Surging Blue Raiders turn back Arkansas State

October 23, 2005 · MT Media Relations

JONESBORO, Ark. - The red-hot Middle Tennessee soccer team continued its late-season surge with a 5-1 win at Arkansas State Sunday afternoon to complete the weekend sweep and extend the team's season-high unbeaten streak to five.

Holly Grogan scored a pair of goals, while Rebecca Rodriguez (one goal, one assist), Kaley Forrest (one goal), and Claire Ward (one goal, one assist) all tallied in the impressive road win that allowed Middle Tennessee to complete the regular-season road portion of its schedule with a 5-2-2 mark away from home.

The Blue Raiders (10-4-2, 4-1-2) kept alive their hopes of a Sun Belt regular-season title heading into next weekend's home finale against perennial league powers Denver (Friday) and North Texas (Sunday).

"It was very important to keep the momentum going as we went on the road this weekend and we were able to do that by playing two solid matches," Grogan said. "We need a little help from some other teams but we have put together a nice run to put ourselves in position to still have a chance for a championship going into the last weekend of the regular season."

The Blue Raiders, who outscored their two weekend foes by a combined 10-2 count, continued their scoring prowess against Arkansas State (5-12-1, 2-6-2) with four first-half goals to take control of the match from the outset.

"We have been able to get more players involved in our offense and that has been a big key," Middle Tennessee coach Aston Rhoden said. "It's hard to mark one player when several are proving themselves capable of being offensive threats. We have been playing well, and I really believe our tough non-conference road schedule has helped prepare us for this strong finish."

Ward started the scoring when she used nifty footwork to steal a pass at the top of the box and rifle home her third goal of the season in the ninth minute.

Forrest's impressive sophomore campaign continued when she scored her fifth goal of the season in the 25th minute on an assist from Rodriguez. Forrest has scored in three straight matches.

Arkansas State closed to within 2-1 in the 36th minute, but Rodriguez added to her gaudy scoring total just six minutes later when she scored on a corner kick in the 42nd minute to extend the lead to 3-1. It was Rodriguez' 11th goal of the season and moved her to within one of Laura Miguez' career record of 29.

Grogan capped an impressive first half with the first of her two goals when she took a cross from Ward and headed it into the back of the net, sending Middle Tennessee into the half with a 4-1 lead.

Grogan completed the scoring in the 74th minute on an unassisted goal to give her three goals, one assist and seven total points in the weekend sweep. She has seven goals and two assists on the season.

The Blue Raiders also had another sterling defensive effort, allowing just eight shots and the one goal. Middle Tennessee has allowed just three goals in its last four matches. Senior keeper Danielle Perreault, who had to stop just one shot on goal, improved to 9-4-2 this season.

NOTES: Middle Tennessee improved to 7-0 all-time against Arkansas State ... The win against Arkansas State was Middle Tennessee's 10th of the season, marking the first time in program history the Blue Raiders have had three straight seasons with double-figure wins. Coincidentally, it also the first time Middle Tennessee has turned in three straight winning seasons ... Middle Tennessee improved to 35-15-6 since the start of the 2003 season under fourth-year Head Coach Aston Rhoden ... The Blue Raiders have outscored opponents 18-4 during their five-match unbeaten streak ... Rebecca Rodriguez scored her 28th career goal to move to within one of the all-time mark of 29, set by former teammate Laura Miguez. Rodriguez also moved into third on the career assists list with 11, passing former teammate Jessica Northcutt. As far as single-season marks, Rodriguez is tied for No. 5 in goals (11), is fourth in points (29), and seventh on the assists list ... With two goals against Arkansas State, Holly Grogan moved into a tie for seventh on the career goals list with 14, and her 34 points are seventh on the all-time list. Grogan has scored seven goals in each of her first two seasons at Middle Tennessee ... Danielle Perreault notched her 20th career win in goal against Arkansas State, moving into second on the career wins list. Her ninth win in 2005 is tied for seventh on the single-season list.

Printed on June 18, 2013
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/4494