

# Blue Raiders set to open home slate this weekend

## Play host to Wright State, Tennessee Tech

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### **MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -**

The Middle Tennessee soccer team will begin its home schedule at 7 p.m. Friday when it plays host to Wright State at Dean A. Hayes Track and Soccer Stadium. The Blue Raiders will also welcome Tennessee Tech to town for a 4 p.m. Sunday contest.

"We are excited about playing at home, in front of our own fans and families," head coach Aston Rhoden said. "I think it is going to be an exciting weekend with two very good opponents."



It will mark the second meeting in the series with the Raiders after the two teams faced each other last fall in the inaugural matchup. Middle Tennessee pulled out a 2-1 double-overtime victory as Vanessa Mueggler netted the game winner with 6:22 remaining in the second extra frame. She fired home the clincher from 35 yards out to lift the Blue Raiders to the win.

Then-freshman Allison Stallard also posted her first collegiate goal, tying the match at 30:52, igniting the Middle Tennessee comeback.

The Blue Raiders started the 2010 campaign with a 1-0 setback at Mississippi last Friday. The defense kept the Rebels off the scoreboard until the 71st minute, while junior preseason All-Sun Belt pick Shan Jones and sophomore Whitney Jorgenson paced the offensive attack with two shots apiece.

Wright State, coming off an 11-7-2 mark a year ago, is under the direction of sixth-year head coach Pat Ferguson. The Raiders have begun this fall with back-to-back road losses to Central Michigan and Illinois by a combined 4-1 margin.

"Wright State was a difficult team for us last year. They pose a lot of challenges and I am sure they are a better team this year."

Middle Tennessee is 7-6-1 all-time in home openers entering the match. The Blue Raiders had a record-setting performance in last year's first game at the field, knocking off Alabama A&M 11-1 and

establishing several new school standards along the way. Middle Tennessee owns a 6-2 mark under Rhoden in home openers.

The match will serve as Camper Night, as all attendees of the Aston Rhoden Soccer Academy camps this past summer are invited back to cheer on the Blue Raiders.

The Blue Raiders will then play host to in-state foe Tennessee Tech to conclude the pair of weekend matches. In last year's meeting, Middle Tennessee earned a 4-0 triumph in the season opener as Jorgenson tallied her first two collegiate scores. The Blue Raiders own a 10-2 all-time series advantage against the Golden Eagles and have won both tilts under Rhoden's watch. Middle Tennessee won the first five games in the series, which dates back to 1996.

First-year mentor Daniel Brizard, who takes over a squad which posted a 7-12-3 mark in 2009, leads the Golden Eagles. Tennessee Tech is 0-2 on the young campaign with consecutive losses to Auburn and Chattanooga, both on the road, and having been outscored 6-1.

"Tennessee Tech has a new head coach, who is going to have them well-prepared coming into this game, especially because it is against an in-state opponent. I suspect both games are going to be really taxing for us."

Sunday's contest will be Fan Day, as special giveaways will be available to all Blue Raider spectators in attendance.

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