Senior class makes final appearance in Murphy Center Sunday

Annual Pink Zone game with Senior Day festivities after the contest

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - The Middle Tennessee women's basketball team will play its final home game of the 2009-10 campaign at 2 p.m. Sunday when it plays host to South Alabama inside the Murphy Center. It will mark the final appearance in Murfreesboro for five senior players, who will be honored with Senior Day festivities after the game.

In addition to Senior Day, it will also serve as the annual WBCA Pink Zone game with the Blue Raiders wearing special pink uniforms. After the game and Senior Day celebration, the pink jerseys will be auctioned off with proceeds benefiting the Kay Yow/WBCA Cancer Fund and the Middle Tennessee Medical Center (MTMC) Cancer Center.

The five-member class of Brandi Brown, Alysha Clark, Dana Garrett, Chelsia Lymon and Jackie Pickel will be recognized for their accomplishments on and off the court during the last four seasons.

Brown was a member of head coach Rick Insell's first recruiting class. She became the Blue Raiders' all-time leader in 3-pointers made and surpassed the 1,000-point barrier this season after earning Preseason First Team All-Sun Belt honors. She has used her height (6-3) to her advantage,

giving her versatility on the low block or on the perimeter. She graduated from MT last May, completing her undergraduate requirements in just three years and was chosen as the Sun Belt's Postgraduate Scholarship Award recipient. Brown is the only three-time Academic All-District honoree in school history, including First Team accolades this season.

Clark will finish her career as one of the most decorated players in school history. She has received multiple All-American accolades, including Preseason First Team honors by ESPN.com this year. She was the nation's leading scorer in 2008-09 with 27.5 ppg on her way to being named the Sun Belt Player of the Year and was an Academic All-District First Team selection last month. She currently ranks seventh on the NCAA's all-time list with 69 career double-doubles and her 10 Sun Belt Player of the Week honors are the second most in league history. She became the 21st member of Middle Tennessee's 1,000-point club earlier this season and has since risen into ninth place. Clark also has graduated from Middle Tennessee, finishing in December.

Garrett has played the last two seasons with the Blue Raiders after transferring from Walters State Community College. Her athleticism has allowed her to grab rebounds high off the glass above much taller opponents. Garrett's career-high 11 points came in last year's Pink Zone game against North Texas.

Lymon has been the driving force at the point guard position the last three years and her ability did not go unnoticed as she was tabbed as a player Making the Buzz for The Nancy Lieberman Award earlier this season, the award given to the nation's top player at that position. She enters Sunday's game needing just 11 points to become the 23rd member of the school's 1,000-point club. Lymon was picked as a Preseason Second Team All-Sun Belt choice this year, one season removed from receiving Third Team honors. She also was a member of Insell's first recruiting class.

Pickel is the final member of Insell's first recruiting class. She has molded her game into one more than just a shooter, becoming an all-around offensive threat over the last four years. She ranks second to Brown on the school's all-time 3-pointers made list and needs only 68 points to surpass the 1,000-point mark in her career. She has missed just one game in her career and will soon become the school's all-time leader in that category. Pickel netted a career-best 34 points against FIU last month and swiped 10 steals, one shy of the school record, against Louisiana at the beginning of the 2010 calendar year. She has completed all of her undergraduate requirements except for a semester as a student teacher, which she will finish next fall.

As a group, the five seniors have lost just once in 35 Sun Belt home games and six times in all. They have amassed 99 overall victories, including 63 in conference action. No other group of seniors at any Sun Belt school can claim as many regular-season conference wins as this set.

They have accounted for a combined 4,758 points and 1,613 rebounds in their careers, seeing the floor for 470 games with 263 starts entering Sunday.

Four nationally-ranked opponents have come to Murphy Center during their tenures as Blue Raiders, including No. 1 Maryland in their first game as freshmen in 2006-07. The Terrapins and No. 6 Tennessee this season represent the top-two crowds in school history, with the Lady Vols' contest last November being played in front of a record 11,802.

This season, Middle Tennessee owns a 19-5 overall record and 14-1 Sun Belt mark. The Blue Raiders have clinched the league's East Division, a crown they sealed following Wednesday's 106-

84 victory at Troy Wednesday. Middle Tennessee will be a top-three seed at the upcoming Sun Belt Conference Tournament, held March 6-9 in Hot Springs, Ark. The high seeding provides the Blue Raiders with an opening round bye, meaning they will begin play Sunday, March 7.

South Alabama brings a 14-13 overall and 9-7 Sun Belt ledger into the contest. The Lady Jags, under the direction of 10th-year mentor Rick Pietri, have won just once in their last five games. Christian Shelter paces the squad with 11.4 ppg, while Shakira Nettles also averages in double figures with 10.8 ppg.

The Blue Raiders won the meeting earlier this season, a 100-52 triumph in Mobile, Ala., February 6 to take a 14-4 lead in the all-time series. Middle Tennessee has won each of the last 12 matchups and currently owns a 5-1 all-time edge in games played in Murfreesboro.

The game will be broadcast live on ESPN360.com and ESPN Full Court with Middle Tennessee students handling the production of the telecast. The Voice of the Blue Raiders Chip Walters will be on the play-by-play call with former assistant men's basketball coach Andy Herzer serving as the color analyst.

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