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Blue Raiders ranked in preseason AP poll for first time

Middle Tennessee earns No. 24 ranking

Athletic Communications

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee women's basketball earned 143 votes for the No. 24 position in the preseason Associated Press poll released Friday, marking the first time in school history the Blue Raiders have been placed in the preseason poll.

"It is definitely exciting to be ranked in the preseason top 25," head coach Rick Insell said. "It says a lot about our program and our players. Now comes the time that we have to go out and take care of business."

Middle Tennessee, coming off a 28-6 campaign a year ago, has also received preseason accolades from various magazines. *Slam* has listed the Blue Raiders at the highest position, placing them at No. 8.

While it never reached the Top 25 by the organization in 2008-09, the Associated Press in its final poll ranked MT No. 26 last season. The highest the AP has ever listed the Blue Raiders was at No. 16 late in the 2006-07 campaign before they finished at No. 17 in the final standings.

Four Middle Tennessee opponents also earned preseason honors from the Associated Press. Tennessee (No. 7), LSU (No. 8), Xavier (No. 11) and Louisville (No. 23) garnered rankings.

The Blue Raiders open their exhibition slate with a 7 p.m. Monday contest against Carson-Newman inside the Murphy Center. Middle Tennessee begins regular-season action at 2 p.m. Nov. 15 at home against UCF.

Preseason AP Poll:

1. Connecticut (40), 1000
2. Stanford, 951
3. Ohio State, 862
4. Notre Dame, 799
5. North Carolina, 798
6. Duke, 772
7. Baylor, 744
8. Tennessee, 676
9. LSU, 600
10. Michigan State, 521
11. Xavier, 492
12. Texas, 487
13. Oklahoma, 444
14. Virginia, 394
15. Florida State, 385
16. Arizona State, 317
17. DePaul, 301
18. California, 294
19. Georgia Tech, 262
20. Kansas, 241
21. Georgia, 201
22. Vanderbilt, 165
23. Louisville, 156
- 24. Middle Tennessee, 143**
25. Rutgers, 138



Head coach Rick Insell and the Blue Raiders are ranked in the preseason AP poll for the first time in school history. (Bradley Lambert)