Softball heads to FAU for pivotal Sun Belt series

MT looks to continue winning streak

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BOCA RATON, Fla. -- The Middle Tennessee softball team will conclude its Sun Belt road schedule this weekend when the team travels to meet Florida Atlantic in a key three-game series beginning Saturday.

The Blue Raiders and Owls will meet Saturday for a doubleheader beginning at 5 p.m. CT with first pitch of Sunday's single game at 11 a.m.

Middle Tennessee (15-30, 4-15 Sun Belt) and Florida Atlantic (14-34, 4-15) are currently tied for the eighth and final spot in the Sun Belt Tournament. Following this weekend's series, the Blue Raiders will host Western Kentucky for two games next Saturday to close out conference play while the Owls will play a home-and-home two-game series with FIU.

Middle Tennessee heads to Boca Raton riding a two-game winning streak. The squad began this week by knocking off Western Kentucky 8-4 on the road before returning home on Wednesday to defeat UT-Martin by a 4-3 score.

Florida Atlantic dropped two-of-three contests at UL-Monroe in midweek action. The Owls were swept 8-3 and 4-3 in Tuesday's doubleheader before coming back with a 6-3 win on Wednesday. "Florida Atlantic is a similar team to us," said Middle Tennessee head coach Sue Nevar. "We need to come out focused and ready to play this weekend, and I expect us to do that. We have been playing well lately and hopefully we will be able to continue to build momentum and win games as we head down the stretch."

The Blue Raiders have greatly benefited from the return of Kayla Toney back to the lineup. After missing 14 games due to injury, the sophomore made her first appearance in nearly a month on Tuesday against Western Kentucky. She promptly went 2-4 with a home run and three RBIs against the Lady Toppers and followed that up by going 1-2 at the plate with two runs scored against UT-Martin on Wednesday.

Meanwhile Natalie Ysais has had a great start to the week for Middle Tennessee. The Riverside,

Calif., native tallied two hits in four at-bats with a run batted in against Western Kentucky before going 2-2 with a home run and three RBIs the following day against the Skyhawks. The senior has increased her average at the dish all the way up to .287 and she is now second on the squad with 24 RBIs this season.

Caty Jutson and Shelby Stinnett both notched strong outings in the circle earlier this week. Jutson tossed the final six innings in relief on Tuesday, limiting the Lady Toppers to just one run while scattering seven hits. Stinnett went the distance in Middle Tennessee's win against UT-Martin, giving up just three earned runs on eight hits. It was her eighth complete game of the year which ties her with Jutson for the team lead.

Live stats as well as radio will be available for each game of the series courtesy of Florida Atlantic and can be accessed here. Periodic updates will also be provided via the Middle Tennessee softball social media pages on Twitter @MT_Softball and on Facebook at the MTSU Softball page.

Fans are encouraged to follow the Blue Raiders via Facebook and Twitter this weekend during their road trip to Boca Raton. Behind-the-scenes pictures and videos will be uploaded to the sites throughout the weekend.

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