a goal in the first 20 minutes and we did that in both the first and second half," Rhoden continued.

Middle Tennessee (1-0) was not scoring in the first half, as senior Jen Threlkeld netted her first goal of the campaign at 22:57. Threlkeld took an initial shot, which ricocheted off the crossbar and bounced right back to her feet. She then recollected the ball and fired another attempt past Polk from

15 yards out to increase the margin to two.

The Blue Raiders maintained an offensive domination in the opening 45 minutes, outshooting Tennessee Tech (0-1) by a 14-5 advantage and holding a 3-0 edge on corner kicks.

MT was not finished adding marks to the scoreboard in the second half, as junior Vanessa Mueggler tallied her first goal at 60:06 on a Shan Jones assist. Jones passed the ball to Mueggler near the top of the 18-yard box, which Mueggler then attempted a shot as she was being tackled by a Golden Eagle defender. The attempt had enough forward momentum to find the back of the net, putting the Blue Raiders ahead by three.

The visitors continued to push forward with Elisabeth Sikes finding Threlkeld, who then looked ahead to a streaking Jorgenson. The freshman gathered the ball in stride, made a move around Polk to discover an open net and punched the scoreboard one last time at 65:07 to cap the scoring on the afternoon.

"I am very happy and my dad was here to watch me too," Jorgenson noted. "It is nice to know that if I am open, they will play me, or if someone else is open, they play her."

Middle Tennessee outshot Tennessee Tech 26-10 overall with Threlkeld and Mueggler leading the squad with five shots apiece. Suominen and Jorgenson added four each, while Jones and Regina Thomas contributed a pair of attempts towards the Golden Eagle cage.

Rebecca Cushing and Jessica Gilchrist combined for the shutout in their first action as Blue Raiders. Cushing earned the start, playing the opening 76:28 and registering five saves, before giving way to Gilchrist for the final 13:32.

MT will continue its season when it opens the home slate at 1 p.m. Sunday against Alabama A&M at Dean A. Hayes Track and Soccer Stadium.

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