Blue Raiders gearing up for Opening Day Friday against Ball State

First pitch slated for 3 p.m. at Reese Smith Jr. Field

February 14, 2013 · @MTAthletics

Promotions Schedule

WEEKEND SCHEDULE
Friday, 3 p.m. - vs. Ball State
Saturday, 2 p.m. - vs. Ball State
Sunday, 1 p.m. - vs. Ball State

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - The Middle Tennessee baseball team will get the 2013 campaign underway on Friday as the Blue Raiders welcome Ball State to Reese Smith Jr. Field for a three-game series this weekend.

Tickets for Friday's game are just $1 and former Blue Raider All-American Dewon Brazelton will be on hand to throw out the first pitch. Hot dogs are also only $1 and free hot chocolate and coffee will be available. The first 400 fans will receive a free baseball magnet schedule and the 500th fan through the game will receive a free one night stay and lunch for two at the Embassy Suite in Murfreesboro. Kids can also run the bases after the game.

Friday marks the first game the squad will take the field under the direction of head coach Jim McGuire. McGuire spent the previous 20 seasons as an assistant and associate head coach for MT before taking the head job last summer.

"There's not been anybody that's been more excited than me," McGuire said. "That's what I tell the players. I am extremely excited and been waiting a long time for the opportunity and just can't wait for Friday."

MT is coming off a 31-28 year with a 14-16 finish in the Sun Belt. Although the Blue Raiders lost leading-hitter Justin Guidry to graduation, the bulk of the roster returns this year, including 14 seniors and two of the three weekend starting pitchers.

The series between the Blue Raiders and the Cardinals marks the third in school history, with all five

contests held in Murfreesboro. The two teams split a pair of games in the 2005 season and Middle Tennessee took 2-of-3, winning the series, a year ago, giving the Blue Raiders a 3-2 advantage against the Cardinals.

The Blue Raiders will look to senior Hunter Adkins for the opening day role on the mound. Adkins finished the 2012 season with a 5-6 record and 5.75 ERA before being drafted in the 18th round of the MLB draft by the Milwaukee Brewers.

Sophomore Johnathan Frebis, the 2012 Sun Belt Freshman of the Year, has been awarded the start for Saturday's matchup and junior Zac Curtis, a transfer from Volunteer State Community College, will head close out the series Sunday. Frebis went 6-3 last season with a 3.65 ERA and finished second in the league with a .226 opponent batting average.

The Cardinals head to MT for their opening series after finishing 14-36 overall in 2012. Ball State is under the direction of first-year head coach Rich Maloney, who returns to the head job at BSU after spending the previous 10 seasons as the head baseball coach at Michigan. Prior to his stint at Michigan, he spent seven seasons at the helm of the Cardinals.

Chris Marangon, a right-hander, will start for BSU on Friday with lefty Nestor Bautista and righty Scott Baker rounding out the weekend rotation.

All games can be heard live on the radio at 88.3 WMTS. Also, beginning this season, games can be viewed on MTSU's Channel 10, MT10HD.

First pitch on Friday is set for 3 p.m.

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