Soccer pulls away late to earn victory to reach double-digit wins

Blue Raiders score twice in nine-minute span

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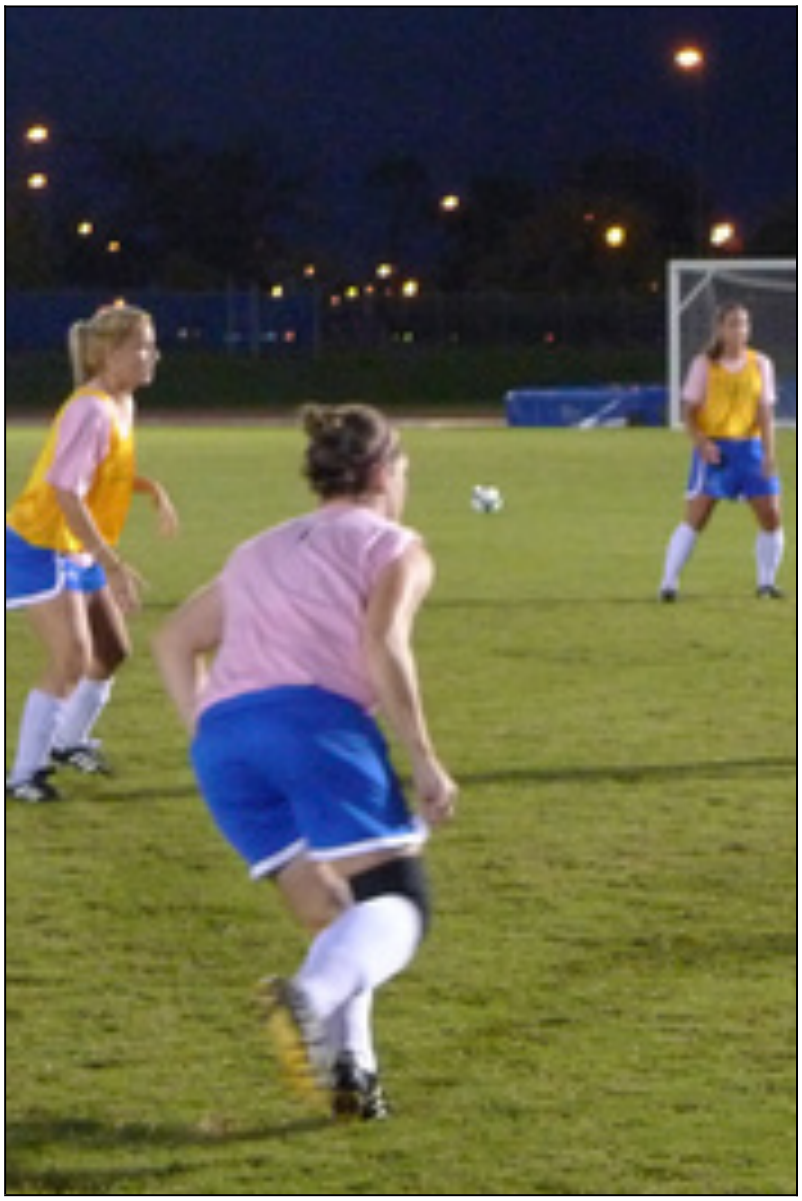

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee scored twice in a nine-minute span late in the second half after finding itself tied with visiting Arkansas State to earn a 3-1 triumph Friday evening in a crucial Sun Belt Conference match at Dean A. Hayes Track and Soccer Stadium. The Blue Raiders reach the double-digit win plateau for the sixth time in eight seasons under head coach Aston Rhoden and the ninth time overall in program history with the win.

"Arkansas State is certainly a good team," Rhoden said. "I was really proud of how our team responded after their goal. We did not lose our composure and kept doing what we believe in to give us two goals. It also created several opportunities for us. We will take the win at home against a team that was at the top of our league."

Once again, a balanced offensive attack was the difference for Middle Tennessee (10-2-1, 4-1 Sun Belt), as three different players scored the team's goals in the victory.

"To have the number of people score goals for us this season is a very good thing," senior Jen Threlkeld said. "To be so dynamic up top, along with a solid defense, we are very confident right now."

Threlkeld was credited with the game winner when she put the Blue Raiders ahead 2-1 at the 70:08

on her fifth goal of the campaign. Freshman Paige Goeglein sent a high cross from the right side into the penalty box, finding Threlkeld's head from 12 yards out. The senior redirected the pass past Red Wolves goalkeeper Susan Brown.

Nearly nine minutes later, at 78:53, the icing was put on the cake when sophomore Luisa Moscoso one-touched a pass behind her to junior Vanessa Mueggler, who was running all alone on the left flank. Mueggler took the ball, dribbled to just inside the 18-yard box and fired it past Brown for her sixth goal this season.

Junior Fran Howells started the night's scoring at 29:18. Following a foul on the Arkansas State (6-5-1, 3-1 Sun Belt) defense, freshman Allison Stallard lined up for the free kick. Her shot landed inside the six-yard box, only to be bobbled by Brown. Howells was one of many Blue Raiders around the loose ball, but she placed her foot on it and had a wide-open net in front of her for the second goal this fall for the co-captain.

The score remained 1-0 through the half, but the Red Wolves were able to net the equalizer at 64:12 when Chelsea Fricke located Miranda Wiley standing near the midfield line. Wiley moved forward about 10 yards before launching a long-range shot that just went under the crossbar and above the head of MT goalkeeper Rebecca Cushing.

The two teams had several other chances apiece, but the wet field conditions due to heavy rains in the Murfreesboro area all day helped control the pace at which the game was played.

Threlkeld finished with a game-high five shots, while Mueggler and sophomore Shan Jones each added four as the Blue Raiders held a 20-10 edge in the category. Cushing collected seven saves in between the pipes for Middle Tennessee.

Arkansas State played a balanced game with 10 different players taking its shots. Brown finished with a game-high 10 saves in the cage.

Prior to the game, the Blue Raiders wore specially designed pink warm-up t-shirts in support of breast cancer research. The Center for Breast Health at Middle Tennessee Medical Center sponsored the event.

Middle Tennessee will again wear the pink shirts when it returns to action at 1 p.m. Sunday when it plays host to UALR at the Dean A. Hayes Track and Soccer Stadium. A similar designed t-shirt is available for purchase to the general public for $12.

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