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Blue Raiders close regular-season slate against Hilltoppers

MT carries successful record into regular-season finale

Athletic Communications

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - The Middle Tennessee soccer team will travel to Bowling Green, Ky., Friday for its final regular-season match of the campaign, as it faces rival Western Kentucky at the WKU Soccer Complex at 6 p.m.

"This is an important game because it is still a part of our regular season," head coach Aston Rhoden said. "Like every game, we are going to go out and try to get a positive result. We hope to use it as preparation for the upcoming conference tournament."

The Blue Raiders enter the match with a 12-4-2 overall record, including a 6-3-1 mark in Sun Belt action. Middle Tennessee is guaranteed the fifth-place seed in next week's Sun Belt Tournament in Boca Raton, Fla., regardless of Friday's outcome.

Thirteen different Blue Raiders have scored at least one goal during the campaign, led by 11 from sophomore **Shan Jones**. Her total equals the output she set last fall when she was named the Sun Belt Freshman of the Year.

Redshirt freshman **Regina Thomas** scored MT's lone goal during the final homestand last week against North Texas and Denver. Fellow newcomer, sophomore **Rebecca Cushing**, posted seven saves in the scoreless tie with then league-leader North Texas Friday.

Following the Western Kentucky match, the Blue Raiders will open Sun Belt Tournament play at Noon Wednesday against an opponent yet to be determined as the No. 4 seed.

Middle Tennessee owns a 3-1-4 all-time series record against Western Kentucky. The lone Hilltopper victory came during the inaugural meeting in 2001. Each of the last two contests have ended in ties by 1-1 and 2-2 scores in 2007 and 2008, respectively.



Sophomore Rebecca Cushing has four solo shutouts on the season entering Friday's match at Western Kentucky. (Bradley Lambert)

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