Middle Tennessee finishes second at SBC Championship

Adams takes home Coach of the Year, Akin and Haggard earn All-Conference

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MUSCLE SHOALS, Ala. - It was another historic showing on Wednesday at the Sun Belt Conference Championship for the Middle Tennessee women's golf team as the Blue Raiders carded a three-over 291 to finish the event in second at 25-over at The Shoals Golf Club's Fighting Joe Course in Muscle Shoals, Ala. "The team played really well today, and I think we made a statement with the final round," head coach Chris Adams said. "We started strong and we finished strong, and we always seem to perform well here. We had the lowest score of the day, and you have to be happy with that, especially in an event like this." The three-round total of 889 is the second-best in school history, only bettered by 880, which was set in last year's Sun Belt Championship. The event marked the third consecutive runner-up finish, which ties for the best final showing by MT in the conference finale. Following play on Wednesday, Adams earned her first career Sun Belt Coach of the Year award. "That's something that is voted on by the other coaches, and it's really a big honor," Adams said. "This team has come such a long way over my time here. We've gone

from fourth to third to second the last three years, and the credit is all on the players. We've had great players who work hard and never stop trying." Denver won the event for the ninth consecutive season with an eight-over 872. FIU mounted a heroic comeback effort to challenge the Blue Raiders for second that included holing out from over 100 yards, another eagle and a near hole-in-one on the 18th hole by Katie Mundy, but at the end of the day MT would not be deterred, ultimately pulling ahead by six strokes. Individually, Allie Knight closed out her freshman campaign in style with her second even-par 72 in three days to finish fifth in the 55-player field at two-over. "Overall, I hit a lot of greens, and putting was probably the difference for me today," Knight said. "As a freshman, I think this entire year went very well for me. I think this was a really good experience for me to be playing in the last group, and I think I can learn from it over my next three years." "Allie has been great for us this year," Adams said. "She just missed out on all-conference, and I'm thrilled that we have three more years with her. She's a great player." Fellow freshman Rachael Watton of Denver out-dueled Mundy to take home the low medalist crown at one-under. Olivia Love also put up a top 10 showing for MT, tying for seventh at four-over after ending with a one-over 73. Ashley Haggard finished strong, sinking a birdie putt on the 18th to card a two-over 74 to end 13th at nine-over. The junior was named to her first career All-Sun Belt team following the event. Karisa Akin also earned the all-conference designation, joining Tamara Munsch and Taryn Durham as the only Blue Raiders in school history pick up the award three times. Akin and Durham are the only two to accomplish the feat in three straight seasons. Akin shot a one-over 73 to tie for 15th at 12-over, and Natalie Chrisopulos carded a career-best one-over 73 as well to tie for 18th at 13-over. **TEAM SCORES** 1. Denver - 288-293-291=872 (+8) 2. Middle Tennessee - 295-303-291=889 (+25) 3. FIU - 298-305-292=898 (+31) 4. North Texas - 296-308-294 (+34) 5. UALR - 302-311-298 (+47) 6. South Alabama - 304-315-298=917 (+53) 7. Arkansas State - 305-313-306=924 (+60) 8. Troy - 309-317-307=933 (+69) 9. ULM - 312-308-315=935 (+71) 10. WKU - 316-338-312=966 (+102) 11. Florida Atlantic - 335-339-330=1004 (+140) **MT SCORES (of 55)** 5. Allie Knight - 72-74-72=218 (+2) T7. Olivia Love - 75-72-73=220 (+4) 13. Ashley Haggard - 73-78-74=225 (+9) T15. Karisa Akin - 75-80-73=228 (+12) T17. Natalie Chrisopulos - 77-79-73=229 (+13)

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