## Blue Raiders draw even with Sooners in hardfought battle

## Middle Tennessee rallies from one-goal deficit

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## MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Middle Tennessee rallied from a one-goal deficit but could not hang on and battled through overtime before earning a 2-2 double-overtime tie Friday night against Oklahoma in front of a large and loud fan base at Dean A. Hayes Track and Soccer Stadium in Murfreesboro, Tenn.

"We are very grateful for our fan support tonight," Blue Raider head coach Aston Rhoden said. "They were loud and supportive the entire match and helped our team in this outstanding soccer contest."

After a scoreless first half in which Middle Tennessee (3-1-1) seemed to control much of the offensive opportunities, it was Oklahoma which struck first at 61:06 on Katharine Nutman's first goal of the season at 61:06 on an assist from Dria Hampton. Hampton took the initial shot in the sequence, which was saved by Blue Raider goalie Rebecca Cushing, but Cushing could not control the ball and it found the foot of Nutman, Nutman, who was



standing just inside the sixyard box on the left post, pushed it into the back of the net to break the scoreless tie.



Middle Tennessee regained an offensive push as the regulation clock wound down. The Blue Raiders lined up for a corner kick with just under 17 minutes to play. Vanessa Mueggler's swing pass found the foot of Luisa Moscoso, who then sidestepped a one-touch to Jen Threlkeld. Threlkeld took one attempt at the ball and it found the net behind Sooner keeper Kelsey Devonshire for the equalizer at 73:37.

The Blue Raiders continued to push forward with a chance at the go-ahead goal. Those opportunities came to fruition at 86:32 when Paige Goeglein netted her second score of her career. Hope Suominen lined up for a free kick on the left side, hitting Mueggler, who then fed the ball to Goeglein from 15 yards out for the 2-1 MT advantage.

"We were pushing for a goal because it was tied and I thought my goal helped give us momentum," Goeglein noted.

Despite the late goal, Oklahoma (4-0-1) never quit and knotted the score once again before regulation ended. The Sooners' capitalized on a long through ball by Hampton to Whitney Palmer, who slipped behind the Blue Raider defense and beat Cushing to the far side with just 58 seconds remaining, at 89:02.

Both teams had several chances throughout regulation and overtime for more scoring opportunities but neither team found the back of the net again.

The physical match resulted in three yellow cards being issued. Several of the set-piece chances for both teams were placed near the cage but not converted.

Shan Jones was the Blue Raider leader with four shots, while Palmer paced the Sooners with four as well.

Cushing finished with a career-best 10 saves, while Devonshire recorded five stops for OU.

"We played a great game against a great opponent," Rhoden continued. "Oklahoma provided us with a solid test which will help us the remainder of the season."

The two teams have met twice on the pitch with both matches ending in ties.

Middle Tennessee will resume its season at 1 p.m. Sunday when it plays host to Belmont at Dean A. Hayes Track and Soccer Stadium.

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