

Blue Raiders return to the court Saturday

MT is 9-1 at home this season

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

The Middle Tennessee women's basketball team will return to the Murphy Center floor for a 5:30 p.m. Saturday tip against South Alabama in the second game of a Blue Raider doubleheader. The women's contest will begin at 5:30 or 30 minutes following the conclusion of the men's game, which is set to begin at 3 p.m.

Middle Tennessee maintained its three-game cushion in the Sun Belt's East Division after picking up an 87-58 victory over ULM Wednesday night. Sophomore Icelyn Elie led the way with a career-high 28 points on 12-of-14 field goals and 4-of-6 free throws, while adding eight rebounds, three blocked shots and an assist in a career-best 37 minutes.

Senior Anne Marie Lanning moved into third place on the school's all-time list for 3-pointers with 227 after nailing four against the Warhawks. She also handed out a career-high nine assists, sharing game-high honors with sophomore Kortni Jones.

The Blue Raiders will be looking to improve their home record, which currently sits at 9-1 this season, including a perfect 5-0 against Sun Belt foes. Middle Tennessee has won its last six contests inside the friendly confines of the Murphy Center.

South Alabama has won four of its last six games and brings a 13-9 overall and 5-5 league ledger into Saturday's tilt. The Lady Jags have dropped their last three games on the road, including Wednesday's 56-41 setback at Western Kentucky.



Christian Shelter (12.4 ppg) and Sarda Peterson (11.1) pace head coach Rick Pietri's squad offensively, while Taylor Ammons is the team's top rebounder with 8.4 per game.

The Blue Raiders captured a 67-59 victory in the last meeting between the two schools, Jan. 2 in Mobile, in Middle Tennessee's conference opener. Lanning and freshman Ebony Rowe each tallied 26 points in the win, while Rowe hauled in a game-best 16 rebounds for a double-double.

The victory lifted MT's lead in the all-time series to 16-4, including a current 14-game winning streak, with the last South Alabama triumph coming Jan. 16, 2003.

Dick Palmer and Duane Hickey will have all the action on the Blue Raider Network, including WGNS (100.5 FM, 101.9 FM, 1450 AM), WMOT (89.5 FM) and WBRY (96.7 FM, 1540 AM).

The Middle Tennessee Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) will also hold a Diaper Drive on the upper concourse of Murphy Center prior to the game. The group will collect diapers, baby hygiene products and baby food.

Tickets are also available for the upcoming Sun Belt Tournament, to be held March 5-8 in Hot Springs, Ark., for the third-straight season. Tournament booklets are \$83 and can be purchased by calling the Middle Tennessee ticket office at 1-888-YES-MTSU or stopping by the ticket office at Gate 1A of Floyd Stadium.

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