Blue Raiders to begin road swing in Birmingham

MT to face UAB for first time in school history

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - The first of a four-match road trip is next up for the Middle Tennessee soccer team as it travels to Birmingham, Ala., Thursday to face the UAB Blazers at 6 p.m. at West Campus Field. The game will serve as the first meeting in the series between the two regional foes.

"UAB has historically done well in Conference USA," said head coach Aston Rhoden. "This game is on our schedule because they are a very strong opponent, one which will help challenge us and help us prepare for conference play. There is no game on our schedule that is an easy game."

The Blue Raiders enter the game with a 2-3 record, having split their two matches last weekend. Middle Tennessee opened the set with a 4-0 road win at Alabama A&M after senior All-Sun Belt honoree Vanessa Mueggler netted a pair of goals, including one just 45 seconds into the contest. The shutout was the first of the season for junior netminder Rebecca Cushing.

The weekend then concluded with a 2-1 home loss to Evansville. Junior Shan Jones, the team's leading scorer each of the last two seasons, tallied her first goal of the campaign to the cut the deficit in half late in regulation. Mueggler and Jones combined for 15 of the Blue Raiders' 26 shots against the Purple Aces.

UAB owns a 3-3 record entering Thursday's matchup. The Blazers, under the direction of 15th-year head coach Paul Harbin, are led by Laura McCalla's five goals through the opening six tilts, accounting for one-half of the team total. UAB's three-game winning streak was snapped Sunday against cross-town rival Samford.

Middle Tennessee will continue its four-game road swing at 1 p.m. Sunday in Tuscaloosa, Ala., against Alabama before heading to North Carolina for the Duke Nike Classic next weekend.

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