Men's hoops unveils 2011-12 schedule

Blue Raiders host 15 games, face six 2011 NCAA participants

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Printable Schedule

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. – The Middle Tennessee men's basketball team unveiled its 2011-12 schedule on Monday and will tackle another rigorous slate of opponents, announced head coach Kermit Davis and director of athletics Chris Massaro. "We believe we're once again playing a very challenging non-conference schedule that will prepare us for Sun Belt play," Davis said. "From top to bottom, this is the toughest non-conference schedule we've had during my 10 years here. Our road schedule also is extremely challenging. We're going to find out how tough we are during the non-conference in the ability to play away from home." The Blue Raiders match up against six teams from the 2011 NCAA Championship field and will have 15 home games, opening the season at the historic Murphy Center on Nov. 11 against Austin Peay. MT will travel to Los Angeles for its first two road games of the season. The Blue Raiders face Loyola Marymount on Nov. 13 before going to UCLA, a No. 7 seed in last year's tournament, as part of the EA SPORTS Maui Invitational Opening Games. "Our players are very excited about the early portion of our schedule," Davis said. "Our California trip will be a great trip for our team. The experience we gained in Canada was one of the main reasons we took that trip – we were trying to prepare for tough early road games." The following weekend, MT returns home to host the inaugural EA SPORTS Maui Invitational Regional Games, including Belmont, Towson and UNC Greensboro. The Blue Raiders will take on UNC Greensboro on Nov. 19, while Belmont will square off against Towson. The championship and consolation games of the inland tournament

will take place on Nov. 20. “Our home schedule is highlighted by the inland portion of the Maui tournament, which we’re very excited about,” Davis said. “We also play several in-state rivals to go along with a really good Sun Belt schedule.” MT faces a trio of in-state foes over the next three games, playing Cumberland (Nov. 22), at Austin Peay (Nov. 26) and at Tennessee State (Dec. 1). The Blue Raiders then host Akron, the 2011 Mid-American Conference tournament champion, on Dec. 4. MT follows that with a trip to Birmingham, Ala., on Dec. 7 for a contest against UAB, Conference USA’s reigning regular-season champion and a 2011 NCAA tournament participant. Four of the Blue Raiders’ next five contests will take place at historic Murphy Center. UT Martin makes the trek to Murfreesboro on Dec. 10, while Belmont, the 2011 Atlantic Sun tournament champion, takes a short trip down I-24 on Dec. 13. MT will meet the Ole Miss Rebels in Southaven, Miss., on Dec. 21 for a neutral-site contest before returning home to begin Sun Belt action. “I think this is the best the Sun Belt Conference has ever recruited in a one-year period,” Davis said. “You’re going to see a good collection of returning players and an influx of really talented newcomers throughout the league. It could be the most exciting league race that we’ve ever had.” The Blue Raiders open conference play with back-to-back home games against FIU (Dec. 29) and South Alabama (Dec. 31). After a trip to Troy on Jan. 5, MT hosts Louisiana on Jan. 7 before traveling to Florida for contests against FIU (Jan. 12) and Florida Atlantic (Jan. 14). The Blue Raiders’ road game at South Alabama (Jan. 21) is sandwiched between home contests against Arkansas State (Jan. 19) and Troy (Jan. 26). MT then hits a three-game road stretch, breaking from league play to face Vanderbilt, a No. 5 seed in the 2011 NCAA tournament, on Jan. 28 before traveling to North Texas (Feb. 2) and Denver (Feb. 4). The home slate concludes with a trio of games, beginning with WKU on Feb. 9. The Blue Raiders also welcome last year’s Sun Belt tournament champion UALR on Feb. 11 and wrap up the home portion of the schedule with Florida Atlantic on Feb. 18. MT finishes the 2011-12 regular season with a pair of road games, heading to ULM on Feb. 23 and playing the finale at WKU on Feb. 25. The Sun Belt Championship is set for March 3-6 in Hot Springs, Ark., at Summit Arena. For information on season and single-game tickets, contact the Blue Raider ticket office at 1-888-YES-MTSU.

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