

Blue Raiders host UAH in Exhibition Thursday

Tip set for 5:30 p.m. at the Murphy Center

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

The much anticipated start to the Middle Tennessee women's basketball season begins on Thursday when the Blue Raiders host Alabama-Huntsville in an exhibition. Tipoff is slated for 5:30 p.m. at the Murphy Center.

The Blue Raiders open the 2012-13 season with a pair of preseason contests. After playing UAH on Thursday, MT closes out exhibition play with in-state foe Lincoln Memorial on Tuesday, Nov. 6 at 6:30 p.m. The regular season opens on Nov. 9 when Middle Tennessee hosts Kennesaw State in the first round of the WNIT at 5:30 p.m.



Dick Palmer, the voice of the Blue Raiders, and former Blue Raider Chelsia Lymon will broadcast both games online at GoBlueRaiders.com.

Middle Tennessee is coming off a remarkable 26-7 campaign that saw the Raiders post a 16-0 mark in Sun Belt action en route to their fourth consecutive NCAA Tournament appearance. The Blue Raiders set numerous records last season and return 10 letterwinners, including all five starters from a year ago.

The Raiders were voted No. 27 in the preseason Associated Press Top 25 poll and placed 32nd in the preseason USA Today Sports/ESPN Coaches' Top 25 poll. Earlier in the fall, preseason publications Athlon and Lindy's listed MT as No. 24 nationally.

Sun Belt coaches voted the Raiders as the preseason favorite in the Sun Belt East Division with 10 votes and 65 points. The trio tandem of Icelyn Elie, Kortni Jones and Ebony Rowe all received preseason first team All-Sun Belt accolades.

Elie was an All-Sun Belt Second Team and All-Sun Belt Tournament Team selection a year ago. The forward returns from a junior campaign that saw her collect nine double-doubles. The Lebanon

native ranked second on the squad with 8.0 rebounds per game and third in scoring with 13.7 points per game. She ranked 48th nationally last season with a 48.9 field goal percentage.

Jones garnered a preseason accolade after being selected first team All-Sun Belt and All-Tournament team. The Oak Ridge set single season school and conference records for 3-pointers made (115) and attempted (329). Jones was second nationally and tied for 10th on the all-time single season NCAA chart for triples made. Last season, Jones averaged a team-best 16.8 points per game, while dishing out a team-high 153 assists.

After two strong seasons, Rowe returns with expectations high in 2012-13. The junior forward became the 26th Blue Raider to eclipse 1,000 points at Middle Tennessee. She moved to 22nd on the list with 1,069 points and amassed the most points by any player in program history through her sophomore campaign. Rowe averaged a double-double in 2011-12 by tallying 16.3 points and 10.1 rebounds per game. She finished with 31 games in double figures and registered 16 double-doubles.

Head Coach Rick Insell begins his eighth campaign at the helm of the Blue Raiders program. Since his arrival, Middle Tennessee has made six NCAA Tournament appearances, garnered five All-Americans and had three WNBA draft picks.

Insell enters his eighth season with an outstanding 174-54 (.763) ledger, collecting more wins than any other coach in school history over the same timeframe. He needs only eight additional victories to tie the school career mark, closing in on the standard set by Lewis Bivens over a 10-year span.

Alabama-Huntsville is the preseason favorite in the Gulf South Conference. The Lady Chargers boasted a 23-7 overall mark and an 11-3 clip in league play. The Lady Chargers were voted No. 21 in the Women's Division II Bulletin Preseason Top 25.

Two Lady Chargers were selected preseason All-Gulf South. Jasmine Hammon was a unanimous selection after finishing second in the conference with 17.2 points per game. The WBCA All-America honorable mention honoree also grabbed 7.3 rebounds a contest in 30 games.

Junior guard Jordan Smith was a preseason All-Conference honor for UAH after scoring 16.6 points per game and notching a team-best 58 3-pointers.

Head Coach Roy Heintz enters his fourth year with the Alabama-Huntsville program and has managed a 38-42 record during his tenure.

Tickets for Thursday's exhibition are \$10. Season tickets are on sale for \$199 each for a men's and women's combo pack. Women's season tickets can also be purchased separately for \$100. For more information, call the MTSU Ticket Office at 1-888-YES-MTSU or by visiting online at GoBlueRaiders.com.

Live stats and a webstream broadcast of Thursday's exhibition can be found at GoBlueRaiders.com. Fans can also follow live results through Twitter @MT_WBB.

QUICK INFO

OPPONENT: Alabama-Huntsville (2011-12 Record: 23-7, 11-2 Gulf South Conference)

WHEN: Thursday, Nov. 1, 2012 - 5:30 p.m.

WHERE: Murphy Center - Murfreesboro, Tenn.

RADIO/VIDEO: GoBlueRaiders.com - Dick Palmer (play-by-play)

TICKETS: GoBlueRaiders.com or 1-888-YES-MTSU

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