Soccer returns to field for second-straight away conference weekend

Blue Raiders close four-match road trip

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - The Middle Tennessee soccer team will play its second-straight Sun Belt weekend on the road when it travels to Florida for a pair of matches this weekend. The Blue Raiders open the two-game swing Friday at Florida Atlantic in Boca Raton, Fla., before heading to Miami to square off against FIU Sunday.

"Conference games on the road are always difficult," head coach Aston Rhoden said. "These two games will not be any different. Both are good, well-coached teams and we will have to play our best if we want to be successful."

Middle Tennessee enters the weekend on a three-game winning streak to push its record to 6-7 overall and 3-1 in the Sun Belt. The Blue Raiders began the run with a home victory over North Texas before they picked up road league triumphs last weekend at Arkansas State and UALR.

Senior Vanessa Mueggler, a Preseason All-Sun Belt choice, continues on a career-best pace by leading the squad with 21 points on eight goals and five assists. She had a goal and four assists in the two road matches last weekend.

Sophomore Whitney Jorgenson is next with four goals and three assists for 11 points. She registered both of Middle Tennessee's scores at Arkansas State for her first career Sun Belt goals.

Redshirt sophomore Regina Thomas and another Preseason All-Sun Belt selection, Shan Jones, are next for the squad with three goals apiece.

Junior goalkeeper Rebecca Cushing posted her second shutout of the campaign at Arkansas State and enters the weekend with 56 saves this fall. She continues to be the main last line of defense for the Blue Raiders, playing 98.5 percent of the minutes in the cage.

Florida Atlantic owns a 3-8 overall mark but is 2-2 in league action. The Owls, under the direction of Brian Dooley, are led by Jesse Shugg's six goals and 12 points. Allison Griffin also factors into the offense with 11 points, including four goals.

FIU, the defending Sun Belt regular-season champion, brings a 7-4-1 overall and unblemished 4-0 league record into the weekend. The Golden Panthers are one of just two undefeated teams left in the conference, joining Denver. Chelsea Leiva, the reigning Sun Belt Player of the Week, tops the squad with six goals and 12 points. Melanie Raimo has been a stopper at goalie for head coach Thomas Chestnutt's team, recording four consecutive shutouts, and five in the last six outings, to lower her goals-against average to 0.56.

Middle Tennessee returns to the friendly confines of Dean A. Hayes Track and Soccer Stadium next weekend when it plays host to Louisiana and ULM Friday and Sunday, respectively.

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