

# RAIDER REVIEW

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

SPRING 2017 ■ VOL. 2 NO. 6

## Dual-Threat QUARTERBACK

Scholar-athlete  
**Brent Stockstill** ('16)  
has done more than  
simply pass his way to one of  
the all-time greatest football  
careers at Middle Tennessee



## BACK<sub>2</sub>BACK C-USA CHAMPIONS

March Madness  
Page 30



## Ty Petty

Her love of basketball  
starts at her feet  
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# RAIDER REVIEW

Middle Tennessee State University

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## ON THE COVER



"It's hard to be a student-athlete. You have to be very mature and balance both the ball and the work."

**Brent Stockstill ('16)**

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Chris Massaro

# From the Desk of the **A.D.**

**MT Athletics continues to experience unprecedented success both academically and athletically. Next month, the NCAA will announce every school's Academic Progress Rate (APR), and our department will be at an all-time high for the 2015–16 school year with a score of 988 out of 1,000. Meanwhile, we continue to rack up Conference USA titles and push our name and athletic brand in to the national consciousness.**

I have always held the firm belief that an athletics department is only as good as its coaches. As our academic and athletic performance bears out, we at MTSU are clearly blessed to have what I believe to be the best collection of coaches in the country, bar none.

The only place to start in a discussion of MTSU's coaching excellence is with our most decorated and enduring coaching legend, track and field head coach Dean Hayes. Coach Hayes recently won his 50th conference championship when the men brought home the C-USA Indoor Track title. Now, take a step back and ponder that for a moment—50! That is hard to do! It's a number that definitely puts Dean in a category all by himself (and, incredibly, he may add to that total later this year). He is a worldwide treasure who is universally known and respected in the international track and field community. His place in national, international, and MTSU track history is unsurpassed as he is truly one of the great track and field coaches (and

coaches in general) of all time. We are so fortunate that he decided to stay at MTSU decades ago.

We recently celebrated another coaching legend with the election of women's basketball coach Rick Insell into the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame. This is the highest honor one can receive in women's basketball nationally. Coach Insell has always had a legacy of winning championships,

**... my job as the A.D. is to help provide the resources for our student-athletes to be successful.**

but also of growing his sport and of aiding the transformation of his players into adulthood. He will be officially inducted on June 10 in Knoxville.

Most universities would not be able to match the accomplishments of just those two individuals; however, our coaching roster is much deeper than that. Our men's basketball team recently enjoyed another fantastic March run, and we have started to become a national brand. Coach Kermit Davis is MTSU's all-time wins leader, and his successful tenure over the last six years is unprecedented in school history. In addition, football coach Rick Stockstill's teams have been bowl-eligible eight out of the last 11 years, and Coach Stockstill's squads are always in the top percentile in the country for APR.

# Our Greatest Teachers

But there's more. At the time of this writing, Coach Chris Adams was gunning for a third straight C-USA women's golf championship, while Coach Brennan Webb's team was among the favorites to win a men's golf conference title for the first time since 2009. The men were ranked No. 44 nationally and tracking toward a likely bid to the NCAA Regional, which will be held at The Grove Club in nearby Williamson County May 15–17 and is hosted by MT's program. And our softball program under Coach Jeff Breeden continues to show remarkable annual growth.

In reality, I could list every sport and each coach for their tremendous accomplishments. I hope you get the point.

I believe that my job as the A.D.—and your job as donors—is to help create an environment and provide the resources for our student-athletes and coaches to be (and continue to be) successful. In other words, we support the coaches' mission of achieving excellence in the classrooms and on the fields and courts.

We are truly blessed to have such a collection of coaching talent at MTSU that drives our student-athletes to achieve these tremendous accomplishments. I hope you are proud to support these coaches and encourage your friends and neighbors to get behind them by attending our games and supporting the department financially through the Blue Raider Athletic Association. I would ask that you do this before our June 15 deadline for this fiscal year. **RR**

**Chris Massaro**  
Athletic Director

# Dual-Threat QUARTERBACK

by Josh Vardaman

Scholar-athlete **Brent Stockstill** ('16) has done more than simply pass his way to one of the all-time greatest football careers at Middle Tennessee

**A**lthough Brent Stockstill has just two seasons under his belt as starting quarterback of the Blue Raiders, the redshirt sophomore's awards and achievements on the field are nothing short of staggering.

He's already the school's all-time leader in touchdown passes (61), 300-yard passing games (14), and passing yards per game (303.3) and will no doubt break most every other school passing record next season. A former Freshman All-American, he currently ranks fourth nationally among active players in career passing yards per game and sixth in total passing yards.

But to focus solely on Stockstill's accolades and accomplishments on the field would be to miss a big part of his story at Middle Tennessee. With an academic work ethic that equals his fierce competitive streak on the football field, Stockstill has already graduated with a bachelor's degree in just over three years and has even started work in a master's program.

## True Blue Student-Athlete

Given the remarkable nature of his athletic achievements, it would be easy to imagine Stockstill spending all of his time sitting in a film room or tossing balls on the practice field. But he knows when it's time to put football to the side and focus on excelling in the other field of play for student-athletes: the classroom.

"I'm extremely proud to complete it that quickly," Stockstill said of his undergraduate degree. "It's pretty cool that I still have two years of football left to go ahead and work on a master's. I really couldn't ask for much more."

Given how fast Stockstill earned his degree, one would assume he followed a hurdle-less path to graduation. However, the road hasn't always been a straight and easy one for the quarterback. He originally signed with the University of Cincinnati out of Murfreesboro's Siegel High School in 2013, but decided before the fall semester started to transfer to Middle Tennessee and play for the hometown team coached by his father, Rick Stockstill.

Cincinnati granted his release from his scholarship, but Stockstill took a grayshirt for his first season on the MTSU campus. That meant he had to pay his own way through the first semester before a scholarship opened up in January 2014.

Stockstill then took a redshirt one game into the 2014 season, again delaying the start to his collegiate career on the field. He was eventually named the starter out of camp in 2015 as a redshirt freshman.

While he waited to get on the field, Stockstill's focus in the classroom

was laser-sharp, to say the least. He completed his bachelor's degree in Leisure, Sport, and Tourism Studies in 3½ years, graduating in December 2016 with Cum Laude honors. Thanks to the department's Accelerated Bachelor's-to-Master's (ABM) program, he also started on a master's degree in Leisure and Sport Management in the spring with 12 credits already under his belt. In order for students to be accepted into the ABM and the master's programs, they have to maintain at least a cumulative 3.25 GPA in their undergraduate courses.

"When I was starting out, I didn't know that's how it was going to work, but as I got through my first and second year, I saw where if I could do what I was supposed to do on the path I was on, I could complete my master's even before my senior year of football," Stockstill said. "That's pretty exciting."

Even with some of the distractions that go hand-in-hand with being a college quarterback and with football preparations taking up a lot of his time, Stockstill believes that reaching his academic goals wasn't as difficult as it might have been at another university. He credits both the "great academic guidance" he's gotten at MTSU and the work ethic instilled in him by his parents both on and off the field for his performance in the classroom.

"You have the people here to put you in the right place; you just have to do the work," he said. "It's hard to be a student-athlete. You have to be very mature and balance both the ball and the work. When you have the people around you constantly pushing you and trying to keep you on track, all you have to do is focus on doing the work."

## First-and-Ten

Stockstill doesn't plan on slowing down academically. He's on track to graduate in just one year with a master's degree, an academic achievement he hopes will help him transition to a coaching role after his playing days are over.

"Having that master's in hand is going to be huge for me," he said. "I think having both my quarterback



**"You have the people here to put you in the right place; you just have to do the work," he said.**

play and my degree is going to be a huge help in the future when I get into the coaching profession."

With so much academic success (and so many football records) already under his belt, what does Stockstill say could be the cherry on top of his already storied career at Middle Tennessee?

"To be able to do everything here in Murfreesboro is special," he said. "Now we just have to go get the fans a championship." **RR**



by Josh Vardaman

# Ty Petty's Love of basketball, arguably, starts at her feet

**B**asketball legend Michael Jordan's first athletic shoe, the iconic Air Jordan 1, first hit the market in 1985. Since then, Jordan-brand basketball shoes have captured the hearts and wallets of generations of basketball players and "sneaker-heads" in a way that no other shoe has.

One Middle Tennessee basketball player has been among those Jordan shoe aficionados prone to drooling over the famed sneakers ever since she can remember.

Senior Ty Petty, the newest member of the Blue Raider 1,000-point club and the unquestioned leader of the 2016–17 MTSU women's basketball team, isn't ashamed to admit she has a shoe obsession. And which pairs corner her attention more commonly than others in her closet? Her Jordans, of course.

"When I got to college, it veered off to Pumas, adidas, and other Nikes—but it's really all about Jordans," she said.

Like many young athletes, Petty's love of shoes started at an early age. Long before she joined the Blue Raiders, she was a charter member of the Jordan craze that contributes billions of dollars to shoe sales each year in the U.S.

"It really started in high school," she said. "I would do anything—sell some stuff, ask my mom what I could do around the house, anything—to put some money in my pocket. I would do anything to get a pair of shoes."

Once she had that money in hand, Petty would also do just about anything to physically get to a store and grab the newest shoes, even if that meant camping out at a store prior to a release date.

As a high-schooler at Riverdale in Murfreesboro, for instance, she remembers playing a game on a Friday night, showering at the school, then trekking to a store to await a Saturday morning release, even sleeping in her car.

PETTY HAS  
ASPIRATIONS  
OF DESIGNING  
HER OWN  
SNEAKERS IN  
THE FUTURE

"I've done it in the rain, sleet, and snow—I would do anything in high school," Petty said. "Nowadays, I'll pay a little extra and get them online if I have to."

All of those cash-grabbing efforts have led to a collection of Jordans that would rival just about anyone's. Petty said she lost count at about 75 or 80 pairs, and that was quite a while ago.

Where does a person keep so many shoes? Luckily for Petty, she has some extra space.

"Where we stay, we have a storage closet, but I actually had to take my roommate's storage closet because it's the biggest," she said. "If you go in there and look, there are like 15 of the same pairs, just a different color."

With so many sneakers, it's hard for Petty to nail down exactly which pair is her favorite. She's always been partial to the Air Jordan 12s, she said, though she may have bought a new pair recently that could rival them.

"I'm a big fan of the 12s. I can't tell you how many pairs I have," Petty said. "I actually bought my first pair of 12s not long ago, though. Obviously, there are 23 pairs [of Jordans], and I think I'm at 20."

Even with her already vast collection, Petty doesn't see herself slowing down her purchases of the famed shoes anytime soon, even if her basketball career ends when her time is through at Middle Tennessee.

In fact, Petty has aspirations of designing her own sneakers in the future, regardless of whether she will be lacing them up on the court or just marveling at her own creations.

"I have a friend from high school who is an artsy person, and that's one thing we've always wanted to do and we've talked about," she said.

"I think I'm just going to continue to buy shoes," she added. "I've seen people who have thousands of pairs, and I want to get to that if I can get a career where I can buy as many as I can."

Whether she continues playing after college or not, the love Petty has for the game of basketball will no doubt live on thanks to her favorite accessories: Air Jordans. **RR**





# PASSING IT ON



Much like he did on the MT hardwood, **Kevin Kanaskie** is still dishing out assists to student-athletes



by Tony Stinnett

**K**evin Kanaskie spent his time assisting others during his record-setting basketball career as a dynamic point guard at Middle Tennessee (2005–09).

The well-rounded, personable Kanaskie continues to assist others to this day—currently as a secondary education teacher and boys basketball coach at Ottumwa High School in Iowa.

Almost a decade following the completion of his extraordinary career,

Kanaskie remains among the Top 10 Blue Raiders of all time in no fewer than seven statistical categories. He's the program's all-time leader in assists (485), games started (105), and minutes played (4,078). He is also among the all-time leaders in 3-point field goals (2nd, 207), free-throw percentage (6th, .812), steals (7th, 127), and free throws made (8th, 350).

Kanaskie is a member of the program's 1,000-point club as well as his 1,251 points rank him 14th most all-time. But for all of his successes at Middle

Tennessee, there is one thing Kanaskie would like to see happen.

"I want them to be broken," Kanaskie said of his records. "I did promise myself when someone does break the assists record, I will be on the next flight to . . . celebrate."

Kanaskie said he hopes it is current Blue Raider point guard Tyrik Dixon who breaks the assists record.

"He is a great player who will be a four-year starter and is already off to a

great career," Kanaskie said. "I want all of the school records to be broken and the program to keep moving forward."

Kanaskie is undoubtedly one of the players who helped lay the foundation for Middle Tennessee's current success. One of head coach Kermit Davis' earliest recruits, Kanaskie proved to be a steady force and a reliable standout as a player.

"There have been a lot of terrific players come through here, but if there is one guy who epitomizes what I stand for and what our program stands for, it's Kevin Kanaskie," Davis said. "Kevin is a player who maximized his potential every day. He came in against the odds, and he beat out everybody and never lost his job."

Kanaskie is still battling the odds—and winning. He and his wife, Jessica, married in the Cayman Islands in 2014. Their daughter, Meredith, was born premature at 26 weeks old on Oct. 26, 2016. (See sidebar)

As a high school coach at Ottumwa, Kanaskie faces another type of challenge. He coaches at the largest high school in southeast Iowa, which also happens to be in the poorest community in the state.

"We have a lot of challenges; but seeing our players improve and better their lives is amazing," Kanaskie said. "I always wanted to be a coach. I really enjoy it. Watching a kid improve and mature over four years of high school is what motivates me.

"The game of basketball has done so much for my life and has opened up so many opportunities. Being able to teach the game is truly an honor for me. I wake up every day happy and excited to go to work."

Kanaskie benefits from having learned from several coaches he admires, such as his dad, Kurt, and his former college

coach, Davis. Kanaskie and Davis remain in contact to this day.

"I talk to coach probably once a month," Kanaskie said. "I'm really happy for him. I believe if you work hard, you will be successful, and no one works harder than Coach Davis.

"When I played for him, I knew it was only a matter of time before he made MTSU a nationally known basketball program. I know firsthand how hard the coaching business is and admire how

loyal Coach Davis has been to MTSU.

"It is very rare that a coach stays in one place for 14 years and cares about his players more than winning games. A lot of people only see Coach Davis as a high-intensity guy who yells all the time during games. He does a lot for his players off the court that no one knows about."

As evidenced by his familiarity with Dixon's play, Kanaskie still follows the Blue Raiders religiously, along with Air Force, where his dad coaches, and Truman State, where his younger brother plays.

For his part, Davis said Kanaskie's success in

life does not surprise him in the least.

"Kevin was the ultimate teammate you could count on every day," Davis said. "Kevin has a tough job at his high school. They are limited talent-wise and he fights it every day, but those kids will learn from him and learn how to do things the right way. Kevin is a guy who did everything right all of the time. He was a winner at Middle Tennessee, and he continues to be a winner in every area of his life."

A key to Kanaskie's success clearly stems from his willingness to share his talents, his wisdom, and his passion for the game. Much as he did throughout a brilliant Blue Raider career, Kanaskie continues to dish out assists in life. **RR**

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**Kanaskie is undoubtedly one of the players who helped lay the foundation for Middle Tennessee's current success.**

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# Meredith Kanaskie, born premature, has the same heart and fight as her father.



"She was 14 weeks early and weighed 2 pounds," Kanaskie said.

"She was transported to an out-of-town hospital and spent 66 days in the NICU. Through the tremendous support of our team of doctors and nurses, we were able to bring her home on New Year's Eve without any major health concerns. She is a true blessing and miracle."



# THE Gatekeeper

by John Galatas

Looking for a sporting event to attend in Murfreesboro?

**James Kentfield** has just the ticket

**J**ames Kentfield, director of ticket operations at Middle Tennessee, began his career in the NBA, serving in different ticket operations and sales positions with the Orlando Magic and New Orleans Hornets. Having seen the business approach to professional sports, Kentfield was eager to work in an environment where people are deeply invested in a university setting.

Now at Middle Tennessee, the Michigan native is responsible for the day-to-day activity in all facets of the Blue Raider ticket office. Kentfield has served in the MT athletic department for nearly seven years.



"I loved working in the NBA. However, I was missing something," he said. "The connection I was seeking in sports, I didn't feel it in professional sports. It felt so much more like a business."

With an athletic ticket office being one of the first impressions a fan may have with a college program, Kentfield and his staff are committed to building relationships with Blue Raider fans and ensuring they have the best experience possible.

"We try to make the whole ticket-buying experience a smooth process, and we

let everyone know how accessible we are," Kentfield said. "The ticketing world has changed so much since I have been here. There have been so many advancements from buying tickets online and printing them at home."

Additional responsibilities of the ticket office include updating the online ticket marketplace, handling season ticket renewals, and promoting University and athletic-sponsored activities such as the Groundhog Day Luncheon, Fish Fry, BRAA Signing Day, and Student Services events.

Kentfield and his staff also work closely with different departments across campus. From BRAA to Marketing to University Alumni Relations and the president's office, Kentfield strives to foster relationships in order to promote the Blue Raider brand.

"It's definitely not just waiting for the phone to ring. We are working with the BRAA to find the right ticket package for members," he said. "Maybe not everybody can come

out for a full season or commit to all of the sports, but we definitely try to work with different departments across campus to get our promotions and our word out. We're constantly maintaining and growing relationships on campus to get people to our sporting events."

With a rapidly growing city such as Murfreesboro, one of Kentfield's biggest challenges is promoting MT sports to people who may not be familiar with the Blue Raider brand. One approach to reaching the community is adding value to ticket packages, as well as making other Blue Raider sports more enticing.

"We want to make our Blue Raider brand as accessible to as many fans as possible. Offering sports such as softball, volleyball, soccer, and track and field events free to the

public allows the casual fans to come by and check out the Olympic sports and not have to charge them \$4 or \$5 a ticket," he said. "We want to be fan-friendly, and allowing some of those sports to be complimentary admission is within our goals of becoming just that."

Kentfield emphasized that the most important way to support Blue Raider athletics is to buy season tickets and attend games regularly.

"As cliché as it sounds, getting out here and supporting our student-athletes who are wearing the MTSU jersey every day and

representing this University and this great city, it's so important for those kids to look up in the stands and see fans out there supporting them," Kentfield said. "Having our fan base grow as the city of Murfreesboro grows is what we need to focus on and getting people to our stadiums and our arenas."

As his eighth year on campus approaches, Kentfield is proud to serve in the Blue Raider athletics office and to have found a special connection to sports. And for Kentfield, it's the people, he said, who make it special.

"There are people who for generations have been Middle Tennessee fans. That's something you're raised with, and it's something that is a part of you," he said. "Being here and seeing the fans who graduated 30, 40, or 50 years ago and are still passionate, and their children and grandchildren who will soon be going to Middle Tennessee, that's something very special to be a part of, to have that connection." **RR**

"it's so important for those kids to look up in the stands and see fans out there supporting them."

# For Pete's Sake

Legendary baseball coach Steve “Pete” Peterson gains induction into a national hall of fame

by Tony Stinnett



**F**ormer Middle Tennessee baseball coach Steve Peterson became the first Division I baseball coach from the state of Tennessee to be inducted into the prestigious American Baseball Coaches Association (ABCA) Hall of Fame.

The ABCA, which was founded in 1945 and launched its hall of fame in 1966, inducted Peterson during its national convention in January. It is the fifth Hall of Fame into which Peterson has been enshrined.

“This is a very huge honor, and I am overwhelmed, humbled, and almost

embarrassed,” Peterson said. “It is so inconceivable that it could happen to me.

“As a kid, my dream was to be a baseball player and get into the hall of fame. Maybe this was not the plan I had envisioned, but it was the plan God had for me. My dreams, goals, and aspirations came true.

“As a kid, I was hoping for Cooperstown, but I guess this was the plan.”

## Icon of the Diamond

Peterson retired following the 2012 season as Middle Tennessee’s all-time winningest baseball coach with a 791-637-3 record. He led the program

for 25 years and also served as an assistant coach for the Blue Raiders for six years.

During his tenure, Peterson produced 16 seasons with 30 or more wins, including a school-record 44 victories in 2009. He also had four campaigns of at least 40 wins, including the 44-18 record in '09.

Peterson guided Middle Tennessee to 11 regular-season conference championships, nine conference tournament titles, and nine NCAA Regional berths, including two at-large selections. During one stretch, Peterson coached the Blue Raiders to a remarkable seven consecutive championships.

*continued on page 19*

PULL-OUT  
PHOTO SECTION

**MT**



# MIDDLE TENNESSEE GOES TO THE HAWAII BOWL





MIDDLE TENNESSEE

#TRUE PRIDE



**MT**





**MT**

# For Pete's Sake



In his acceptance speech, the legendary baseball coach took time to thank the ABCA, his family, former Blue Raider head coach John Stanford, and longtime assistant and current head coach Jim McGuire.

"I want to thank the ABCA very much, not just for this honor, but also for what they do for college baseball; it's meant so much for me in my career," Peterson said.

"My family is unbelievable, which we all know what type of family we have to have. My wife Rita recognized the passion I had for coaching and she allowed me to fulfill it.

"Jim (McGuire), thank you so much. Twenty years he spent with me, or I spent with him, and that's a pretty good relationship right there for two guys to get along! So Jim, thank you so much for what you did."

Peterson already is a member of the Blue Raider Hall of Fame (2010), Huntsville-Madison County (Alabama) Athletic Hall of Fame (2009), the Tennessee Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame (2007), and the Rutherford County Old Timers Baseball Hall of Fame (2003).

"It's a very proud moment for Coach Pete and his family, but it is also a proud moment for Middle Tennessee baseball players, former coaches, and players and fans," said McGuire, who spent 20 years as Peterson's top assistant and was heavily involved in the nomination process.

"This is the Cooperstown for our profession," McGuire added.

Asked what word best described Coach Pete, McGuire responded, "consistency."

"He was consistent in everything he did, whether it was how he handled practices or games or alumni," McGuire said. "He was very consistent, and he always took time for others. The best compliment I can give Pete is he is a baseball guy. People in our profession know what that means."

Asked what he was most proud of regarding his own career, Peterson answered with the same word—consistency.

"During the four seasons I have been retired, I have done a lot of reflecting," he said. "Looking back, it just amazes me. When I was coaching, I really didn't pay attention to the success we were having. When I look at the quality of teams and championships we won all through the 1990s and year after year, it really never dawned on me what was taking place. I was just worried about the next game, the next win, the next dollar.

## **"The consistency of it all is amazing to me now as I look back."**

Peterson expressed gratitude for all the players who helped him to achieve his Hall of Fame success. Peterson coached a Sun Belt Conference Player of the Year and six Ohio Valley Conference Players of the Year, a Sun Belt Pitcher of the Year, an OVC Pitcher of the Year, two Sun Belt Freshman of the Year players, two First-Team All-Americans, five Third-Team All-Americans, five Freshman All-Americans, and 44 first-team All-Conference players.

Professional baseball has seen 71 former Peterson performers earn the chance to play the game at the highest level, with eight making their way to the major leagues.

## **Where There's a Will, There Was Pete**

Not only was Peterson a winner on the field, he was also a wildly successful fundraiser during his career. Events such as the annual Chuck Taylor Golf Tournament, the Groundhog Day Luncheon, and the Grand Slam Fish Fry have become mainstays on calendars of Blue Raider baseball supporters across middle Tennessee and have raised thousands of dollars for the improvement of Blue Raider baseball.

Peterson spearheaded the efforts to pay for the construction of the Stephen B. Smith Clubhouse and Indoor Training Facility, which is one of the finest collegiate clubhouses and training facilities in the country. Reese Smith Jr. Field also benefited from Peterson's fundraising abilities. He helped transform the park into a fan-friendly area by leading efforts to expand the seating area, add an information center just inside the gate, and improve restroom and concession facilities, as well as add a modern press box to accommodate media.

At the time of his retirement in 2012, Peterson told MTSU News, "I love baseball, and hopefully I've taught players to love baseball. . . . But it's not about me. I've been a part of the improvement of the program. Was I the program? No, and I never tried to be. I was just an extension of it.

"I said this at the Groundhog Luncheon: Where there's a will, there's a way. I tried to be the will. Everybody out there was the way. The players were the way. The people that donated money and people that came to the games were the way. I just had a will for 25 years to try to keep improving the program. And it's going to keep improving." **RR**



VIEW  
FROM  
THE

# PRESSBOX



Chip Walters

The Voice of the Blue Raiders

# CATCH SPRING SPORTS IN ACTION, TOO

Just because basketball season has come to a close does not mean the athletic year is over. Far from it. As a matter of fact, **there are more teams and more student-athletes in action between now and Memorial Day than at any other time of the year.**

Baseball, softball, track and field, both tennis teams, and both golf teams give Blue Raider fans numerous opportunities to come out and show their support—not to mention football spring practice and the Blue-White Spring Game.

Reese Smith Jr. Field has been the epicenter for spring sports on campus for years. Jim McGuire's fifth season at the helm includes an experienced lineup with a highly anticipated recruiting class to take on the very best Conference USA has to offer. This year's baseball home slate includes three-game series with

Western Kentucky, Old Dominion, UAB, Southern Miss, and Louisiana Tech. Add to that the local rivalries with Tennessee, Vanderbilt, Belmont, Lipscomb, and others, and you have a ton of family entertainment.

Just because  
basketball season  
has come to a close  
does not mean  
the athletic year  
is over.

Across campus at Blue Raider Softball Field, Jeff Breeden's Lady Raider team showed great improvement last spring and fall and looks to

continue that this spring. The home conference schedule gets underway with archrival Western Kentucky and also includes FIU, UAB, and Marshall. Interesting home nonconference matchups are sprinkled throughout with games against Auburn and a host of local rivals.

Men's and women's tennis can claim two home facilities. The Buck Bouldin Courts adjacent to Murphy Center have served as the outdoor home for years. The new Adams Tennis Complex at Old Fort Park gives Middle Tennessee one of the premier indoor facilities in all of collegiate tennis. Both venues are fan-friendly, and if you haven't been to a college match before, you should go. For the second year in a row, MT tennis will host a conference tournament. Last year it was the women's event, and this year the Conference USA Men's Tennis

Championships are scheduled for April 21-23 at the Adams Tennis Complex.

On the links, women's golf will be looking for a third consecutive championship and NCAA tournament appearance. The MT men's team made huge strides a year ago and will be right in the thick of things this year in C-USA. Men's golf also will host the biggest event in the history of the program this year, the Murfreesboro Regional of the 2017 NCAA Men's Golf Championships May 15-17 at The Grove course. This tournament alone offers Blue Raider fans and BRAA members an opportunity to support and donate your time to help make this a world-class event.

Last but certainly not least is MT track and field. Just like the swallows coming back to Capistrano, you can count on seeing Blue Raider track athletes competing at the highest level this spring. Last year's squads featured numerous conference champions who went on to qualify for the NCAA championships, as well as the Rio Olympics.

These spring sport student-athletes put in immeasurable hours of work on the athletic side as well as the academic side to represent our University. If you haven't been to a golf or tennis match or a home softball game in a few years, break out of your comfort zone and show these teams some additional support. You will have a good time, and I promise your efforts to be there will be appreciated by the coaches and players.



Kayla Kort,  
Compliance Coordinator

## ONCE A STUDENT-ATHLETE, ALWAYS A STUDENT-ATHLETE

As another academic year ends, many of our student-athletes are celebrating the conclusion of their education and athletic eligibility here at MTSU. The Athletics Compliance Office would like to take the opportunity to remind our Blue Raider Athletic Association (BRAA) members of their adherence to NCAA rules and regulations as they relate to interaction and relationships with our student-athletes.

Previous articles have discussed the impermissible extra benefits that boosters must be aware of, these include, but are not limited to, the following

- A special discount, payment arrangement, or credit on a purchase or service, not otherwise available to the general public
- Cash, loan, or signing or co-signing of a loan
- Transportation, payment of expense, or loan of any automobile
- Benefits or gifts based upon the student-athlete's athletic performance
- Free or reduced rent or housing

Oftentimes, these extra benefits are thought to apply only as it relates to current student-athletes, but rather, many of the impermissible benefits regulations apply to all former student-athletes, too. While it is permissible for a booster to provide legitimate employment to a former student-athlete (or a student-athlete with exhausted athletic eligibility) after graduation, it is still impermissible for a booster to give former student-athletes cash or other material gifts. This rule is important to remember with the growing popularity of fundraising websites such as GoFundMe.com. Under this rule, boosters are prohibited from donating money to a former student-athlete's GoFundMe or a similar type of fundraising account.

If you ever have any questions or concerns regarding NCAA bylaws and other student-athlete/booster regulations, please contact the Compliance Office. As always, **ASK BEFORE YOU ACT** and **GO BLUE RAIDERS! RR**

Ask  
before  
you  
act!



Blue Raider Athletic Association



Keith McCluney  
Associate Athletic  
Director/Development

# INVITE CASUAL FANS TO JOIN OUR FAMILY

The Blue Raider Athletic Association has a unique mission in that we are tasked with being the defenders of our student-athletes' "quality of experience" during their time here at Middle Tennessee State University. As we enter deep into our renewal season (June 15 deadline this year), please let me reiterate to all of you how appreciative we are of your generous support and that in order for us to have sustained success we must continue to finance our expectations.

Our expectations must be a reflection of our commitment level. Championship giving = championship results. It is when those two parallel lines intersect that we will realize the dominance in every sport that we all desire. Our expectation has and will continue to be "Excellence in all that we do!" That statement can never be fulfilled without you and at least two of your friends who are "MTSU fans" but not "invested" in our success as a program. We need you to help us turn the anonymous fan into the proud donor.

Our extremely talented student-athletes display a level of commitment on a daily basis that is greater than many can comprehend. They spend early hours of their day in the weight room, training rooms, meeting rooms, and, most importantly, classrooms. Our commitment to providing them with the best intercollegiate athletic experience remains strong and grows stronger every day. Think about the pride that you feel when you see our student-athletes represent our institution with class and carry themselves in a way that makes

all of us proud to be Blue Raiders. Sharing your Blue Raider experience and pride with others in your circle encourages them to help us embrace these young men and women who aspire to be great in everything they do and represent Middle Tennessee in a first-class manner! We acknowledge that there is so much more that we

**Our extremely talented student-athletes display a level of commitment on a daily basis that is greater than many can comprehend.**

can do for our student-athletes, but it must be a team effort. The Blue Raider Athletic Association has a long history of leading the charge for our student-athletes. We must continue to be their voice and their expanded circle of support. The bigger that circle is, the more empowered and inspired they will be to follow their dreams and reach their goals. As

an organization, we must remain diligent in providing the foundational support that has a tremendous impact not only during their time here but impacts their lives far beyond their playing days.

Many of you have been a part of the Blue Raider Athletic Association for five years, 10 years, 20 years, or more and have seen the elevation that has taken place over the years. We are now at a point that another transformational shift is needed in order to keep us among the elite programs in our peer group and also propel us to that next level of greatness. You have made a commitment to the lives of our student-athletes and to the success of our programs. We are where we are because of your support. Our student-athletes are standing on the shoulders of the thousands of donors who have sacrificed their time and resources to provide them with an elite experience during their time at MTSU. Renewal season is also a season of growth for the Blue Raider Athletic Association. Help us continue to expand our reach, deepen our commitment, and widen our impact.

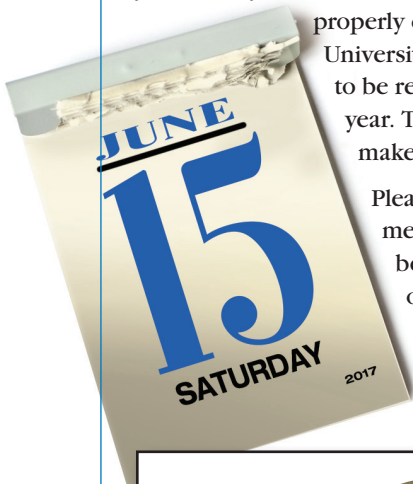
Our student-athletes get to sit in the shade today because of trees that BRAA members planted many years ago. Please continue to help us plant those trees that provide shade for our current student-athletes and our future Blue Raiders!

**Please call us today and renew your commitment to excellence! Help us Make MT Better!**

# NEW BRAA MEMBERSHIP YEAR-END DEADLINE IS JUNE 15, 2017

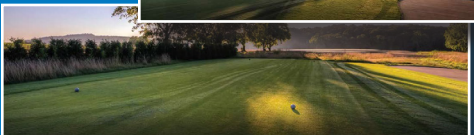
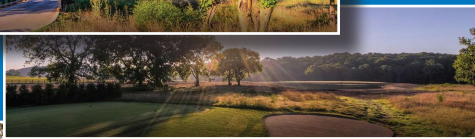
The BRAA has moved up its annual giving deadline from June 30 to June 15, 2017. This is to ensure that all gifts are properly credited for the correct year. The University has a 2 p.m. deadline for gifts to be received by the end of the fiscal year. This will allow for more time to make sure all gifts are posted.

Please make sure your BRAA membership is received on or before June 15, 2017 to ensure all of your benefits are available for the 2017-18 athletic year. [RR](#)



The  
GROVE

AND MT ATHLETICS TO  
HOST 2017 NCAA  
MEN'S GOLF REGIONAL  
MAY 14-17



Middle Tennessee and The Grove club are looking for volunteers to assist in putting on the best NCAA regional golf championship possible for the many student-athletes from across the nation that will participate in this event. To register as a volunteer, please go online to [goblueraiders.com](http://goblueraiders.com) and click on the Men's Golf link under Sports and look for the volunteer form at the top of the page.

We hope you come out to volunteer or watch this exciting event and see some of the best collegiate golfers in the country!

Keep up with the Blue Raider Athletic Association and connect with other members on Facebook and Twitter!



[Facebook.com/BRAA](https://www.facebook.com/BRAA)



[@MT\\_BRAA](https://twitter.com/MT_BRAA)

## SUPPORT YOUR BLUE RAIDERS AS THEY COMPETE TO WIN CONFERENCE USA CHAMPIONSHIPS!

Make plans to travel with the Blue Raiders to the softball and baseball conference tournaments, both in Mississippi this spring. The 2017 C-USA softball tournament takes place May 11-13 in Hattiesburg, and the 2017 C-USA baseball tournament will be played May 24-28 in Biloxi.



The Grove and MT Athletics are excited to bring the biggest event in the history of the men's golf program to Middle Tennessee. The Grove will play host to the NCAA Men's Golf Regional at its course in College Grove on May 14-17.



# 2017 FOOTBALL

The Blue Raider Athletic Association's annual National Signing Day Celebration presented by Nutrishop took place Feb. 1 in the Emmett and Rose Kennon Sports Hall of Fame. Football coach Rick Stockstill and his staff were on hand to break down each incoming Blue Raider from the 2017 signing class. Fans were able to get a first look at each signee, gain insight on each recruit, and learn directly from the coaching staff about the expected impact that each player will have on the Middle Tennessee football program.



The 44th annual Groundhog Day Luncheon was held Feb. 2 at the Student Union Ballroom. Head coach Jim McGuire and the Middle Tennessee baseball team hosted the event that officially kicks off the 2017 season. The popular luncheon featured the traditional menu of ham hocks, white beans, tomato salad, green onions, cornbread, chocolate cake, and ice cream.

# 2017 GROUNDHOG DAY LUNCHEON



# SIGNING DAY



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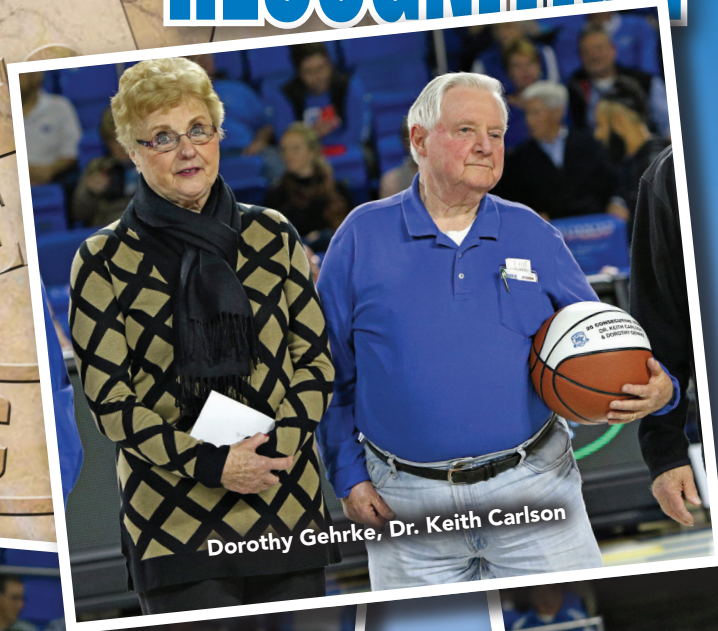
**410 West Burton Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37130**





# BRAA 25-YEAR DONOR RECOGNITION

The Blue Raider Athletic Association annually recognizes our 25th-consecutive-year donors in an on-court ceremony during a basketball game. This year we honored Gary and Jane Barton, David and Gaye Bond, Keith Carlson and Dorothy Gehrke, Ron and Linda Cooper, Bill and Brenda Hayes, David and Chris Kiddoo, and Charlie and Eleanor Teasley during the Feb. 16 women's basketball game against Western Kentucky.



Dorothy Gehrke, Dr. Keith Carlson



Gary Barton, Jane Barton



Linda Cooper, Ron Cooper



David Kiddoo, Chris Kiddoo, Keith McCluney

# Donor SPOTLIGHT

## Steve and Carol Ruckart

- MTSU '77 Alumni
- Consecutive Years Giving to the BRAA: 30
- Currently Reside: Murfreesboro



**Q.** Tell us about you and your family.

**A.** I am a 1977 graduate of MT, as is my wife Carol. Our first three dates were to Blue Raider basketball games. Carol thought that I must really like basketball, but the true reason was the games were free for students and I had no money for a real date! Carol and I took advantage of the married student housing for the first six months of our marriage and moved to Nashville after graduation. We lived there for a year before we decided that Murfreesboro was the town where we wanted to raise our family. Carol and I have two children, Rachel and Katelyn; two son-in-laws, Brad and Chad; and three grandchildren.

**Q.** When did you first get involved in with the Blue Raider Athletic Association?

**A.** We have been season ticket-holders and BRAA members for over 30 years. As MT graduates and fans of athletics, we knew we wanted to support the student-athletes by attending games and with financial contributions.

**Q.** In what ways have you seen the BRAA grow since you became members?

**A.** We have really watched the BRAA grow in recent years. I think business people should understand how important MT athletics are to our community. If we want to have a first-class program, it requires private donations.

**Q.** What motivates you to stay involved with the BRAA?

**A.** We love our University and desire to be No. 1 in whatever conference we are a part of. We believe that private donations are what makes champions!

**Q.** What is your best memory as a Blue Raider?

**A.** We have a few "best memories," but the ones that stand out are the New Orleans Bowl victory and NCAA basketball wins over Kentucky and Michigan State! We are looking forward to the C-USA tournament this year and hopefully the Sweet 16.

**Q.** What is your best memory as a Blue Raider?

**A.** East Lansing, Michigan. Carol and I once drove all the way there and back (18 hours!) to see the women play in the NCAA Tournament.

**Q.** What is your favorite MTSU sport to watch and why?

**A.** We support all of the teams, but we rarely miss a women's basketball, men's basketball, or football game.

**Q.** As a Murfreesboro resident, tell us the importance of supporting your home team.

**A.** I am in the financial planning business in Murfreesboro, and I firmly believe the importance of investing in Murfreesboro community. We want everyone to associate Murfreesboro with MTSU and continue to hear people all across the country saying "MTSU" when we mention Murfreesboro.

**Q.** Do you have a message to share?

**A.** We are convinced that the sky is the limit for MT athletics. We need our entire community and alumni base to get behind our teams by coming to the games and supporting our programs with financial gifts. Let's be All In and True Blue!



# RAIDERS IN



Photo by  
St. Louis Rams

## Football

|                            |     |                    |
|----------------------------|-----|--------------------|
| Kevin Byard (2012-15)      | NFL | Tennessee Titans   |
| Benny Cunningham (2009-12) | NFL | Chicago Bears      |
| Rod Issac (2007-10)        | AFL | Orlando Predators  |
| Logan Kilgore (2010-13)    | CFL | Toronto Argonauts  |
| Keon Raymond (2004-05)     | CFL | Toronto Argonauts  |
| Sammy Seamster (2009-13)   | NFL | Dallas Cowboys     |
| Jimmy Staten (2010-13)     | NFL | Chicago Bears      |
| Erik Walden (2004-07)      | NFL | Indianapolis Colts |
| Josh Walker (2010-13)      | NFL | Houston Texans     |



Photo by Indianapolis Colts



Photo by MLB

## Baseball

|                             |             |                                 |
|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| Hunter Adkins (2010-2012)   | Independent | Lake Erie                       |
| Bryce Brentz (2008-2010)    | MLB         | Boston Red Sox                  |
| Zac Curtis (2013-2014)      | MLB         | Seattle Mariners                |
| Nathan Foriest (2012-2015)  | A-          | San Diego Padres                |
| Jonathan Frebis (2012-2015) | A           | Chicago White Sox               |
| Andy Haines                 | MLB         | Chicago Cubs                    |
|                             |             | Minor League Hitting Instructor |
| Ronnie Jebavy (2015)        | A+          | San Francisco Giants            |
| Michael McKenry (2004-2006) | MLB         | St. Louis Cardinals             |
| Heath Slatton (2013-2015)   | A-          | San Francisco Giants            |
| Ryan Stephens (2011-14)     | A-          | Colorado Rockies                |

## Women's Soccer

|                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Shan Jones (2008-11)       | Long Island Rough Riders |
| Vanessa Mueggler (2007-10) | Ottawa Fury              |
| Lisa Marie Woods (2004)    | Adelaide (Australia)     |



Photo by Craig Mitchelldyer/  
Hillsboro Hops

# IN THE PROS



Photo by Seattle Storm

## Men's Basketball

|                            |              |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| K.C. Anuna (2008-11)       | Nigeria      |
| Tim Blue (2006-07)         | France       |
| Raymond Cintron (2012-13)  | Puerto Rico  |
| Michael Cuffee (2004-05)   | Germany      |
| LaRon Dendy (2012)         | France       |
| Darnell Harris (2014-16)   | Belgium      |
| Jani Hiltunen (2000-01)    | Finland      |
| Neiko Hunter (2012-14)     | Italy        |
| Jason Jones (2010-13)      | Bolivia      |
| Shawn Jones (2010-14)      | Israel       |
| Marcos Knight (2011-13)    | Germany      |
| Bruce Massey (2012-13)     | NBA D-League |
| Steve Thomas (2005)        | Venezuela    |
| James Washington (2009-11) | Sweden       |



Photo by Dave Eggen/  
NBAE via Getty Images

## Women's Basketball

|                           |      |                         |
|---------------------------|------|-------------------------|
| Alysha Clark (2009-10)    | WNBA | Seattle Storm           |
| Chrissy Givens (2004-07)  | Euro | CS Municipal Targoviste |
| Cheyenne Parker (2014-15) | WNBA | Chicago Sky             |

## Men's Tennis

|                              |                 |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| John Peers (2008-10)         | ATP Doubles #7  |
| Andreas Siljeström (2004-07) | ATP Doubles #98 |



Photo by Getty Images

## Track and Field

|                       |         |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Noah Akwu             | Nigeria |
| Ann Dudley            | US      |
| Stanley Gbagbeke      | Nigeria |
| Cordairo Golden       | US      |
| Emmanuel Tugumisirize | Uganda  |



Photo by Bob Donnan, USA Today Sports

## Men's Golf

|                           |                    |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Kent Bulle (2006-10)      | Web.com Tour       |
| Rick Cochran (2005-09)    | Web.com Tour       |
| Hunter Green (2009-12)    | Swing Thought Tour |
| Jason Millard (2008-11)   | Web.com Tour       |
| Chase Narramore (2005-09) | Web.com Tour       |

## Women's Golf

|                        |              |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Allie Knight (2011-15) | Symetra Tour |
|------------------------|--------------|

# BACK-2-BACK

C-USA CHAMPIONS

NCAA 2017 TOURNAMENT ROUND OF 32



2017  
BASKETBALL  
CHAMPIONSHIPS  
metroPCS



**Blue streak**  
For the second year in a row, Middle Tennessee State University...  
**Coming home**

OVERALL  
RECORD  
31-5







# UPCOMING



# EVENTS

## APRIL 2017

- 1** Track & Field at Joey Haines Invitational, Cape Girardeau, Mo.
- 1** Men's Tennis vs. Valparaiso, Murfreesboro
- 1** Softball at Louisiana Tech (DH), Ruston, La.
- 1** Baseball at Marshall, Huntington, W. Va.
- 2** Women's Tennis vs. Louisiana Tech, New Orleans
- 2** Baseball at Marshall, Huntington, W. Va.
- 2** Softball at Louisiana Tech, Ruston, La.
- 2** Men's Tennis vs. UAB, Murfreesboro
- 4** Baseball at Tennessee, Knoxville
- 5** Softball at Belmont, Nashville
- 7** Men's Tennis at VCU, Richmond, Va.
- 7** Women's Tennis vs. UAB, Murfreesboro
- 7** Baseball vs. Old Dominion, Murfreesboro
- 8** Track & Field at UT Invitational, Knoxville
- 8** Men's Tennis at William & Mary, Williamsburg, Va.
- 8** Baseball vs. Old Dominion, Murfreesboro
- 9** Women's Tennis vs. Southern Miss, Murfreesboro
- 10-11** Women's Golf at The Brickyard Collegiate, Macon, Ga.
- 11** Baseball vs. Belmont, Murfreesboro
- 12** Men's Tennis vs. ETSU, Murfreesboro
- 12** Softball vs. Alabama State (DH), Murfreesboro
- 13** Baseball vs. UAB, Murfreesboro
- 14-15** Men's Golf at Wolfpack Spring Open, Raleigh, N.C.
- 14** Women's Tennis at South Alabama, Mobile, Ala.
- 14** Softball at Florida Atlantic (DH), Boca Raton, Fla.
- 14** Baseball vs. UAB, Murfreesboro

## APRIL 2017

- 15** Track & Field at Austin Peay Invitational, Clarksville, Tenn.
- 15** Women's Tennis vs. Troy, Mobile, Ala.
- 15** Softball at Florida Atlantic (DH), Boca Raton, Fla.
- 15** Baseball vs. UAB, Murfreesboro
- 15** Spring Football Game
- 15** Spring Game Tailgate
- 17-19** Women's Golf at Conference USA Championship, Fort Myers, Fla.
- 18** Softball vs. Alabama A&M (DH), Murfreesboro
- 18** Baseball vs. Vanderbilt, Murfreesboro
- 19** Softball vs. Belmont, Murfreesboro
- 20-23** Women's Tennis at Conference USA Championship, Denton, Texas
- 21-23** Men's Tennis at Conference USA Championship, Murfreesboro
- 21** Baseball at Charlotte, Charlotte, N.C.
- 22** Track & Field at Auburn Invitational, Auburn, Ala.
- 22** Baseball at Charlotte, Charlotte, N.C.
- 22** Softball vs. UAB (DH), Murfreesboro
- 23-25** Men's Golf at Conference USA Championship, TBD
- 23** Baseball at Charlotte, Charlotte, N.C.
- 23** Softball vs. UAB, Murfreesboro
- 25** Baseball at Tennessee Tech, Cookeville, Tenn.
- 26** Softball vs. Tennessee State, Murfreesboro
- 27-29** Track & Field at Memphis Invitational, Memphis
- 28** Baseball vs. Southern Miss, Murfreesboro
- 29** Softball vs. Marshall (DH), Murfreesboro
- 29** Baseball vs. Southern Miss, Murfreesboro
- 30** Softball vs. Marshall, Murfreesboro
- 30** Baseball vs. Southern Miss, Murfreesboro

## MAY 2017

- 5** Baseball at UTSA, San Antonio
- 6** Softball at Charlotte (DH), Charlotte, N.C.
- 6** Baseball at UTSA, San Antonio
- 7** Softball at Charlotte, Charlotte, N.C.
- 7** Baseball at UTSA, San Antonio
- 9** Baseball vs. Tennessee Tech, Murfreesboro
- 11-13** Softball at Conference USA Tournament, Hattiesburg, Miss.
- 11-14** Track & Field at Conference USA Meet, El Paso, Texas
- 12** Baseball at Rice, Houston
- 13** Baseball at Rice, Houston
- 14** Baseball at Rice, Houston
- 15-17** Men's Golf at NCAA Regionals, The Grove, College Grove, Tenn.
- 16** Baseball at Vanderbilt, Nashville
- 18** Baseball vs. Louisiana Tech, Murfreesboro
- 19** Baseball vs. Louisiana Tech, Murfreesboro
- 20** Baseball vs. Louisiana Tech, Murfreesboro
- 24-28** Baseball at Conference USA Tournament, Biloxi, Miss.
- 25-27** Track & Field at NCAA Regional, Lexington, Ky.
- 26-31** Men's Golf NCAA Championships

## JUNE 2017

- 2-4** Baseball NCAA Regionals
- Track & Field at NCAA Championships, Eugene, Ore.
- 7-10** Baseball NCAA Super Regionals
- 9-11** Baseball NCAA Super Regionals
- 10** Barbell Bash presented by Nutrishop
- 15** BRAA Donation Deadline
- 17-28** Baseball College World Series





2017 NCAA Men's Golf Regional host Middle Tennessee | College Grove, Tenn.



### Tournament Schedule:

- Practice Round: May 14
- First Round: May 15
- Second Round: May 16
- Third Round: May 17

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