Jones leads Middle Tennessee past Belmont

Sophomore nets game's only goal

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Reigning Sun Belt Freshman of the Year Shan Jones netted the game's only goal as Middle Tennessee withstood a 40-minute weather delay Sunday afternoon to knock off visiting Belmont, 1-0, in non-conference soccer action at the Dean A. Hayes Track and Soccer Stadium.

The game was suspended with about eight minutes to play in the opening half due to lightning in the area. The Bruins controlled much of the action before the delay and finished the first stanza with a 13-7 shot advantage against the host Blue Raiders.

"It was great to get to a win over the weekend in front of our loyal supporters", head coach Aston Rhoden said. "Although we may not have played our best, we are happy to get the victory. Our fans again were tremendous in their support of our team."

However, once the teams came out of the locker room for the second half, the game quickly turned to the favor of Middle Tennessee (4-1-1).

The Blue Raiders put immediate pressure on the Bruin cage and an attempted clear by the defense was blocked by MT's Regina Thomas near the 18-yard box. Thomas one-touched the ball across the top of the box to a wide-open Jones, who then placed it behind goalie Sari Lin at 45:31 for her team and conference-leading fifth goal of the campaign. Jones entered the game with four goals and having been named the Aug. 25 Sun Belt Player of the Week.

Middle Tennessee then clamped down on defense, preventing Belmont (1-3) from scoring the equalizer in preserving the second blanking of the season. Sophomore Rebecca Cushing played the entire 90 minutes in between the pipes, earning the shutout.

Jones and Vanessa Mueggler tied for the team lead with four shots, while the Bruins' Lauren Paynter paced all players with six attempts. Belmont ended the contest with a slim 17-14 edge on shots and held a 6-0 advantage on corner kicks.

Cushing registered five saves in the shutout, while Lin stopped three shots for the visitors.

The Blue Raiders will return to action in one week when they travel to Evansville, Ind., to face the Evansville Purple Aces at 1 p.m. Sunday.

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