

March 14, 2010

Blue Raiders hit the road to play Missouri State in CIT Wednesday Team to make first postseason appearance since 1989

MT Athletic Communications

NORWOOD, Mass. - Middle Tennessee has received an invitation to play in the CollegeInsider.com Tournament (CIT) and will face Missouri State in the first round.



The 2009-10 Blue Raiders won a share of the Sun Belt title and will face Missouri State in the first round of the CollegeInsider.com Tournament. (Bradley Lambert)

The Blue Raiders will play the Bears (20-12) in Springfield, Mo., on Wednesday, March 17 at 7:05 p.m. at JQH Arena on the campus of Missouri State University.

This is the first postseason appearance since 1989 for Middle Tennessee when it competed in the Southeast Regional of the NCAA Tournament. The Blue Raiders have reached the postseason nine times in school history.

"I am excited for our players and our program as well as our fans that we continue in the postseason. There are 129 basketball teams that will continue playing this week out of 350 which is about 36 percent of all college basketball. The only teams that are left are those who had really good seasons and are playing well," head coach Kermit Davis said. "I'm really happy for our seniors who get a chance to play another game and I think it's a great experience with the extra practice and tournament experience for our returning players next year."

It is the second year for the CollegeInsider.com Postseason Tournament with Old Dominion defeating Bradley in the inaugural championship game. Sixteen teams receive invitations to compete in the tournament which features mid-major universities who have a record above .500.

Middle Tennessee won a share of the Sun Belt regular season title and goes into the CIT with a 19-13 overall record. The Blue Raiders ended Sun Belt play 13-5, its best record since becoming a member in 2000-01.

The Blue Raiders defeated Missouri State, 63-51, to win the Basketball Traveler's Tipoff Tournament on Dec. 22, 2008, which was hosted by the Bears, in the only previous meeting between the two schools.

"We went to their tournament last year and were fortunate enough to beat Missouri State in the finals. They are a much improved team that has won 20 games this season. They are a great home team and we are really excited about playing in the postseason," Davis said.

Also competing in postseason action from the Sun Belt are North Texas, who received the automatic bid to the NCAA tournament, and Troy, who received the Sun Belt tie-in to the National Invitation Tournament.

It is the first time since 2005 the Sun Belt has sent three teams into postseason action, that season Louisiana-Lafayette competed in the NCAA while Denver and Western Kentucky were in the NIT.

Chip Walters will call the action on the Blue Raider Network and on goblueraiders.com. Check goblueraiders.com for continued coverage of the Blue Raiders at the CollegeInsider.com Postseason Tournament.

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