Smith and Akin lead Blue Raiders to Belmont Invitational win

Smith takes home low medalist honors following playoff

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OLD HICKORY, Tenn. - The Middle Tennessee women's golf team concluded its regular season with a win at the Belmont Invitational at Old Hickory Country Club (Par 72, 5983 yards) on Tuesday. The Blue Raiders carded a 17-over 305, nine shots ahead of the pack. "We expected to play well here," head coach Chris Adams said. "We wanted to play a 36-hole event, but it just didn't work out that way. I think we could've played a little bit better, but considering the conditions we had to play in, I'm certainly happy with the win." The victory is the first for Middle Tennessee since winning the Stones River Shootout last April. After severe weather damage shortened play at the event from two rounds to one, much of the field played just nine holes on Tuesday. However, this was not the case for the Blue Raider duo of Karisa Akin and Stephanie Smith. The teammates tied for the lowest score and went on to play three playoff holes for the individual title. Smith sank a putt on the 17th green to become the first MT low medalist since Morgan Hale at Stones River last spring. "That's the first time in my 14 years coaching that I've ever had two teammates playing against each other for an individual title," Adams said. "I think it's good experience anytime you can get in a playoff, which could definitely happen in the future. Hat's off to them, it was pretty exciting." Both Akin and Smith ended the day with a three-over 75. "It was fun to play against a teammate," Smith said. "There wasn't a whole lot of pressure, but I liked it. We both did well, so you can't really lose." Three other

Blue Raiders finished among the top 10 . Hale ended with a five-over 77 to tie for fifth in the 48-player field. Olivia Love and Ashley Haggard carded a six-over 78 and a seven-over 79, respectively, to tie for eighth and 10th. Competing in the event as an individual, Natalie Chrisopulos posted a 12-over 84 to tie for 30th. Middle Tennessee will now prepare for the Sun Belt Championship later this month in Muscle Shoals, Ala. The Blue Raiders will be looking to build off a 2010 performance that saw them post a program-record second place finish. **TEAM SCORES (of 8) 1. Middle Tennessee - 305 (+17)** 2. UAB - 314 (+26) 3. Belmont - 321 (+33) T4. Austin Peay - 324 (+36) T4. Tennessee Tech - 324 (+36) 6. Lipscomb - 328 (+40) 7. Trevecca - 358 (+70) 8. Tennessee State - 360 (+72) **MT SCORES (of 48)** **1. Stephanie Smith - 75 (+3) 1. Karisa Akin - 75 (+3) T5. Morgan Hale - 77 (+5) T8. Ashley Haggard - 78 (+6) T10. Olivia Love - 79 (+7) T30. Natalie Chrisopulos - 84 (+12)

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