Week-long hiatus ends Sunday for Middle Tennessee

Blue Raiders welcome former OVC rival TSU to town

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. – After a week without a game due to fall semester final exams, the Middle Tennessee women's basketball team will return to action at 2 p.m. Sunday when it plays host to former Ohio Valley Conference rival Tennessee State inside the historic Murphy Center.

It marks the first game between the two schools since an 82-63 Blue Raider triumph Dec. 15, 2003. Middle Tennessee owns a commanding 33-10 edge in the all-time series but Sunday's matchup is the first in the Rick Insell era.

Reigning Sun Belt Player of the Week Ebony Rowe paces the Blue Raiders with team-high averages of 15.9 points and 10.4 rebounds. She has knocked down 52.4 percent of her field goals, while blocking a team-best 12 shots and swiped a team-high 27 steals.

She was named the top player in the Sun Belt for the week of Dec. 6-12 after averaging 20.7 points and 10.7 rebounds in a trio of contests against Austin Peay, at Xavier and against Georgia Tech preceding the week-long break. It marks her first player of the week nod this season and fifth of her career.

Juniors Kortni Jones (14.3 ppg) and Icelyn Elie (10.7) give Insell a trio of regular starters with double-

digit scoring averages. Elie's 7.1 rebounds per contest rank second behind Rowe.

Tennessee State, under the direction of ninth-year head coach Tracee Wells, brings a 4-6 record into the meeting, but the Tigers are 0-4 on the road.

Jasmin Shuler is the lone TSU player to average double-figure points, tallying 15.2 per game, while a balanced rebounding effort is led by Destiney Gaston's 4.8 per game.

Tennessee State last won Dec. 3 when it knocked off South Alabama, 74-69, in Nashville. It also has picked up victories over Lipscomb, Cumberland (Tenn.) and Cal State-Fullerton.

The game can be heard on the Blue Raider Network of WMOT (89.5 FM) and WGNS (1450 AM, 100.5 FM, 101.9 FM) with Dick Palmer and Duane Hickey calling the action.

In addition, 2012 Sun Belt Conference Tournament booklets are now on sale at the Middle Tennessee athletic ticket office. Cost per booklet is $83 and includes a ticket to all eight sessions of the Sun Belt Championships, March 3-6, in Hot Springs, Ark.

Fans can purchase booklets by calling 1-888-YES-MTSU or visiting goblueraiders.com.

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