Thomas scores late to force overtime in regular-season finale

Blue Raiders rally to score in last 10 minutes of regulation

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BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – Middle Tennessee rallied late in regulation and forced overtime but dropped an overtime heartbreaker, 2-1, at Western Kentucky Friday night in the the regular-season soccer finale at the WKU Soccer Complex in Bowling Green, Ky. Redshirt junior Regina Thomas registered her eighth goal of the season to knot the scoring with under 10 minutes to play in regulation. She broke free from the Western Kentucky (12-6-1, 7-3-1 SBC) defense to knock home the equalizer at 82:03, forcing overtime. As the first extra 10 minutes neared their end, WKU's Mallory Outerbridge closed the scoring with a low roller past senior goalkeeper Rebecca Cushing at 99:47 off a pass from Allie Auscherman for the clincher. The Lady Toppers netted their first score at 29:29 when Chrissy Tchoula sent a corner kick into the box. It landed on the head of Amanda Buechel, who redirected it behind the Blue Raider defense to give the hosts a 1-0 lead. Both teams traded opportunities early in the first half but neither could find the back of the net until Buechel's score. Middle Tennessee (10-8-1, 7-3-1 SBC) had a pair of corner kick chances itself late in the stanza but was unable to capitalize on both. The best Blue Raider offensive push appeared to come 5-to-10 minutes into the second half. Junior Paige Goeglein started the surge with a shot high, but MT added two more attempts and three corner kicks, all taken by sophomore Jessika Oseguera, during the span while holding Western Kentucky without an offensive look. Again, the two teams would trade

chances, including a shot by senior Luisa Moscoso that bounced off the crossbar at 67:47. The Blue Raiders continued to push forward offensively, as senior Hope Suominen's attempt off another Oseguera corner kick was blocked just a minute prior to Thomas' goal. After the score, junior Whitney Jorgenson added a shot and Goeglein sent one last corner kick towards the net with 12 seconds remaining in regulation, but neither opportunity supplied the go-ahead goal. Middle Tennessee started the first extra frame the same way it ended regulation, with a strong offensive effort, as Goeglein sent a shot towards the cage just 39 seconds into the period. Thomas had a shot blocked before the Blue Raider defense staved off a pair of Kelsey Meyer corner kicks before the winning goal with just 13 seconds left before a second overtime would have started. Middle Tennessee will look to regroup next week when it serves as the host of the Sun Belt Championships, which begin Wednesday at Dean A. Hayes Track and Soccer Stadium. The Blue Raiders will be seeded No. 5 in the eight-team field and will square off against the Lady Toppers again, who earned the No. 4 seed by virtue of Friday's victory, at 7 p.m. Wednesday. Complete tournament bracket information and seeds, including all quarterfinal matchups, will be released Saturday morning. The tournament continues through next Saturday, Nov. 5, with the championship slated to begin at 1 p.m.

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