

Softball ready to host JSU

Teams split 2010 doubleheader in Jacksonville

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

The Middle Tennessee softball team will play host to the Jacksonville State Gamecocks on Wednesday at Blue Raider Field. First pitch for the doubleheader is set to be thrown at 1 p.m.

Coming off a three-game conference sweep of North Texas last weekend, the Blue Raiders are riding high and will look to build off the momentum against a solid JSU squad.

"Last weekend we finally put everything together and it really showed," head coach Sue Nevar said. "We are a young team, but we are growing together and working better as a unit. It was important to prove to ourselves we can beat anyone in our league. Jacksonville State is a good quality opponent that will be a strong non-conference test as we look to get better before traveling to ULM this weekend."



In Middle Tennessee's six games last week, senior Corrie Abel was on-fire at the plate, slugging an impressive 1.125 over the span. A native of Shorewood, Ill., Abel was 8-for-16 with four doubles and two home runs and three RBIs. She also worked four walks. Kaycee Popham led the team with three home runs and six RBIs.

From the circle, Katy Jutson was lights-out last week, giving up just one earned run in 11.0 innings of work. Although she appeared primarily in a relief capacity, Jutson did have one complete-game start in the series finale with the Mean Green in which she did not allow an earned run.

Entering Wednesday's doubleheader, the Gamecocks are 19-6, 6-0 in Ohio Valley play and are coming off a three-game sweep of Morehead State. Junior Abbey Stepp led JSU, going 11-for-14 last week for a .786 batting average, while driving in 12 runs and belting a double and three home runs. She was named Ohio Valley Player of the Week for her accomplishment. The honor is the second of the season for Stepp and the fifth for the Gamecocks, who have won their last 11 games and are off to their second-best league start since joining the OVC in 2004.

The two teams squared off last season in Jacksonville, splitting a doubleheader. In the first game, the squads battled through nine scoreless innings before Kaycee Popham scored in the top of the 10th on a JSU throwing error. Starter Lindsey Vander Lugt was dominant for Middle Tennessee, throwing all 10 innings, striking out nine and giving up just five hits. The Gamecocks took the second half of the doubleheader, 5-1. The Gamecocks lead the all-time series 8-4.

Live audio and statistics for Wednesday's doubleheader available on GoBlueRaiders.com and Twitter.com/MT_Softball.

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