

Blue Raiders begin final road stretch Sunday

Two regular-season games remain

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. –

Middle Tennessee soccer heads to Troy, Ala., to face Troy at 1 p.m. Sunday in the first of two road matches to conclude the regular season. The Blue Raiders return home after the stretch to play host to the Sun Belt Championships, Nov. 2-5, at Dean A. Hayes Track and Soccer Stadium. “We need to continue to play well to put ourselves in a good position for the tournament,” head coach Aston Rhoden said. “As I’ve said before, road matches in this league are never easy and Sunday will be no exception. Troy is playing really well right now and we have to be ready.” Middle Tennessee owns a seven-match unbeaten streak (9-7-1 overall and 6-2-1 SBC) entering the contest, having earned a tie in its last contest, a 0-0 home draw against South Alabama in the regular-season finale Thursday night. The Blue Raiders outshot the Lady Jags, 19-7, but were



unable to knock one into the back of the net on Senior Night. Senior goalkeeper Rebecca Cushing matched the school’s all-time shutouts record with the 110-minute blanking, equaling the mark of 17 set by Jennifer Robb (1997-2000). Cushing has accomplished the feat in just three seasons as a Blue Raider after transferring into the program from SMU. Redshirt junior Regina Thomas leads MT with six goals, one more than senior Shan Jones. Jones is one score shy of tying the career game-winning goals standard of 13 set by Holly Grogan (2004-07). By virtue of the tie Thursday, the Blue Raiders clinched a spot into the upcoming championships and currently own the No. 4 seed in the field. The top-eight teams out of 12 are included in the tournament, which Middle Tennessee will be looking to defend its title from last fall on its home field. Troy is one of the teams fighting for a spot

into the championships and helped its cause with a 1-0 road triumph over Western Kentucky Thursday. The Trojans are 9-8-1 overall and 4-5 in the league, which currently places them in the No. 8 slot. They are tied with Arkansas State with identical conference records, but the Red Wolves own the tiebreaker. UALR stands just one game back of the pair with a 3-6 mark. Chelsey Williams paces the squad with nine goals and 19 points, while Ruth Sutcliffe and Alissa Jones have added seven scores apiece. Ashley Branham has been the primary goalkeeper, posting a 1.47 goals-against average with 91 saves.

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