Women's golf gearing up for 2013 spring slate

Blue Raiders coming off tournament victory at end of fall

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - With the golf season starting up again next week, women's head coach Chris Adams is making final preparations and gearing her team up for what she hopes will be a successful spring season. The Blue Raiders will tee off in Miami, Fla., on Feb., 4 at the Hurricane Invitational.

"We're looking forward just to get some playing time under our belts," Adams said. "We have a week until we go to Miami. It's our first time to go there and it's our first time to start that early in February. Every event is a big one at this point because everything really affects your ranking."

With the split in seasons (fall and spring), the squad is forced through two "off-seasons" each year, and staying fit throughout the year is key.

"We go into the off-season as a refresher to kind of get their mind off things," Adams said. "We took a little time off and then got started again in November on some short game stuff."

The team also had extra motivation after battling some tough competition in the fall, but ending with a victory at the Blue Raider Invitational.

"It's always great to go into the off-season with a win, especially in your home tournament," Adams said. "We didn't have a great fall prior to that, but getting that win gave us some confidence."

Though the team wasn't able to practice as a unit for much of December, several players took the opportunity to improve their games individually.

"Allie Knight played a holiday event at the Dixie Amateur, and played very well," Adams said. "She put together four days of shooting no worse than a 78, and gets four days of good practice.

"Olivia Love went to Florida over the holidays and spent a week playing with her dad. That's what we want out of them, especially because when we get back here, we have two weeks before we leave and that's not a lot of time especially with the weather that we have being a little hit or miss."

As the squad heads into the spring, the team does have one positive that helps immensely.

"We're deep," Adams said. "We've got 10 girls and at any given time, any of them can compete. I think that's a good problem to have when I feel like there are seven or eight that could be the top 3 at any time."

Ashley Haggard routinely scored team-lows in the fall, and leads the team with a 75.67 scoring average. Avery George, a freshman, is second (77.25).

"Ashley and Avery are right at the top of our team, followed closely by Olivia (Love)," Adams said. "Olivia missed a couple events, one due to injury, so I expect her to come back strong."

Love and Haggard, both seniors, will handle the bulk of leadership expectations.

"With those two primarily as my top scorers, we should have solid leadership at the top," Adams said. "When you throw in freshmen like Avery and Emily (Miller), who have stepped up this season, we should be competitive."

That depth will come in handy throughout the spring, as different lineups are created in hopes of finding the perfect mix.

"For the first five years I've been here, we've been relying on the same four or five girls for every tournament, so having a deeper lineup up allows us more competition within the team to get better," Adams said.

If the squad can do that, Adams hopes they can achieve success.

"Ultimately, the conference championship is what we're trying to achieve, and to do that we have to have the best five players out there," Adams said.

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