VB Season Preview: Outside Hitter

Seniors Adams and Waller lead group into 2012 season

August 22, 2012 · @MTAthletics

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - The final position preview for the 2012 Blue Raiders volleyball team is the outside hitters. Last season, Middle Tennessee was second in the Sun Belt with a .267 hitting percentage and 13.58 kills per set. This group has experience in seniors Ashley Adams and Brandi Waller, as well as a promising group of freshmen that includes Chelsea Ross, Katie Bange, Miri Shade, and Jazmyne Johnson.

Adams earned First Team All-Sun Belt honors for the second consecutive year last season, finishing the 2011 campaign as Middle Tennessee's leader in kills with 425. Her 3.73 kills per set were the fourth-most in the Sun Belt. Waller appeared in 21 matches in 2011 and averaged two kills per set. The duo is looking to set an example for the newcomers to follow as the Blue Raiders get set to take the floor on Friday in their season-opening matches against Furman and UAB in the Blue Raider Bash.

"As seniors, we have to work hard and show them how limit errors when hitting," said Waller. "We have to do everything right and play defense. Defense is first, then comes the offense."

While Adams may be the focal point of the offense to some, the senior says that with the newcomers Middle Tennessee has this year, the points will be more spread out.

"We have a lot of new girls, so I feel like the offense is more spread out," Adams said. "We have two right-sides that can hit really well. Our middles are doing a lot better. I feel like the offense will be more balanced this year, and the outsides are a big part of that."

Ross, Bange, and Shade come to Murfreesboro adding depth and talent to the outside hitter position. Bange was the Georgia Player of the Year in 2011, leading Pope High School in Marietta, Ga. to three straight state titles. Ross has been an AAU and USA Volleyball All-American, as well as a First-Team All-State selection in Tennessee.

"Chelsea has had an outstanding training camp and I feel very comfortable with her playing a big role on our team this weekend," said head coach Matt Peck about Ross. "Miri Shade came in as a

middle blocker but has been doing very well playing both the right and left side. Katie Bange is our tallest player and is very experienced at a high level. They're very capable and I think they're going to surprise some people with how they step in and fit right in off the bat. "

With two days left until the start of the season, the Blue Raiders are excited to get the 2012 season up and running.

"I feel this team is going to go far," Adams said. "I think some may underestimate us because we have nine freshmen, but I think we're going to go really far with this team. Our chemistry is way better than it was at the start of training camp. It was a little rocky at first, but now I completely trust everyone behind me. I trust anyone to tell me where I'm hitting or to cover me when I get blocked. I'm comfortable playing with anyone who is on the court with me."

Middle Tennessee opens its 2012 campaign on Friday, August 24 when it takes on Furman in the opening match of the Blue Raider Bash at 12 p.m. at Alumni Memorial Gym. The Blue Raiders will take on UAB later that night at 7:30 p.m.

Printed on August 1, 2014
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/62221