

February 20, 2010

## Raiders set to open spring season

### Men's golf team ranked 27th

*Athletic Communications*

**MURFREESBORO, Tenn.** - Middle Tennessee's men's golf team, currently ranked 27th nationally by Golfstat.com, will tee off the 2010 spring season on Sunday, February 21st, at the Mobile Bay Intercollegiate in Mobile, Ala. Hosted by Sun Belt Conference foe South Alabama, the three-day, 18-team tournament will also include teams from the SEC, Big 12, Big East and Conference USA. Middle Tennessee will be the highest ranked team in the tournament.

Coach Whit Turnbow, who saw his team rise to its highest pre-season ranking in history, is ready to see if his team can build on the momentum they gained last fall by coming from behind to win two tournaments on the final day.

Middle Tennessee won the Mason Rudolph tournament, overcoming an 11-stroke deficit to beat No. 10 South Carolina in a playoff. Georgia Tech, ranked No. 3 at the time, finished 4th. In the final fall match, the Blue Raiders beat No. 18 Chattanooga on their own home course, after rallying from nine strokes down.

"We had a heck of a fall, but we have not played in the last three and a half months, so a little of the momentum has worn off," said Turnbow, now in his third season as head coach.

"The weather in January and February here has been the worst I can remember, and we haven't been on a course in a long time. Obviously, our performance center has helped us a lot, but when we tee it up in Mobile, it will be the first time we have not hit balls into a net for a while."

Turnbow revealed that he will not be starting the same five golfers that he used last fall.

"[Jason Millard](#) has been suspended indefinitely for a violation of team rules," noted Turnbow. "He will be replaced by red-shirt freshman [Dane Voss](#), who will be making his varsity debut. I have total confidence in Dane. He has worked hard to get this chance, and he deserves it."

[Kent Bulle](#) and [Craig Smith](#) are the two seniors on the team, which also includes junior Millard and sophomores [Hunter Green](#) and [Brad Simons](#). Bulle led the team in the fall with a 71.4 stroke average, followed by Millard (72.0), Green (72.2), Smith (73.3) and Simons (73.6).

Bulle and Green tied for low medalist in the Chattanooga tournament. In the playoff with South Carolina at the Mason Rudolph, four of the five Blue Raiders birdied the last hole, and Smith wound up tied for 4th overall.

"We are as mentally tough as anyone in the country. Every player at this level has the physical skills, but not all of them have the same mental approach," said Turnbow. "We develop that edge by working hard in the weight room, and spend a lot of time at our performance center, and they all do the extra things above what we ask them to do that makes the difference."

"When we get to a tournament, we know in our minds that we are at least as well-prepared as any other team in the tournament," said Turnbow.

Defending Mobile Bay Intercollegiate champion Mississippi State heads a contingent of four SEC schools which includes Kentucky, Ole Miss and Vanderbilt. Louisville and South Florida represent the Big East, while Memphis and Southern Miss will carry the banner for Conference USA. South Alabama, who was runner-up in this tournament last spring, will be joined by MTSU and Arkansas State in representing the Sun Belt.

The tournament will be held on the Magnolia Grove Crossing Golf Course, the home course of South Alabama. It is a par-72, 7,212 yard course.

Other teams in the field are: Akron, Toledo, Iowa State, Belmont, Jacksonville, Kennesaw State, and Illinois State.

"We will use all of the spring tournaments before the conference championship to try to set ourselves up so that we don't have to win the conference to go to the NCAA," pointed out Turnbow. "Hopefully, we can do that."

Fans wishing to follow Middle Tennessee's golfers on the internet may log on to [golfstat.com](http://golfstat.com), which will provide score updates



Kent Bulle will lead the Blue Raiders as they begin the 2010 spring schedule. ( )

every three holes throughout the tournament.

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