

Blue Raiders to take on Salukis

Baseball sets off on first true road trip of the season

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

After not leaving the state of Tennessee over the first 11 games this season, the Middle Tennessee baseball team is hitting the road for a pair of meetings at Southern Illinois this week, beginning with a matinee at Abe Martin Field in Carbondale, Ill., on Tuesday. The Blue Raiders, who will be looking for their third consecutive series win, will turn to the left arms of newcomers Jordan Cooper and Nathan Foriest. MT is coming into the game boasting a Sun Belt-best 2.43 earned run average. Cooper started at Tennessee last week, allowing two runs over 5.1 innings. He also gave up a pair of runs in his first career start at Lipscomb two weeks ago. The junior from Knoxville is 0-0 with a 2.92 ERA over 12.1 frames of work. Foriest has made three appearances this



season, all out of the bullpen. His 1.69 ERA ranks fourth on the team, and he has surrendered just one run on two hits over 5.1 innings of work. The trio of Justin Guidry, Johnny Thomas and Ethan Williams have done most of the work offensively this season. Guidry, a preseason all-conference selection, is coming off a spectacular weekend series against Louisiana Tech, hitting .667 with three stolen bases and four runs scored. Williams, a .341 hitter this season, has been a double machine, belting out five to rank first in the Sun Belt, and Thomas has driven in 11 of MT's 35 runs this season, including a grand slam against La. Tech on Saturday, his team-leading third home run of the season. The Blue Raiders will be looking to continue their recent success against SIU. MT is 13-6 against the Salukis, posting wins in each of the past eight meetings, including a pair of victories last season. The Blue and White last traveled to Carbondale in 2010, winning in 17-4 and 13-6 fashion. The last MT loss to SIU came in March 2009 in Murfreesboro. First pitch on Tuesday at Abe Martin Field is slated for 2 p.m.

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