

Regular-season opener on horizon for Middle Tennessee women's basketball

Blue Raiders to play host to USF at 1 p.m. Sunday

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

The Middle Tennessee women's basketball team will open its 36th season of varsity competition when it plays host to Big East foe USF at 1 p.m. Sunday inside the Murphy Center.

The Blue Raiders and Bulls have met three times previously, with each team earning a win. The last time they played, USF garnered a 70-62 triumph during the 2004 Preseason WNIT. MT's lone victory came in the first meeting, a 79-64 decision, in 1990.

Middle Tennessee begins its sixth season under head coach Rick Insell, who has guided the program to the postseason all five of his years, including four NCAA Tournament appearances. Last season, the Blue Raiders registered a 25-6 record, including a 17-1 mark in the

Sun Belt, and advanced to the 13th NCAA Tournament in school history.



Anne Marie Lanning and Emily Queen are the lone seniors on this year's squad, which features 11 sophomores and freshmen among the 15-player roster. Lanning enters her final campaign at Middle Tennessee needing just 234 points to become the 25th member of the school's 1,000-point club. Both seniors were Preseason All-Sun Belt selections, as Queen was tabbed Second Team and Lanning was chosen Third Team.

The Blue Raiders completed a pair of exhibition games over the last week and a half, knocking off Lincoln Memorial, 94-59, before handing Alabama-Huntsville a 115-43 setback. Balanced scoring keyed Middle Tennessee's two wins, as all five starters reached double figures in the first game and four players attained the plateau in the second contest.

USF opened regular season play with an 82-77 home victory Friday against Jacksonville. Andrea Smith led the Bulls with 21 points, while Kaneisha Saunders and Daleisha Carn added 18 and 16 points, respectively for head coach Jose Fernandez's squad.

USF was picked to place 11th in the 16-team Big East poll after reaching the Postseason WNIT First Round last season. The Bulls concluded the campaign with a 15-16 mark, including a 6-10 ledger in conference.

Tickets for the game are available by calling the MT Athletic Ticket Office at 1-888-YES-MTSU. The game is also part of the department's November Triple Play ticket special. More information regarding the special can be obtained by calling the ticket office.

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