Middle Tennessee set for Buckeye State road trip

Blue Raiders to face pair of first-time opponents

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - The Middle Tennessee soccer team will hit the road for Dayton, Ohio, this weekend to play a couple of matches against first-time opponents. The Blue Raiders open the slate at 6 p.m. Central Friday against Wright State before they face Dayton at Noon Central Sunday.

"We certainly have a lot of confidence going into the weekend," Rhoden said. "But, we also know it will be a stiff test for us. This will be our first really long road trip and we are playing two quality opponents in a state that is known for its soccer."

Middle Tennessee enters the weekend as the only Sun Belt school with a 2-0 record. The two victories it earned moved the Blue Raiders into the No. 10 spot in the National Soccer Coaches Association of America's South Region poll. MT is the only member of the Top 10 with two contests under its belt entering this weekend.

Sophomore Shan Jones leads a balanced and deep offensive attack. She collected her first Sun Belt Player of the Week accolade Tuesday after tallying a school-

record tying four goals in the 11-1 victory against Alabama A&M Sunday. Jones' four scores lead the conference and team, as do her 10 overall points, which include a pair of assists.

Eight other Blue Raiders have added at least one goal in the two games, including three by freshman Whitney Jorgenson and two from senior Jen Threlkeld. Jorgenson found the back of the net two times in the season-opening 4-0 triumph at Tennessee Tech Friday. Threlkeld has contributed one score in each of the two games.

Sophomore Hope Suominen paces the squad with four assists, followed closely by Threlkeld's three. Jones and fellow sophomore Luisa Moscoso each have two assists on the season.

Middle Tennessee is outscoring its opponents 15-1 and carries a commanding 46-2 advantage in points, 50-13 margin on overall shots and 24-7 edge on shots on goal.

"I hope it continues throughout the season," Rhoden noted about the well-rounded attack.

Sophomore Rebecca Cushing has garnered the start in goal during both matches thus far for the Blue Raiders. The sophomore transfer has yet to allow a score in 121:28 of time between the pipes and has the only six goalkeeper saves on the team.

Wright State comes into the weekend with a 0-2 record after opening the season with losses at Indiana and Akron. The Raiders finished 2008 with a 10-9-1 record, including a 4-3-1 mark in the Horizon League for head coach Pat Ferguson.

Dayton is 1-0 entering the campaign, having won its season opener at Loyola (Ill.). The Flyers, who were 15-6-1 (8-2-1 Atlantic 10) last fall, will play at Auburn Friday before heading back home for the MT match Sunday. Head coach Mike Tucker is in his 15th season as the UD mentor.

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