

March 20, 2010

Blue Raiders prepare for 13th NCAA Tournament appearance

Tip at 1:30 p.m. Central on ESPN

Athletic Communications

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PITTSBURGH - The Middle Tennessee women's basketball team will step onto the Petersen Events Center floor at approximately 1:30 p.m. Central Sunday for its 13th NCAA Tournament appearance when it matches up against Southeastern Conference foe Mississippi State in Pittsburgh, Pa.

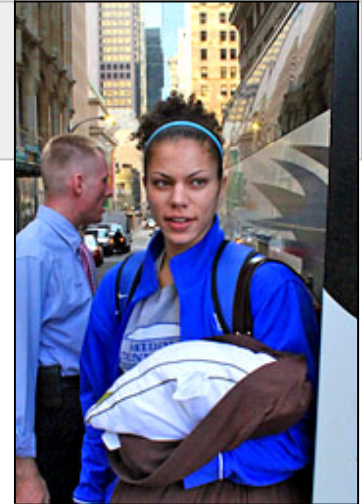
The Blue Raiders, who earned the Sun Belt Conference automatic bid after winning the league tournament and finishing with a 25-5 record, earned a No. 10 seed in the Dayton Region against the No. 7 seed Bulldogs. The meeting between the two schools is their first since 1990 with Middle Tennessee owning a 4-2 lead in the all-time series.

The Blue Raiders are 5-12 in their dozen previous NCAA Tournament appearances, following last year's heartbreaking 60-59 First Round loss at Michigan State. Middle Tennessee has made the 64-team field six times in the last seven years and four out of the last five seasons under head coach Rick Insell.

Mississippi State tallied a 19-12 overall record under head coach Sharon Fanning-Otis. Five different Bulldogs average in double figure scoring, as the squad garnered an at-large bid to the tournament.

The game will be broadcast nationally on ESPN with Pam Ward on play-by-play and Debbie Antonelli as the color analyst. The game can be seen in its entirety on standard definition ESPN in the Murfreesboro and midstate area (Comcast channel 11). ESPNHD (Comcast channel 202) will show "whip-around" coverage with games from the other regions also being telecast.

The Blue Raider Network and play-by-play voice Dick Palmer will also carry the game on four different stations. Radio stations picking up the broadcast will include WGNS (100.5 FM, 101.9 FM, 1450 AM), WMOT (89.5 FM), WBRY (96.7 FM, 1540 AM) and WNSR (560 AM).



All-American Alysha Clark steps off the bus after arriving at the hotel in Pittsburgh Friday. (Bradley Lambert)

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