

Blue Raider women earn first bye at Sun Belt Championships

MT enters tournament as No. 3 seed

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2012 Sun Belt Championships - Women's Tennis Bracket

NEW ORLEANS – On the heels of its most successful campaign in 12 years, the Middle Tennessee women's tennis team has earned a first-round bye at the upcoming Sun Belt Championships to be held in Denton, Texas, starting Thursday. In their dozen seasons playing in the Sun Belt, it is the first time the Blue Raiders have garnered a bye and they will begin tournament action Friday as a result.

Middle Tennessee is seeded

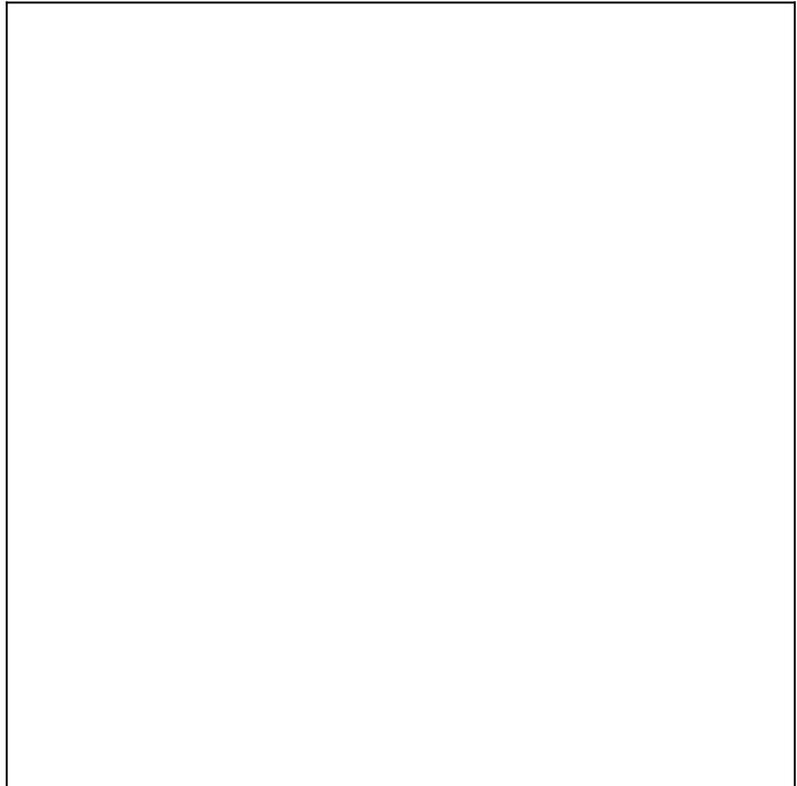
third in the 12-team field, its highest seeding since also earning a No. 3 seed in 2004. The Blue Raiders await the winner of No. 6 seed South Alabama and No. 11 seed Louisiana for an 8 a.m. Friday match at North Texas' Waranch Tennis Complex.

Middle Tennessee takes a 14-6 overall record into the event, including a 6-2 mark against Sun Belt competition this spring. The Blue Raiders have won 11 of their last 14 matches, which includes an eight-match winning streak that encompassed a month.

First-year head coach Shelley Godwin's squad faced South Alabama earlier this spring, handing the Lady Jags a 4-3 setback Feb. 5 in Mobile, Ala. It marked just the third match of the campaign. MT did not square off against the Ragin' Cajuns this season.

Four Blue Raiders have earned at least 20 combined singles victories this year, led by sophomore Flavia Nagayama's 22. This spring, she is tied for the team lead with junior Lexi Brand and freshman Nayara Moraes with 13 victories apiece.

Middle Tennessee previously earned a No. 3 seed three other times in the conference tournament, from 2002 through 2004. However, this year is the first time the Blue Raiders will not have to begin



competition on the tournament's opening day.

Host North Texas, the lone ranked program in the conference at No. 59, earned the top seed with FIU next ahead of Middle Tennessee. Rounding out the four schools with byes was Denver at No. 4. The Panthers won last year's event in Mobile, Ala.

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