

Blue Raiders back on the courts Sunday

Match moved to 10 a.m. due to travel plans

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

The Middle Tennessee women's tennis team will return to action at 10 a.m. Sunday when it plays host to South Alabama at the on-campus Buck Bouldin Tennis Center. "We have to come out ready to play from the get-go in order to be successful," head coach Melissa Schaub said. The Blue Raiders have dropped their last three matches to fall to 5-7 overall this season. Middle Tennessee's last win was a 5-2 victory over UALR March 12. Junior Carla Nava has posted a singles triumph in each of her last four contests to improve to a team-best 8-5 this spring. Classmate Taylor Coffey returned to action in Friday's match with Denver after missing much of the campaign due to injury. South Alabama carries a 1-8 mark entering Sunday's tilt. The Jaguars fell 6-1 to Denver Saturday morning and own just 4-3 win over Austin Peay



March 11 this spring with Chane Hines pacing the squad with five singles victories. The meeting will be the seventh of a season-long eight-match homestand for the Blue Raiders.

Live stats will be available through GoBlueRaiders.com and admission is free to the match at the on-campus facility.





Getting to Know...Mariana Muraca

1. Who is the best tennis player you have ever played with or against? When I was back in Brazil, and I was a junior, I played an exhibition match against the lady who was No. 1 in Brazil and I beat her. I was 16 at the time, and it was a real thrill for me. It was awesome.

2. Did you consider playing pro tennis, even as a youngster? Yes and No. Every little girl in Brazil wanted to be a tennis player, but when I was 15, I had a tumor in my leg and missed a year and a half right in the middle of my development, so I guess that was when I decided on college tennis.

3. What advice would you give to a high school player who wanted to play college tennis? Put your time towards something you want and you work hard. If you work hard, you can make it.

4. Where do you anticipate the MT tennis program being in five years? I think we are about to have great progress in our program and we will be the one of the top teams in the Sun Belt, and hopefully ranked.

5. Rate the Sun Belt Conference compared to others in the Southeast. The Sun Belt is really good in tennis. Overall, it is very strong and I know that we have at least five ranked teams.

6. This team is really close. How does this affect the way you coach them? It is really awesome that our team is so close. You do not want to coach a team that is not close. On the court, though, the friendships should not make a difference. Right now we all have a common goal, so it is awesome to be coaching them right now. One problem I have is that I look really young. When I recruit, sometimes I am confused with high school players and that could make it a little harder. I have talked to Melissa about it. That will go away, however, as I get older.

7. What aspects of MT help the most in recruiting? First of all, we are in the south. We are recruiting a lot of international players. On our team now, we have two Americans and five internationals. In recruiting, if it is in the south and it is warm, it is big. Also being in a conference in which we can be successful is huge. Being close to Nashville helps too. Also, having two female coaches who are young and have been through it helps a lot.

8. What do you least enjoy about coaching? Losing and seeing the girls not be successful. They work so hard and to see them not be successful is the biggest frustration for a coach.

9. Rate Murfreesboro as a college town. Murfreesboro is getting bigger and bigger, and so is MT, and more and more students are living here now instead of going home on the weekends. It is becoming a real college town.

10. What qualities do you look for in a potential recruit as someone that you would like to be a part of the Blue Raider program? I recruit the person at least as much as I recruit the tennis player. I am looking for personality, someone that is going to fit in the team and have the sense of team and family. Hard working may be the biggest thing. If you work hard, you will get better and you will be successful.