Women's Tennis looks to carry momentum into 2013

Raiders return four and welcome three newcomers

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Building success takes time. Middle Tennessee women's tennis hopes to build the momentum it gained last season when the Blue Raiders open the 2013 campaign in Akron, Ohio this weekend.

Last season, MT put together a 15-7 record, the most wins for a women's tennis squad since 2000 and an eight game improvement from the year before.

Four return from last season's successful program, including seniors Carla Nava and Yuiri Nomoto. Nomoto won eight matches last season, switching between the one and two spots. In the fall, the senior collected five victories. In the Fall, Nava played doubles and collected a pair of wins in the process.

Nayara Moraes and Flavia Nagayama are both 14 game winners returning from 2012. Moraes completed the fall with an impressive 9-5 record that included collecting an individual title at the Robert Alison Classic in Tuscaloosa, Ala. Nagayama grabbed five victories in tournament play.

"Last year we took several positive steps forward as a program and the returning players on the team have continued to carry that momentum into this season," noted second year head coach Shelley Godwin.

"This group is hungry to take our program to new heights and is working hard to make that possible. I look forward to seeing that hard work pay off this spring."

There was also one new addition to the Raiders in the fall. Freshman Irina Constantinide made her collegiate debut with a first place victory at the Virginia Tech Hokie Fall Invite. The Romania native completed her first fall season with a 9-3 mark.

MT also added two more to the spring roster. Taylor Mathews hails from Litchfield, Conn., while Alexandra Torres made her trek to Murfreesboro from Barcelona, Spain.

"We are excited to have Taylor Mathews and Alexa Torres joining us this spring," said Godwin. "We look forward to seeing the positive impact they will have on this program throughout their careers."

The Blue Raiders open a competitive schedule this weekend with Akron and Penn State.

MT and Akron face each other for the first time in program history on Friday afternoon at 2 p.m. The Zips boasted a 24-4 record, while winning their second consecutive Mid-American Conference title.

Penn State enters the 2013 campaign with a No. 50 ranking in the preseason ITA poll released earlier this year. The Nittany Lions completed last season with a 12-11 mark and picked up 43 individual wins during the fall tournament season. MT and PSU square off in a 9 a.m. neutral site matchup on Saturday.

"The trip to Akron this weekend is going to be a great way to start off our spring season," Godwin stated. "Two strong opponents in Akron and Penn State will provide a great challenge to our team in moving this program forward. The team has come back from the break focused and has been working tirelessly over the last week or so to prepare for this weekend."

Results of this weekend's matches will be available online at GoBlueRaiders.com. For constant updates on the women's tennis program follow @MT_WomensTennis on Twitter.

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