Blue Raiders score early, often in 5-1 win at UALR

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LITTLE ROCK, Ark.. - Middle Tennessee's soccer team improved its unbeaten streak to four with an impressive 5-1 win at Arkansas-Little Rock Friday to keep alive its hopes of a second consecutive Sun Belt championship.

The Blue Raiders (9-4-2, 3-1-2) beat the Trojans for the ninth consecutive time and did so by erupting for its second-highest scoring output of the season. Middle Tennessee has outscored its last three conference opponents by a combined 12-2 margin and the trademark defense continued to shine as the Blue Raiders allowed just five total shots in the match.

"We continued to play well and we picked up our first league win on the road, which was big," Middle Tennessee coach Aston Rhoden said. "We are playing consistent right now and playing our best soccer of the season, and we need to continue that Sunday against a very good Arkansas State team."

Middle Tennessee wasted no time getting on the scoreboard when freshman standout Katie Daley scored just 53 seconds into the match on a perfectly timed pass from sophomore Holly Grogan. Katy Rayburn increased the lead to 2-0 in the fifth minute when she took a pass from Claire Ward and drilled the ball past keeper Marsha Stewart from 10 yards out.

The scoring onslaught continued in the seventh minute when Holly Grogan scored an unassisted goal, her fifth of the season, and Kaley Forrest continued her solid season when she scored off a rebound in the 28th minute to send the Blue Raiders into the half with a comfortable 4-0 lead. It was Forrest's fourth goal of the season and her third in two matches.

Arkansas-Little Rock closed to within 4-1 in the 61st minute but the Blue Raiders came right back when Rachel Holmes scored on an assist from Kala Morgan to account for the final score.

Middle Tennessee concludes the road portion of the regular season at Arkansas State Sunday at 1 p.m.

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