

October 20, 2009

Clark selected Player of the Year; Blue Raiders picked to win division

Three players receive preseason all-league accolades

Athletic Communications

NEW ORLEANS - Middle Tennessee was chosen to defend its East Division crown, while senior **Alysha Clark** added to her preseason accolades by being tabbed the Player of the Year it was announced Tuesday by the Sun Belt Conference following a vote of the league's head coaches. The preseason poll and all-conference teams were unveiled prior to the start of the annual media days.

"We are excited about the fact that we again are selected to win the East," head coach Rick Insell said. "However, what matters is at the end of the year. How you do during the season and how you end up is the most important."

The Blue Raiders, who finished last season with a 28-6 overall and 17-1 Sun Belt record, garnered 11.5 of a possible 13 votes to claim the East Division. Middle Tennessee distanced itself from fellow division members, in order: Western Kentucky, South Alabama, Florida Atlantic, FIU and Troy. UALR was selected to finish on top of the West Division.

Clark was picked as the Preseason Player of the Year following her selection as the league's top player last season. She finished as the nation's leading scorer with 27.5 ppg and guided the Blue Raiders to the NCAA Tournament First Round.

In addition, Clark was named to the First Team All-Sun Belt along with teammate **Brandi Brown**. Brown, also a senior, averaged 11.9 ppg in 2008-09 and finished the campaign as a Third Team All-Sun Belt honoree.

Fellow senior **Chelsia Lymon** was tabbed to the Second Team All-Sun Belt, her second-straight selection on the team. She was the Sun Belt Defensive Player of the Year last season and earned Third Team All-Sun Belt accolades following the conclusion of the campaign.

"It means more that they (the other coaches) respect our players, two of which made first team and another on second team. I am excited for Alysha, Brandi and Chelsia. For them to show that type of respect for our players and our program, I am excited about that."

Middle Tennessee opened practice Friday and will continue leading up to its season opener Nov. 15 at 2 p.m. against UCF.

Preseason All-Sun Belt Teams:

First Team:


Alysha Clark (Middle Tennessee, Sr., F)

Brandi Brown (Middle Tennessee, Sr., F)

Chastity Reed (UALR, Jr., F)

Shakira Nettles (South Alabama, Sr., G)



Senior Alysha Clark was selected as the Sun Belt Preseason Player of the Year. (Bradley Lambert) 

Arnika Brown (Western Kentucky, Sr., F)

Second Team:

Chelsia Lymon (Middle Tennessee, Sr., G)

Monika Bosilj (FIU, Sr., G)

Kim Sitzmann (UALR, Sr., G)

Kaetlyn Murdoch (Denver, So., F)

Dominique Duck (Western Kentucky, Sr., F)

Third Team:

Ebonie Jefferson (Arkansas State, Sr., G)

Brittany Bowe (Florida Atlantic, Sr., G)

Brittany Helm (New Orleans, Sr., G)

Brittney James (North Texas, Sr., G)

Kenzie Rich (Western Kentucky, Sr., G)

Preseason Poll:

East Division:

Middle Tennessee (11.5), 76.5

Western Kentucky (1), 62

South Alabama, 48

Florida Atlantic (0.5), 38.5

FIU, 26

Troy, 22

West Division:

UALR (13), 90

Denver, 73

Arkansas State, 66

New Orleans, 43

North Texas, 43

ULM, 34

Louisiana, 15

() - first-place votes

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