Pair of Blue Raiders earn a spot on the Preseason All-Sun Belt Baseball Team

MT picked to finish sixth

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NEW ORLEANS - A pair of Blue Raiders earned Preseason All-Sun Belt Baseball Team honors for the 2013 campaign, as announced on Monday by the league office. In addition, Middle Tennessee was picked to finish sixth but earned one first-place vote in a poll of the league's head coaches.

Sophomore starting pitcher Johnathan Frebis and junior outfielder Trent Miller each earned preseason accolades at their respective positions.

A Louisville Slugger Freshman All-American in 2012, Frebis was named the conference's Freshman of the Year last season after finishing the year with a 6-3 record and 3.65 ERA. The lefty allowed opponents only a .226 average, which ranked second in the league behind teammate Jonathan Sisco. He also paced the team in strikeouts with 61 and saw the most time on the mound with 81.1 innings pitched. The Murfreesboro, Tenn., native had one of his most notable performances at South Alabama last year, tossing a complete-game four-hitter to pick up a victory. He also delivered an impressive performance against Florida Atlantic last season, tossing seven perfect innings before allowing a hit.

Miller became a staple in the outfield for MT last season, starting in 58 games to earn ABCA All-South Central Region First Team honors. The St. Louis, Mo., native finished second in the conference and led the team with 13 home runs and was second on the squad with a .345 average, which ranked sixth in the league. Miller raked in a team-best 49 RBI, fifth-most in the conference, and accumulated 78 hits while slugging .588 for the season, second-best in the Sun Belt. His most memorable performance came in game two against WKU on March 17 when he went 4-for-4 at the plate with five RBI, two runs and a home run.

The Blue Raiders finished tied for sixth last season with a 31-28 overall and 14-16 Sun Belt record but have a strong foundation returning with 14 seniors under the direction of first-year head coach

Jim McGuire.

Opening day for the Blue Raiders is Friday as MT welcomes Ball State to Reese Smith Jr. Field for a three-game series. First pitch Friday is slated for 3 p.m. CT. Stay tuned this week for an update on the festivities surrounding opening day. Tickets are available by clicking here.

2013 Preseason All-Sun Belt Baseball Team
Chance Cleveland (UALR, Senior, RHP)
Austin Gomber (Florida Atlantic, Sophomore, LHP)
Michael Ellis (FIU, Junior, RHP)
Johnathan Frebis (Middle Tennessee, Sophomore, LHP)
Nate Hill (Troy, Senior, LHP)
Aramis Garcia (FIU, Sophomore, Catcher)
Mark Nelson (Florida Atlantic, Senior, 1B)
Logan Kirkland (South Alabama, Sophomore, 2B
Dustin Jones (Arkansas State, Junior, SS)
Logan Pierce (Troy, Senior, 3B)
Logan Uxa (Arkansas State, Senior, OF)
Trent Miller (Middle Tennessee, Junior, OF)
Danny Collins (Troy, Junior, OF)
Whitt Dorsey (South Alabama, Senior, DH)
Jordan Patterson (South Alabama, Junior, UTIL)

2013 Preseason Player of the Year
Logan Pierce (Troy, Senior, 3B)

2013 Preseason Pitcher of the Year
Chance Cleveland (UALR, Senior, RHP)

2013 SBC Coaches Predicted Order of Finish (first place votes)
1. Florida Atlantic (5) - 89 pts
2. FIU (1) - 85 pts
3. South Alabama - 67 pts
4. Troy - 61 pts
5. Arkansas State (1) - 60 pts
6. Middle Tennessee (1) - 56 pts
7. Western Kentucky - 42 pts
8. Louisiana-Lafayette (1) - 39 pts
9. Louisiana-Monroe (1) - 31 pts
10. UALR - 20 pts

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