

# Softball signs three in early period

## Two locals and a SoCal native to join program in 2012

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### **MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -**

The Middle Tennessee softball team has confirmed three recruits for the 2011 season in the early fall signing period as announced by head coach Sue Nevar on Thursday.

Consisting of three solid field players, the 2010 class includes Samantha Nieves of South Hills HS in West Covina, Calif., and Tennessee locals Katherine Tucker of Karns High School in Knoxville and Laura Dukes of Jefferson County High School in Dandridge.

“The staff worked very hard this offseason and have three players that will continue to grow our program,” said Nevar.

Nieves, a three-time letter-winner at South Hills, has twice been named to the California



Interscholastic Federation Softball League First Team. A crafty base-runner, Nieves set the SHHS record for runs scored (42) in a single season. Actively involved in scholastic life off the diamond, she has maintained a 4.3 GPA in her first three years and is a valedictorian candidate while holding

active memberships in the Debate, Science and Art Clubs.

“Sam is rated one of the top shortstops out of southern California,” said Nevar. “She is a very steady, heady ballplayer with an incomparable work ethic. At the plate she is a very tough out and has HR power. She is a little powerhouse who is going to turn many heads with her offensive efforts and her stellar defensive play. We will be counting on her to step in and replace senior shortstop Brittney Banania.”



Tucker, a member of Karns High School's 2010 TSSAA Region 2-AAA Championship squad, has started the past years as an infielder for the Lady Beavers. For head coach Judy Siebert, she is a three-year letter-winner and was named to the All-District and All-District Tournament Teams in her junior campaign. In her Lady Beavers career, Tucker has amassed a career batting average of .421 with 24 doubles and 75 RBIs. In the classroom, Tucker boosts a 3.75 GPA and is a member of the National Honor Society.

“Katherine is a quiet leader through her actions on the field and at the plate. She is very versatile and has great softball mechanics that are still developing. She is probably one of the most consistent players around. We are excited to begin working with Katherine and developing her potential.”



Dukes, primarily a catcher and first baseman, has amassed a resume that includes twice being named to all-conference and all-tournament roster. A two-time All Northeast-Tennessee team member under head coach Rebekah Massaro, Dukes led her Lady Patriots to the Region 2-AAA Championships en route to finishing fourth in the state before falling to Riverdale in the Tennessee semi-finals.

“Laura is going to be an outstanding catcher/first baseman for the Blue Raiders in due time. She has the size and power to be an offensive and defensive threat in the SBC. Her stats speak for themselves. We are eager to get her here to MTSU and continue her development as we feel she is just beginning to blossom.”

Stay tuned to GoBlueRaiders.com for all Middle Tennessee softball updates.

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