Regular season comes to a close Friday

Blue Raiders are unbeaten in last eight matches

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. – With an unbeaten streak of eight, including seven victories, the Middle Tennessee soccer team will conclude the 2011 regular season by traveling to Bowling Green, Ky., for a 6 p.m. Friday tilt at Western Kentucky at the WKU Soccer Complex.

“Western Kentucky has traditionally played us very tough through the years and we expect nothing different Friday,” head coach Aston Rhoden said. “With it being Senior Night for them, we know their emotions will be high. We have to match and surpass that intensity and focus to come away with a good result.”

The Blue Raiders enter the match with a 10-7-1 overall and 7-2-1 Sun Belt record after picking up a 3-0 triumph at Troy Sunday afternoon. Middle Tennessee has not lost in the month of October, last dropping a decision Sept. 25, before tallying six-straight victories and an overall eight-match unbeaten streak.

Redshirt junior Regina Thomas paces the squad with seven goals, one more than senior Shan Jones. The pair also tops the team in shots with Jones leading Thomas, 46-to-39.

Jones needs one more game-winning goal to equal the career school record of 13.

Senior Rebecca Cushing tied a school record in goal last week, matching the career shutouts standard of 17 established by Jennifer Robb (1997-2000). Cushing has lowered her season goals-

against average to 1.28 as the last line of the Blue Raider defensive unit that has surrendered just two goals in the last eight games.

The Lady Toppers trail MT by one in the conference race, recording a 6-3-1 Sun Belt mark as part of their overall 11-6-1 ledger.

Mallory Outerbridge leads Jason Neidell's team with 12 goals and 27 points. Her dozen scores tie her for second in the Sun Belt entering the final regular-season matches Friday.

Middle Tennessee leads the all-time series 4-2-5 after picking up a win in the regular-season contest and a tie in the Sun Belt Championships tilt last fall. The Blue Raiders eliminated the Lady Toppers in the tournament semifinals a year ago on penalty kicks in the sixth of the last eight meetings to reach overtime.

Middle Tennessee will return to Murfreesboro next week to play host to the Sun Belt Championships, beginning Wednesday at Dean A. Hayes Track and Soccer Stadium.

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