Middle Tennessee soccer closes non-conference slate Friday

Blue Raiders to face Lady Govs of Austin Peay

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - The Middle Tennessee soccer team will play its final non-conference match of the season at 7 p.m. Friday when it travels to Clarksville, Tenn., to face Austin Peay.

The Blue Raiders enter the contest off to the second-best start in school history at 5-1-1 and are unbeaten in their last three matches, including back-to-back one-goal victories.

"We are looking forward to playing this game," head coach Aston Rhoden said. "Whenever you get an opportunity to play another in-state team, it is always good. (Austin Peay head coach) Kelley (Guth) has done an outstanding job with her team. Records go out the window when you play this time of game, so we will have to be ready and be prepared for a strong game at their home field."

Sophomore Shan Jones continues to lead the balanced offensive attack with six goals, 15 points and 25 shots. She has tallied the game-winning scores in each of the last two matches, giving Middle Tennessee triumphs over Belmont and Evansville.

Senior Jen Threlkeld, junior Vanessa Mueggler and freshmen Whitney Jorgenson and Paige Goeglein have each added three goals to the attack, which is outscoring opponents 24-11 through the opening seven matches. Five other players have also found the back of the net at least once for Rhoden's squad.

Twelve different Blue Raiders have been credited with at least one assist, led by six from sophomore Hope Suominen. Threlkeld is next with four, while Jones has three helpers.

Defensively, sophomore transfer Rebecca Cushing has garnered the start in between the pipes in all seven matches. She enters the Austin Peay match with 31 saves, a 75.6 save percentage and 1.51 goals-against average.

The 5-1-1 record is the second best through seven matches in the program's history, trailing only the 6-1 start by the 2006 squad. The 1999 and 2005 teams began 5-2.

Austin Peay brings a 1-5-1 record into the contest, having dropped three straight. The Lady Govs, led by eighth-year head coach Kelley Guth, have been outscored, 13-3, and have not scored since a 2-0 victory over Cumberland Sept. 1. Austin Peay, however, is 1-0-1 in its two home matches thus far this season.

The two teams have been just twice over the years with the last meeting coming in 2003. Middle Tennessee captured a win in both contests, including a 4-0 shutout Oct. 5, 2003, in Clarksville, Tenn. The Blue Raiders earned a 2-1 victory in the only other tilt, Oct. 20, 2002, in Murfreesboro, Tenn.

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