

Blue Raiders look to continue strong start

Middle Tennessee is 4-1-1 after six matches

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee's soccer team will look to continue its best start since 2006 when it travels to Evansville, Ind., to face the Evansville Purple Aces at 1 p.m. Sunday in non-conference action.

"We expect a really strong game," Blue Raider head coach Aston Rhoden said. "We are just hoping, like all of our games thus far, we can use it as preparation for conference play which opens in two weeks."

Middle Tennessee enters the contest with a 4-1-1 record, its best start through six matches since the 2006 squad posted a 5-1 ledger. The two marks are the best under Rhoden, who took the reigns of the program prior to the 2002 campaign.

The Blue Raiders went undefeated last weekend, earning a 2-2 tie versus

Oklahoma Friday night before scoring a 1-0 triumph against Belmont Sunday. Both matches were played at Dean A. Hayes Track and Soccer Stadium.

Three different MT players tallied goals over the weekend, including the team and conference-leading fifth for sophomore Shan Jones, who registered the game winner against Belmont. Senior Jen Threlkeld and freshman Paige Goeglein posted the scores in the Oklahoma contest. Overall on the season, 10 different players have recorded at least one goal for the Blue Raiders.

Sophomore Rebecca Cushing remains the primary goalkeeper, garnering a start in all six matches. She collected her first collegiate shutout versus Belmont, two days after gathering a career-high 10



saves against the Sooners.

Evansville is in its second campaign under the direction of head coach Krista McKendree. The Purple Aces were 13-5-2 a year ago, but have started this fall at 1-3. UE opened the season with a 1-0 win at Southeast Missouri, but have dropped three straight.

"Evansville is a very good team. They won their league (Missouri Valley Conference) and went to the NCAAs last year with a young squad. A lot of those players return this season."

Kristen Davis and Abby Guerra have posted the team's only two goals through the opening four matches. Chaviel Harrison and Theresa Bagby have split time between the pipes with each goalie seeing action for 180 minutes.

The two teams have met twice previously with the series split, 1-1. The Blue Raiders were victorious the last time out, a 3-1 decision in Murfreesboro Sept. 1, 2006, as part of the Middle Tennessee Classic. The only other meeting was a 2-1 Evansville triumph Sept. 11, 2005, in Evansville, Ind.

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