

Regular season comes to a close Friday night

Blue Raiders host rival Western Kentucky

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

The Middle Tennessee soccer team will play its final regular-season match of the 2010 campaign when it plays host to rival Western Kentucky at 7 p.m. Friday at Dean A. Hayes Track and Soccer Stadium. After the game, the Blue Raiders will recognize Jaimee Cooper, Emily Harris, Fran Howells, Vanessa Mueggler and Emily Snowdon as part of Senior Night festivities.

"It is always good to play at home again," head coach Aston Rhoden said. "It is good to be finishing at home, as well. Western Kentucky has always been and will be a fantastic opponent. It sets up for a great game to finish the regular season and use as preparation for the upcoming conference tournament."

Middle Tennessee has won eight of its last nine matches to enter the contest with an 11-8 overall ledger and 8-2 mark in the Sun Belt. The Blue Raiders currently sit in second place in the league standings.

With a win or tie Friday, MT will clinch the No. 2 seed for the Sun Belt Tournament. The Blue Raiders can finish no lower than No. 3, but would have to lose and North Texas would have to knock off regular-season champion and nationally-ranked Denver to slip past Middle Tennessee.

Mueggler continues to rank among the conference and national leaders in scoring, tallying 12 goals and seven assists for 31 points. She netted her fourth career, and second of the season, overtime game winner in Sunday's 1-0 home triumph over Troy.

Junior goalkeeper Rebecca Cushing and the Blue Raider defense, including Howells and Snowdon,



have not allowed more than a goal in 11 consecutive matches, dating back to mid-September.

Cooper and Harris have also been solid contributors to the Middle Tennessee squad at the midfield and defensive positions, respectively. Cooper garnered a start against Troy, her third of the campaign, and has recorded six shots this fall. Harris has played in a career-high five matches during the 2010 season.

"This group of seniors has done extremely well. We have not had a losing season with this group, keeping the tradition going. They are five players who have worked hard on and off the field. They always put the team ahead of themselves. We are excited they spent four years with us and look forward to them helping us as we wind down the season."

Western Kentucky brings an 8-7-2 overall and 6-4 Sun Belt ledger into Friday's meeting. The Lady Toppers, under the direction of head coach Jason Neidell, have lost their last two matches, at Troy and at home against South Alabama to slip to a tie for fourth in the conference race. WKU would be the No. 5 seed in the conference tournament if it started today.

Mallory Outerbridge paces the squad with 18 points on seven goals and four assists. Nine other Lady Toppers have scored at least one goal, including three apiece by Sydney Sisler and Chelsea Smith.

Libby Stout is one of the top goalkeepers in the conference, holding a 1.09 goals-against average and registering 62 saves in playing the majority of the minutes between the pipes.

The Blue Raiders lead the all-time series 3-2-4 with five of the nine previous matchups entering overtime, including four reaching the second extra frame resulting in the ties.

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