Blue Raiders set for Sun Belt Championship

Quarterfinal tipoff 9 p.m. Sunday

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee's men's basketball team will begin play in the Sun Belt Championships Sunday night. Sun Belt East 2 seed Middle Tennessee will face FIU (E6) on Sunday, March 6 at 9 p.m. in the quarterfinals. The Blue Raiders earned a first round by with their regular season finale win over rival Western Kentucky. R-sophomore Jason Jones has led the Blue Raiders the last eight games averaging 13.9 points per game and 5.5 rebounds per game. Also aiding the offense is senior James Washington who is averaging 13.1 points per game during the same stretch. Defensively, senior Trevor Ottley is leading the team with seven rebounds per game. Ottley also has 11 blocks and 13 steals in the last eight games. It is the ninth consecutive time the Blue Raiders have reached the quarterfinals making them the only school to reach this point nine straight years. If Western Kentucky wins its first round game it will be the only other Sun Belt program to accomplish the feat. With a win, Middle Tennessee will play the winner of Arkansas State (W1) vs. South Alabama (E4) or UALR (W5). Tipoff is set for 9 p.m. at the Convention Center Court in Summit Arena in Hot Springs, Ark. Chip Walters and Kyle Turnham will have the call on the Blue Raider Network and live stats will be available on goblueraiders.com. **NOTES AND HIGHLIGHTS All-Time in Conference Tournaments...** Middle Tennessee is 34-34 all-time in conference tournament action. This mark includes an 11-10 mark in the Sun Belt and a 23-24 ledger in the Ohio Valley Conference. The Blue Raiders are 10-8 in SBC Championship action under head coach Kermit Davis. Middle Tennessee is 5-2 in the first round, 4-4 in the quarterfinals, 2-2 in the semifinals and 0-2 in the title game of the Sun Belt Championships. **Stifling Offenses...** In 13 Sun Belt Conference games, the Blue Raiders have held opponents below their normal scoring averages this season. In all but three of those games, Middle Tennessee has held their opponent to seven or more points below their average. Against Western Kentucky, the Blue Raiders held the Hilltoppers to 32.2 points below their normal total.

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