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## Soccer returns home Sunday

### MT opens weekend at Alabama A&M Friday

Athletic Communications

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**MURFREESBORO, Tenn.** - A short trip to Huntsville, Ala., Friday will be the lone interruption of a four-match set for the Middle Tennessee soccer team in which it plays the other three games at home. The Blue Raiders begin weekend action at 4 p.m. Friday at Alabama A&M before returning to Murfreesboro for a 1 p.m. Sunday contest with Evansville.

Middle Tennessee opened its home slate last weekend, capping the two-game series with a thrilling, come-from-behind 2-1 double-overtime win against Tennessee Tech Sunday. The Blue Raiders received the tying goal from senior All-Sun Belt performer [Vanessa Mueggler](#) with 31 seconds remaining in regulation and then junior [Hope Suominen](#) sealed the triumph with the game winner in the second extra frame, just 6:48 before the final horn.

"It is good we were able to pull out a win last weekend against Tennessee Tech," head coach Aston Rhoden said.

The victory was MT's first of the fall, improved its record to 1-2 and provided the Blue Raiders with confidence heading into this weekend's matches. Middle Tennessee knocked off Alabama A&M in last year's home opener in record-breaking fashion, defeating the Bulldogs by an 11-1 margin. Two-time All-Sun Belt forward [Shan Jones](#) netted a school-record tying four goals on her way to earning her first league player of the week award.

The Blue Raiders own a commanding 5-0 series advantage against Alabama A&M, outscoring the opponent 26-3 in the five previous meetings. The Bulldogs, under the direction of head coach Frank Davies, enter the contest with a 0-4 ledger, being outscored 31-1 thus far.

"Alabama A&M has always posed challenges for us when we have played them away. They have had a shaky start this season, but a good result (1-0 OT loss) to Murray State recently. I am sure they are putting the pieces together. We are just hoping we can go to Huntsville and at least play a complete game."

Middle Tennessee then returns home Sunday to battle Evansville and to conclude the weekend by playing its third match at Dean A. Hayes Track and Soccer Stadium in the last four. The Purple Aces, led by head coach Kristy McKendree currently are 0-2-1 entering the weekend. They will travel to Bowling Green, Ky., to face Western Kentucky Friday before arriving in Murfreesboro.

The Blue Raiders secured a 4-3 triumph in Evansville last fall for their third win in as many meetings in the series. The scoring margin is closer than that against Alabama A&M, as Middle Tennessee has won the three outings by a combined 9-5 score. The Blue Raiders built a 3-1 halftime lead in last year's matchup, only to need a goal by Jones late in the second half to combat a hat trick from UE's Kasey Kutzler for the victory.

"Evansville is going to be a very strong opponent for us. The game last year was very close, so I suspect it is going to be a challenging game also. We are facing two opponents this weekend who are looking for their first wins, and teams that are in that mode, tend to always fight and battle a little bit harder. We have to make sure our heads are in the right place and do the simple things. If we can do that, I think we can get a positive result in both matches."

Sunday's game will be International Day, as all fans in attendance are encourage to wear their blue or their favorite international jersey.



Vanessa Mueggler scored the game-tying goal with 31 seconds left Sunday against Tennessee Tech. (Bradley Lambert)

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