

Open forum ends in students' protest; McPhee responds

Opinions, page 4

MON
66°/50°



TUES
60°/45°



WED
67°/44°



MT baseball takes series against Florida International

Sports, page 7

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY SIDELINES

EDITORIALLY INDEPENDENT

MONDAY, APRIL 13, 2009

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Tornadoes tear through Rutherford County



Photo by Meagan McCann, contributing photographer

A house in Murfreesboro stands severely damaged after tornadoes hit Murfreesboro Friday. This house is just one of the 519 structures damaged or effected by tornadoic activity that left the city reeling in its aftermath.

By BYRON WILKES
Opinions Editor

A series of tornadoes ripped through north Murfreesboro Friday, April 10, causing massive damage to residential and industrial areas while injuring dozens and killing two.

One tornado tore down Medical Center Parkway before changing directions, traveling down Thompson Lane and Broad Street prior to moving through the Riverview Community and the Tomahawk Trace area, where it proceeded to devastate the Compton Road area.

"We responded at approximately 12:40 to about 59 calls," said Randy White, Rutherford County Emergency Medical Services public information officer. "We transported approximately 35 patients. Out of those 35 patients [there were] 7 critical patients, and we also had 2 DOA [dead on arrival] patients."

According to White, Kory Bryant and her 9-week-old daughter Olivia were found dead outside of their residence, apparently attempting to get into a car. The child was found in a car seat.

"I looked out my window

and saw it," Murfreesboro resident Roger Daniels said. "It was full of wood and furniture and stuff. It was just dancing."

The twisters destroyed numerous houses and businesses as they forged a path through roads, neighborhoods and other properties.

Sightings of the tornadoes vary from witnesses, but police confirmed the funnels touched down in several places.

"We believe we had at least two confirmed touchdowns in the county area, possibly as many as four," said Sgt. Dan Goodwin of the Rutherford County Sheriff's Office. "We had reported touchdowns all the way from Rockville in the southeastern part of the county out to Milton, which is in the northeast part of the county."

Goodwin also stated that at least three-dozen homes were destroyed or damaged in the county.

"My son ran in and said 'Mom, look out the window,'" said Jennifer Farley, a Mary Kay sales director who lives on Tomahawk Trace. "We got in the closet, and we could just feel the pressure in our ears and the house. We were pray-



Photo by Meagan McCann, contributing photographer

A Murfreesboro family surveys destruction wrought by the storm.

ing the whole time."

Designscape, Stampede Dance Hall and Saloon and Itnolap Pallet and Crating Incorporated were just some of the businesses that incurred damage Friday's storms.

"I left here about 15 minutes before it hit," said Diane Delk, owner of Designscape. "I'm numb right now. We're just waiting for the insurance company to get here and see what happens next."

Traffic came to a standstill as droves of people filled the roads trying to get to various parts of town in the after-

math.

"I watched as one guy stopped in the middle of the road and tried to turn around," said Ronald Wilkinson of Rich Products Corporation. "Sightseeing freaks are coming out here all day, and police and firemen can't get around them."

Police and EMS response time was delayed due to the voluminous amount of traffic on roads surrounding the affected areas.



Photo by Meagan McCann, contributing photographer

Many of the houses on Tomahawk Trace were destroyed on Friday.

TORNADOES, PAGE 3

Rutherford County homeless granted basic needs

By DUSTIN EVANS
Staff Writer

In the midst of a controversial stimulus package, Congressman Bart Gordon, D-Tenn., announced that Rutherford County has been awarded \$80,139 as a grant to aid people without food or shelter on April 9.

Gordon said that the grant, a part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, comes at a time when homelessness and hunger have significantly increased in Middle

Tennessee.

"I am confident that grants like this, in addition to the job creation components and federal grant programs that received funding from the Recovery Act, will pull Middle Tennessee and the rest of the country out of this recession and back on the track of economic prosperity," Gordon said in a news release.

The Nashville Homeless Power Project stated on its Web site that since 2007, the city of Nashville has al-

“The money allocated today will help expand Rutherford’s existing programs.”

BART GORDON
CONGRESSMAN, D-TENN.

ready benchmarked funding to develop 200 units of housing for the homeless a year before the grant.

The NHPP Web site also stated they had previously asked for \$2.3 billion for 200 units to build during 2007-08, the city budget

was only able to allocate \$800,000, which was still able to produce 60 units of shelter.

Gordon said that this grant will be able to assist projects like the NHPP that exist in Rutherford County.

"The money allocated today will help to expand Rutherford's existing program," Gordon said. "Not only can the funds be used for food and shelter purposes, but they can also be used to provide one-month assistance with rent, mortgage and utility payments to prevent evictions, and transition assistance from shelters to stable living conditions."

Gordon said that the funds were allocated by a formula that took current population, unemployment

and poverty into account.

Gordon also said that this funding from the ARRA provided funding to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program. The ESFP's goals are to provide funding to the "neediest areas," to respond quickly, and to maintain accountable reporting.

For more information on Rutherford County's grant, you can contact United Way of Rutherford and Cannon Counties at 893-7303.

CURRENT EVENTS

Paul Blart – Mall Cop
 April 13-17: Monday–Thursday, 7 p.m. & 10 p.m., Friday, 7 p.m.
 Admission: \$2
 Location: KUC Theatre

Afroflow Festival (starring recording artist Mike-E)

Tuesday, April 14, 4 p.m.
 Location: Lawn of the Honors College
 More Information: afroflow.com

A night of comedy with Iliza Shlesinger
 Thursday, April 16, 7 p.m.
 Admission: Free
 Location: JUB Tennessee Room

More Information: ilizashlesinger.com

MTSU Dance Theatre Spring Concert
 April 16 – 18, 7:30 p.m.
 Location: Tucker Theatre
 Admission: \$10 for general admission, \$5 for MTSU staff and free for MTSU students.

Rock Your Body Concert
 April 16, 8 p.m.
 Admission: \$7 for people ages 21+ and \$10 for people ages 18 to 20.

Corey Smith (featuring Clayton Anderson Band)

April 17, 7 p.m.
 Location: Murphy Center
 Tickets: \$20 at mtsusigep.com or \$25 at the door

9th Annual MTSU Student Film Festival
 April 20–24
 Visit KUC 308 for more information.

Rutherford County MTSU Alumni Chapter's Benefit Lunch
 April 22, 11 a.m. & 12:30 p.m.
 Location: Bonefish Grill, 505 Thompson Lane

CRIME BRIEFS

April 6, 11:16 a.m. Burglary
 Murphy Center
 Subject called and requested an officer in reference to an attempted burglary.

April 7, 12:39 p.m. Theft
 Business Aerospace Building
 Subject called and requested an officer in reference to her purse being stolen.

April 7, 1:39 p.m. Theft
 Smith Hall
 Subject called and requested an officer in reference to his iPod being stolen.

April 7, 7:02 p.m. Traffic
 MTSU Blvd.
 Marquella Brown was arrested for driving on a suspended license.

April 8, 10:10 a.m. Trespassing
 Fairview Building
 Officer checked on a suspicious subject off campus near this building.

April 8, 4:35 p.m. Theft
 Deere Hall
 Theft of a purse from this building.

April 8, 5:43 p.m. Vandalism
 Corral Lot

Report of someone keying a vehicle in this lot.

April 8, 11:51 p.m. Trespassing
 Greek Row
 Roland Davis was issued a written trespassing warning and was transported to the hospital due to prior injuries.

April 9, 3:06 a.m. DUI
 East Main Street
 Andrew Nuckolls was arrested for DUI of the first offense.

April 9, 11:47 a.m. Burglary
 Womack Lane
 Subject called and requested an officer in reference to someone trying to break into his apartment.

April 9, 4:10 p.m. Theft
 Floyd Stadium
 Theft of a laptop from the Enhancement Center in stadium.

April 9, 4:16 p.m. Theft
 Business Aerospace Building
 Theft of a laptop reported from building.

April 10, 5:08 a.m. Assault
 Corlew Hall
 Physical altercation had occurred in a room of this dorm between two males.



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Up 'Til Dawn raises \$81,000 for St. Jude

Positions are open for next year's Up 'Til Dawn. Once you become part of this organization, you will receive experiences sure to add value to your resume and make you feel good about helping children at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

There are many ways to get involved as a volunteer, team member, executive board member or planning committee. Within these positions are opportunities in entertainment, catering, corporate sponsorship, public relations, recruitment, finance, patient relations, logistics, fundraising and more.

Applications are in the KUC room 326-S and are due Friday, Mar. 20. For more info visit <http://frank.mtsu.edu/~uptildawn> or call 615-898-5812.



Up 'Til Dawn is a national student-led, student-run fundraising organization. Over 200 campuses participate in an Up 'Til Dawn event, but MTSU is among the best. For over 10 years, MTSU students have been leading the way in hosting this campus and community wide event, raising over \$640,000 to fight childhood cancer.



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Gordon writes Obama for support in wake of tornadoes

STAFF REPORT

After surveying the damage caused by Friday's Tornadoes Representative Rep. Bart Gordon, D-Tenn contacted President Barack Obama to address the situation in Rutherford County.

"I have also informed the White House that Governor

Bredesen may soon request federal disaster assistance for the affected areas, Gordon said in a news release. "I have also sent a formal letter to the President, urging a quick response."

Gordon also said that he has spoken with local officials letting them know that he is ready to help the residents of

Murfreesboro "rebuild their lives and restore their communities."

"Right now, my thoughts and prayers are with the friends and families of those who have lost loved ones, those who have been injured and those who have lost their homes and property."

Retiring faculty receive banquet

By EMMA EGLI
Assistant News Editor

Faculty, family and friends came to the 2009 reception for retired employees and 29 MTSU professors and staff members honored for their years of service at the university.

President Sidney McPhee presented the honorees with engraved clocks, since the retiring faculty members have contributed a total of 747 years of service to MTSU.

"The individuals that we are recognizing today are responsible for helping develop the incredible reputation of MTSU as a great academic institution that we have today," McPhee said.

Some of the faculty members retiring at MTSU for more than 40 years. Boyd Evans Jr., an economics and finance professor who is retiring after 43 years of

teaching, said he will miss working at MTSU.

"It's been a fun 43 years and I've had a really good time here," Evans said. "I definitely plan to stay involved with the community and the university."

Betty Rowland, a staff member at the Gore Research Center, said she is able to retire after 17 years of service for MTSU.

"I'm very fortunate that I am able to retire a bit earlier than normal," Rowland said. "By retiring early I should be able to enjoy things a little bit more instead of working as long as I possibly could."

McPhee said he was not sure why so many people were retiring from MTSU this year and that the decision to retire is entirely up to them.

"If I were to speculate, it might be because of the economy," McPhee said. "It could also just be because

they were ready to retire after working so long with the university."

Carole Carroll, a professor of sociology and anthropology, said in her 39 years of teaching that she has probably taught over 10,000 students.

Many of the retirees said that if given the chance to come back to MTSU and do it all over again, they definitely would.

"MTSU can become a sense of family," Rowland said. "So while you move on to another chapter, you're still always going to miss it."

McPhee said the thing that makes MTSU so unique are the dedicated people who work here.

"We have some incredible employees here, not just professors, but staff as well," McPhee said. "It's a challenge in this environment to replace those individuals with people as dedicated as they have been."



Photo by Alex Moorman, campus news editor
A man cleans up debris from an uprooted tree in neighbors yard on Richard Road off Sulphur Springs Road.

TORNADOES FROM PAGE 1

"What we don't need out in the county or in the city is people sightseeing, coming to see the storm damage," Goodwin said. "I urge [people] to watch it going out there rather than going out there themselves because they're going to clog up the roads."

Goodwin said that police personnel will be patrolling the areas in an attempt to circumvent would-be looters.

Sam Bickford, 18, of D'Ann Drive, saved his mother's life by moving her into a closet after a tornado touched down near his house and broke his finger in the process.

"The boy's a hero," said Mike Bickford, Sam's father. "My wife was asleep, and he dug her down the hall. He felt the house move up when he tried to close the closet door."

The Bickford residence was lifted off of its foundation and moved about 20 feet from where it once stood.

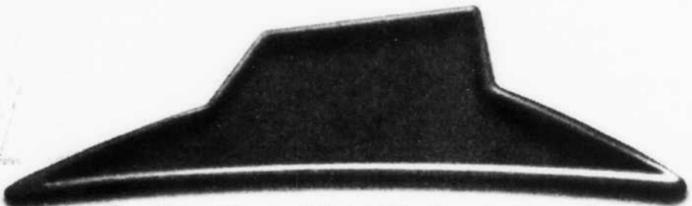
Neighbors helped church groups went around handing out water and other necessities. Anybody still in need of assistance should contact American Red Cross in Rutherford County at 893-4272.



Photo by Michael Stone, editor in chief
Joanna Allen (left) and Allison Cumberbatch salvage items from the rubble of Cumberbatch's parents house.



Photo by Meagan McCann, contributing photographer
An American flag lies draped over a mailbox in front of a crushed house on D'Ann Drive.



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Letters Policy

Sidelines welcomes letters to the editor from all readers. Please e-mail letters to slopinio@mtsu.edu and include your name and phone number for verification. Sidelines will not publish anonymous letters. We reserve the right to edit grammar, length and content.

OPINIONS

Sidelines is the editorially independent, non-profit student-produced newspaper of Middle Tennessee State University. Sidelines publishes Monday and Thursday during the fall and spring semesters and Wednesday during June and July. The opinions expressed herein are those of individual writers and not necessarily Sidelines or MTSU.

FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Tornadoes leave 'Boro to pick up the pieces

On Friday, a series of tornadoes swept through Murfreesboro, causing major damage to businesses, homes and roadways.

The storm left dozens injured, two dead and many residents without power. It also left many people homeless and collecting the remains of their belongings while searching for shelter.

An F-3 tornado first hit Medical Center Parkway and changed its path, destroying Thompson Lane and Broad Street. The Riverview Community, Tomahawk Trace and the Compton Road area were also hit.

According to the city of Murfreesboro's Web site, 42 residences were listed as totally destroyed, 80 sustained major damage, 60 sustained minor damage and 71 were affected but still habitable.

Gov. Phil Bredesen said that the damage is so severe that he is going to request that President Barack Obama declare Murfreesboro as a disaster area. This will help provide low-interest loans for home and business owners who are insured on some of their losses.

On Saturday, neighbors and community members ventured out to help families in need. Family Worship Center on Sulphur Springs Road provided eight portable toilets and started cooking barbeque for storm victims.

Lowe's of Murfreesboro, located on 1825 Old Fort Pkwy., is also reaching out to victims by staying open 24 hours a day to assist with tornado recovery and repair resources. Anyone in need of assistance can contact Lowe's at 615-896-2882.

To help with the victims affected by this disaster, people can donate to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund by visiting redcross.org, calling 1-800-257-7575 or mailing donations to the American Red Cross, P.O. Box 37243, Washington, D.C. 20013. People can also make donations to victims at any Middle Tennessee Kroger store at the checkout counter.

However, the American Red Cross is not accepting any donations of clothing or furniture. Instead the city of Murfreesboro is asking people to call 615-890-1934 if they would like to volunteer.

The Red Cross set up a shelter at New Vision Baptist Church Saturday night where only six people spent the night. Victims are being fed and cared for while determining their next financial moves. Money donations are also being accepted at this shelter, located at 1750 North Thompson Lane.

The Red Cross has also created safeandwell.org, which is a Web site that allows people to register themselves and alert family members that they are safe and well. People that don't have Internet at this time can call 1-866-438-4636 to register over the phone.

We encourage the community to reach out and volunteer their time. It's not an easy experience to lose a home, material possessions and even loved ones. These victims shouldn't have to experience it alone.

McPhee defiant under pressure

I recently attended a town hall meeting in the KUC Theater with President Sidney McPhee. The proposed purpose of this meeting was to let students vent their concerns about the upcoming budget cuts to the president, but some students could reasonably argue that this purpose was not achieved.



Straight Talk

Lauren Collins re-align" programs at MTSU were not his idea.

He also attempted to make the case that the majors, concentrations and programs on the proverbial chopping block are not there because

in. If you are the president, the buck stops with you and no one wants to listen to why it isn't your fault.

If the president and the administration are confused about why students seem so angry about this issue, maybe it's because students keep asking questions for which they're getting no serious answers.

When talks of budget cuts initially began, students were reassured by news reports that Gov. Phil Bredesen wanted the university to solve its budget problems without simply passing the burden onto students.

While we had all hoped this would happen, our hopes were abruptly crushed by the way the university is cutting programs, raising tuition and adding a charge for every hour students take more than 12 hours.

Can someone please tell me how this is not passing the burden onto students?

And, as a special bonus, they're doing this in the



WHO STOLE THE PEOPLES MONEY? DO TELL.

'T WAS HIM.

midst of receiving \$38 million for the university over the next two years.

Where is this money being spent? McPhee talks about the \$38 million like it doesn't exist just because it's being given on a one-time basis.

Maybe I'm the only one having this thought, but if the shortage of money at MTSU is due in large part to the state of the economy in America, wouldn't it make sense to think that the economy may have recovered by 2011?

During the brief period students were given to ask questions, the president was

asked on more than one occasion why administrative salaries were not on the table to be cut.

McPhee immediately stated that administrative salaries would not be considered in this process, and he also offered nothing of himself in the area of sacrifice.

The president berated students for "not being informed" and "not having their facts straight," but maybe he needs to ponder that maybe the facts have not been effectively presented.

MCPHEE, PAGE 5

“McPhee immediately stated that administrative salaries would not be considered in this process, and he also offered nothing of himself in the area of sacrifice.”

The fact that other universities are experiencing financial difficulties as well doesn't justify the way the university is handling this situation.

McPhee also stated numerous times that the tentative plans to effectively "eliminate, consolidate and

of him, but because of the MTSU's deans.

While this may be true, it seemed that the president was taking no responsibility for this financial mess we're

Where were the sirens last Friday?

"Great, my Good Friday good hair day isn't going to last long."

This was my only thought as I left for work around 12:30 Friday afternoon.

I flipped open my umbrella and pouted my way down the steps of my second-floor apartment. It was bad enough that I was on my way to work, but now I had to drive there in pounding rain and hail.

As I turned onto Northfield Boulevard, my cell phone buzzed, indicating a text message had arrived. Being the irresponsible driver that I can sometimes be, I fumbled through my purse and dug out my phone. There were two messages, both said the same thing:

"MTSU ALERT: TORNADO WARNING ISSUED. Take shelter immediately."

That was it - two text messages. I turned off the radio and cracked the window and tried to hear that old familiar warning siren - a sound that I had heard every first Wednesday of every month growing up in southwestern Missouri.

But, I should have known better. There are no tornado sirens on this side of Murfreesboro; at least none that I'd ever heard.

I shrugged and continued on my way to work. When I



Silent Sirens

Andrea Nourse

turned my car down Clark Boulevard, heading toward Northwest Broad, my heart rate sped up. Something felt wrong. This wasn't just a warning, I thought.

Instinctively, I turned the radio back on and began to scan the stations for weather news and found nothing. Again, I found myself wishing I were back in Springfield, Mo. There, I would have simply scanned the dial to 94.7 KTTS and listened to its diligent reports on the weather.

I was panicked and homesick.

A million scenarios ran through my head as I turned right onto Northwest Broad. I passed Big Lots and K-Mart and considered pulling over. No, I thought, I can make it to work. It's just a warning. Besides, there are no sirens.

As I drove past Alexander Chevrolet, I noticed a large, dark-gray cloud less than a mile away. It looked like any

other low-lying rain cloud.

It could have been heavy rainfall in the distance. It could have been anything. But, since I knew we were under a tornado warning thanks to MTSU's alerts, I knew it wasn't just another rain cloud.

In a matter of seconds, I was hyperventilating. What do I do? Where do I go? Oh my God. Oh My God. Over and over, it felt like an eternity.

There's a Kroger at the intersection of Northfield Boulevard and Northwest Broad. I don't remember maneuvering through traffic, looking before I turned onto Northfield or into the Kroger parking lot.

When I pulled in, I couldn't find a parking spot. I saw a police officer as I illegally parked my car and thought that I'd be okay with a parking ticket in this instance.

I grabbed my keys and purse, and I may have even locked the doors. My legs were moving as fast as they could. I could hear a male voice telling me to come inside and go straight to the back of the store. His face is a blur to me now, but I know I was grateful to see it. This

was not a day I wanted to be by myself.

Once inside, my wet shoes slipped across the smooth surface of the grocery aisles. The lights went off when I was barreling down the paper goods aisle. A woman with a flashlight was directing several other customers and shelter seekers into the stock room.

Some of us, myself included, filed into the coolers where we waited for approximately 30 minutes. In that

nado was, or if there would be more, or where it had hit and what damage it had done.

Around 1:20 p.m., I left Kroger and tried to drive to work. I had to know that my co-workers were OK.

As I drove past Chef Wang's, the rain picked up and my fear spiked again. I pulled in and ran inside. I ended up paying \$6 and some change for one spring roll, a Diet Coke and a plate full of food that I just stared at. My hands were still shaking, and my nerves were still on high alert.

Later that afternoon, when I finally made it over to the Avenue and learned that everyone there was OK, I started to go back over the events of the day.

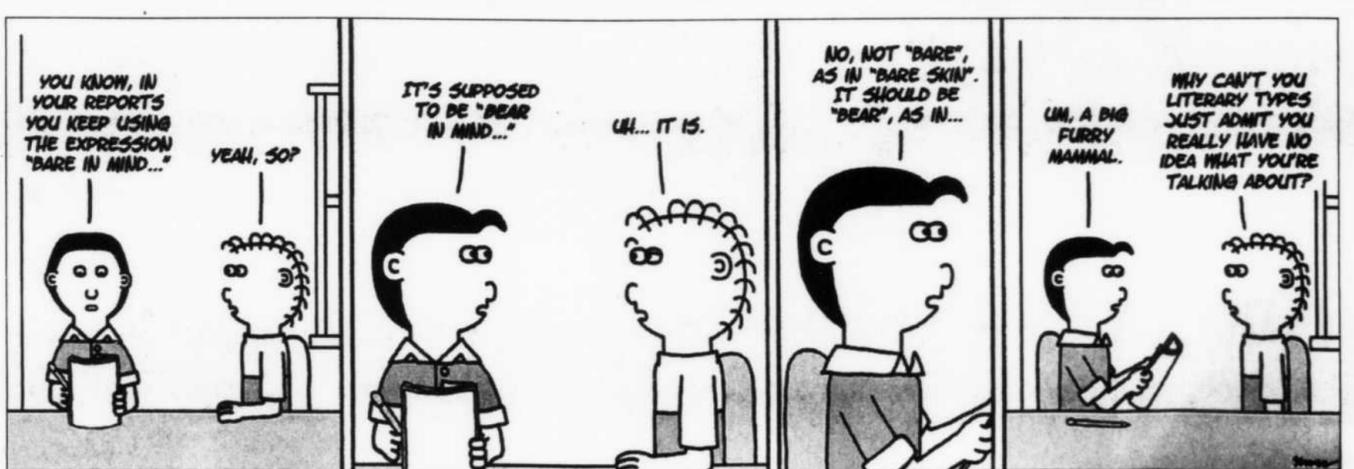
If I'd left my apartment two minutes earlier, I could have already been on Thompson Lane and would have been driving straight for the tornado.

If I'd had the patience to wait to turn left out of my apartment complex, I would have already been past Kroger by the time I saw the tornado.

SIRENS, PAGE 5

“It could have been anything. But, since I knew we were under a tornado warning thanks to MTSU's alerts, I knew it wasn't just another rain cloud.”

COMICS



"Last-Ditch Effort"

kroes@lde-online.com

John Kroes

**MCPHEE
FROM PAGE 4**

around \$10,000 on the "Vote Yes" campaign for a new and improved "all-access" parking garage, but they can't spend a little bit more of their time, and possibly a little bit of money, to inform the student body about what is going on.

If you ask McPhee, he'll tell you to go to the MTSU Web site and read the proposal for yourself. This isn't a bad idea, because we need to be informed. But this simple instruction ignores the larger task at hand.

Reading a proposal doesn't explain to students why some of them are paying upward of \$11,000 a year to go to this school and our professors act like they don't have paper to print our syllabi on.

The proposal won't explain why administrators are sit-

ting pretty and enjoying lush salaries while struggling students are having their tuition and fees raised each year.

The proposal won't tell you why we have a renovated Campus Recreation Center, a new baseball stadium and constant construction on this campus, but the university is "broke."

While there may be good reason for all of the aforementioned issues, I'm just trying to make the point that these things can cause confusion in a student's mind as the university continues to gouge us for money.

If you ask me, it sounds like there's some serious mismanagement of the allocation and exploitation of funds at this university, and I for one, am sick of the burden being passed on to me.

Lauren Collins is a junior in recording industry and can be reached lhc2c@mtsu.edu.

**SIRENS
FROM PAGE 5**

Once again I would have been driving down Thompson Lane, towards the twister.

If I hadn't signed up for the MTSU's emergency text messaging system last year, I would have assumed the large cloud that I saw was simply another large rain cloud.

That thought angered me.

I was lucky because I had the foresight to register for the alert system. What about all the people who didn't go to MTSU, or the students who hadn't signed up for the alerts? What if it was 2 or 3 a.m., and no one had their phones turned on?

What about all those people who don't have cable, digital converter boxes or radios in their homes? Without a siren system, how would these

people have known to take shelter?

I used to get annoyed every first Wednesday of every month when we'd have to practice ducking and covering in the hallways. The sirens annoyed me further as an adult, when I'd forgotten that the system was just being tested. I'd always have to think, "Is it Wednesday? The first one?" But at least it caught my attention, and I knew something was up.

A town the size of Murfreesboro should be capable of warning its residents of impending weather. Furthermore, a town like Murfreesboro should care enough about its citizens to offer such a commonplace service, so why doesn't it?

Andrea Nourse is a junior in public relations and can be reached at arn2e@mtsu.edu.

Rude students don't help

Students' outbursts at President McPhee's open forum deter process of holding real dialect on the impact of budget cuts

Members of the Coalition to Save Our Schools recently disrupted an open forum where President Sidney McPhee fielded questions from concerned students regarding the continued budget difficulties.

According to a report by *The Daily News Journal*, two members of the student organization displayed a banner which read "Fire McPhee, Save Our School." This sort of behavior detracts from legitimate political discourse and should be denounced by students, faculty and concerned citizens who wish to discuss MTSU's budget crisis rationally.

As a former member of the CSOS, I can assure that this radical shift in direction in no way represents the moderate voice of students who wish to contribute to the overall discussion. As Student Government Association Attorney General Shayna Taylor said of the actions of CSOS, "That was completely disrespectful... [McPhee] is doing as much as he can to not [negatively] impact the student body."

I, for one, agree with Taylor's assessment.



Hurtt Pride
Matt Hurtt

I am often critical of MTSU's administration, but I see no room for this sort of distracting dialogue.

The CSOS met with McPhee last week in order to persuade him to sign a petition, which - if signed - would reveal that McPhee had the best interest of the students at heart, according to members of the organization. To the contrary, the petition would have limited the types of cuts McPhee

position at the university, no option should be taken off the table. Being president of a university is oftentimes a political position.

McPhee must be a part-time administrator and a part-time politician, making both operational decisions for the university and selling MTSU to legislators in Nashville.

It should be noted that, from what I gather, McPhee is not the most politically savvy administrator. In fact, one might argue that McPhee is politically tone-deaf, and many would say that such an assessment is not unwarranted. He does seem, on occasion, uncomfortable with the political aspect of his position, although he served in various capacities within the Tennessee Board of Regents before coming to MTSU.

that the budget cuts are beyond McPhee's control. Granted, McPhee does have the final say in which programs get axed, but the numerical figure came from Gov. Phil Bredesen. Students must realize this.

The CSOS might well have been an effective voice for the students. Instead, it has become a distraction from the debate at hand.

Suggesting McPhee resign and disrupting public forums will not solve the budget crisis. Suggesting McPhee is "unfit" to serve as university president does not assuage the necessary \$19 million budget cuts MTSU has to make this year.

Several weeks ago, I offered a practical solution to the budget shortfall: raise tuition \$413 per student per semester. To date, I have heard no other practical solutions. This is not, and should not be about, demonizing McPhee or attempting to publicly embarrass him. It's counterproductive and a waste of our time.

Students interested in engaging in these activities should find something else to do and leave the political discourse to responsible, mature adults.

Matthew Hurtt is a senior history and political science major and can be reached at Matt.Hurtt@gmail.com.

“It's counterproductive and a waste of our time. Students interested in engaging in these activities should find something else to do and leave the political discourse to responsible, mature adults.”

could make to the budget, essentially tying his hands.

McPhee rightly refused to sign the petition. In his

cut \$19 million from its operating budget. The, small yet vocal, group of disrespectful students doesn't seem to realize

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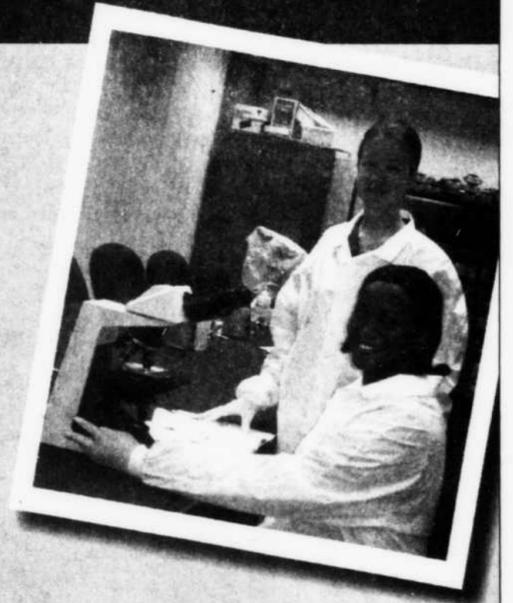
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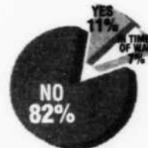
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FEATURES



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Laotian sport finds home in Murfreesboro

Takraw brings local foreign community together at Watlao Buddharam Buddhist Temple

By BYRON WILKES
Opinions Editor

The sun is shimmering as it sets in a parochial field in north Murfreesboro. A few cows moo lethargically in the next field over as they mull around perusing for grass, complete with a few decrepit sheds left over from Tennessee's farming boom.

Train tracks and Highway 24 run parallel to the large field behind the Watlao Buddharam of Murfreesboro, not far down the Old Nashville Highway. White blooms from small trees around the temple and nearby buildings fall swiftly at random intervals in the wind. It is quiet, except for the sounds of children and a strange "clack...clack...clack..." sound coming from the far end of the Buddhist compound, which more closely resembles a countryside park in Laos than a field in Middle Tennessee.

The sound is a group of men on a court kicking a small woven ball back and forth over a net that Americans might mistake for a volleyball net.

Sport utility vehicles and trucks are all parked near the court, which is tucked away in the corner of the hindmost field of the temple.

The "clack...clack...clack..." is the steady sound of the men playing sepak takraw, and it is often punctuated by intermittent shouts or laughter as a player either misses a kick or expertly spikes it over the net.

The game they are playing is known by a few names, sepak takraw or just takraw. The term "takraw" refers to the ball, which is traditionally made of rattan, a wood-like palm, but in modern times can be made with plastic. Sometimes the game is called sepak raga or sipa. In Australia, it is called "footnis."

The "clack...clack...clack..." symbolizes players



Photo by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor

Xai Saenphansiri, left, delivers the takraw ball over the net. The defender uses his body in an attempt to block the ball without using his hands.

repetitiously roving, calculating their next move in a heartbeat and executing a well-aimed kick to deliver the ball.

Takraw looks similar to tennis and soccer combined, or perhaps hackey-sack but with a net between two teams.

Each team is made up of three players, though there are about 10 people present at the single court in all this particular day. Those who aren't playing practice on the sidelines or field stray balls. Occasionally another automobile drives up to the court as 5 o'clock passes and people get off from work.

"Takraw means keep your eyes on the ball," says Phet Ratsadavong, an avid takraw player in his free

“Takraw means keep your eyes on the ball. It is like soccer and volleyball and sort of like basketball.”

PHET RATSAVONG
LOCAL TAKRAW PLAYER

time. "It is like soccer and volleyball and sort of like basketball."

The men who come out to play are both young and old — some work at factories while others own their own businesses. They put aside work to come together and have fun, competing by contorting their bodies to make a little hollow ball travel over the net.

Each team gets to kick the ball three times before having to send it back to the

other side. This allows players the option to strategically position the ball where it can be sent over with more force, or to recover from a particularly strong delivery from the other team.

The game begins when the ball is served by a teammate standing in the service circle, which is located close to the rear-middle on each side of the court.

The game takes on the appearance of baseball for a fleeting few moments as a

player standing near the net pitches the ball to the server so that the latter can kick it over the net. A "strike" on the serve indicates a fault and, consequently, a point for the other team.

Points are also awarded to the opposing team if one team drops the ball on the ground or kicks it more than three times.

Players cannot use their arms at all, though they can use any other part of their body to hit the ball. It is also illegal to be on the other team's side of the court unless a player is following through on a kick.

The determination and agility of the players is obvious. All eyes remain persistently on the ball as it moves to the beat of "clack...

clack...clack..." Players leap into the air foot first to kick the ball before it touches the ground, warping their bodies as they try to make the extremity of their foot and the wayward ball connect.

"Some of the younger guys can perform the bicycle kick to spike it," says Sai Saenphansiri, who is waiting to play the next game. "Most of the time, we don't use bicycle kicks unless it's a tournament though."

A constant and keen awareness among the players is also evident. Not even the cacophony of trains routinely passing only yards away coupled with the momentary sounds of 18-wheelers barreling along to and from Nashville can break their unwavering concentration.

"We started playing about five years ago, but there are people playing [takraw] all over the place," says Lin Southichak, owner of Lin's Auto Repair in Murfreesboro. "When it's nice outside more people come out, especially on the weekends."

Though the group of men comes out just about every day, tournaments are spread out throughout the year. The next tournament is scheduled for April 18, the Laotian New Year, which will be in conjunction with a mass celebration at Watlao Buddharam. Other takraw tournaments occur on the Fourth of July and Labor Day, sometimes with a few occurring in the summertime.

The Buddhist tradition may seem alien to many Murfreesboro residents, but the Laotian population is, in fact, deeply rooted here and reaches far into the community. Despite a myriad of misconceptions and commonplace unawareness, what appears to be strange customs or foreign beliefs is actually an intricately woven portion of the greater tapestry of American culture.



Photo by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor

Xai Saenphansiri executes a bicycle kick during a practice match.

The rules of Takraw

– Two teams of three players play on a 13.4 x 6.1 meter court with a net in the middle

– A player starts the match by kicking the "sepak takraw" ball from a service circle in the middle of his or her side to the opposing side

– The two teams must return the ball over the net in three "touches" using any part of their bodies except their hands

– A team receives a point when the opposing team fails to get the ball over the net inbounds in three hits



Photo by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor

Bounly Daosayania sends the takraw ball to the opposing team.

SPORTS

MT baseball takes two of three in SBC

By STEPHEN CURLEY
Contributing Writer

After falling to Florida International University Saturday afternoon in game one, 5-2, the Blue Raider offense woke up to take games two and three by the scores of 6-3 and 13-9 for the series win.

In the 5-2 loss, sophomore pitcher Bryce Brentz (3-2) threw a complete game, but he struggled at times. The Blue Raider offense could not solve the FIU pitching staff to bail Brentz out. The Knoxville native surrendered five runs on eight hits and was credited with the loss.

Golden Panthers junior pitcher Scott Rembisz (5-0) was credited with the win, only surrendering two runs, one earned, on six hits in eight and a third innings pitched. Freshman pitcher R.J. Fondon closed the door in the ninth to earn his second save this season.

Game two of the doubleheader looked much different for the MT lineup, finishing with 15 hits as the team won 6-3.

Senior outfielder Nathan Hines led the offense, going 3-for-4 with a home run and two RBIs. Freshman outfielder Justin Guidry also contributed greatly at the plate, finishing 4-for-5.

ishing 4-for-5.

Junior pitcher Kenneth Roberts (3-1) was credited with the win, allowing just three runs on nine hits through seven innings. Junior Coty Woods picked up the save.

"I was glad we were able to bounce back in the second game," head coach Steve Peterson said. "I think Kenny did a great job giving us seven really good innings. Hines had the big RBI for us, and it was good to see Guidry come into the second game and play well."

FIU pitcher Tom Ebert was credited with the loss, giving up three runs on six hits in six and a third innings.

Game three saw an offensive explosion from both teams, but the Blue Raiders were able to outslug their opponents thanks in part to an eight-run third inning, and pick up a 13-9 win.

Junior catcher Drew Robertson led the MT offense, going 4-for-5 with a home run, double and four RBIs. The performance brings his batting average to .398.

FIU second baseman Ryan Mollica led the Golden Panthers offense, going 3-for-4 with a home run and five RBIs.

Freshman pitcher Brett



Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer

Senior Rawley Bishop pulls up on his swing to avoid taking a strike against FIU. The Blue Raiders are now second place in the Sun Belt.

Wilson (3-1) got the victory in game three, surrendering three runs on six hits in five innings pitched. The Murfreesboro native has a 4.50 ERA.

Nick Montgomery, Brett Smalley, Guidry and Woods all made appearances in relief, giving up a total of six

runs on seven hits.

"Brett Wilson had an ugly win, and an ugly win is better than a pretty one any day of the week," Peterson said. "He was struggling in the first and then got the reverse pick to get out of the inning. We just have to be better out of the bullpen.

Woods did a good job, but we have to get help in the bullpen before we bring him in."

Corey Polizzano was stuck with the loss for FIU after a disastrous third inning in which he surrendered eight runs. He finished with eight runs on seven hits with three

walks and three strikeouts.

The series win brings the Blue Raiders to 24-8 and only two games behind conference leader Western Kentucky.

MT is scheduled to travel to Nashville Tuesday night for a 6:30 p.m. game against Vanderbilt for their second meeting of the season.

Blue Raider softball falls to FIU in SBC series

By RYLEE PATRICK
Staff Writer

The Blue Raider softball team dropped three straight games to Sun Belt-foe Florida International University in Miami over the weekend by scores of 1-0, 5-1 and 3-1.

The Blue Raiders (8-28, 3-15 Sun Belt Conference) entered the three-game series three wins behind the Golden Panthers (24-22, 8-8 SBC), with the weekend contests determining which of the two teams would fill the final spot in the conference championship to be held in Denton, Texas on May 5.

"This is a huge series for us in regards to both the overall Sun Belt standings and our position in the conference tournament," head coach Sue Nevar said prior to the weekend's performances. "It is at this point in the season that players need to step up and get it done on the field."

In the opening game of the series, MT fell to FIU 1-0 as the Blue Raider bats were silenced to only two hits in the contest.

Junior pitcher Lindsey Vander Lugt (6-14) allowed just one run while fanning nine batters during her appearance in the first game of Friday's doubleheader.

FIU's Kasey Barrett (12-9) shut out MT on two hits while striking out 13 to clench the opening victory.

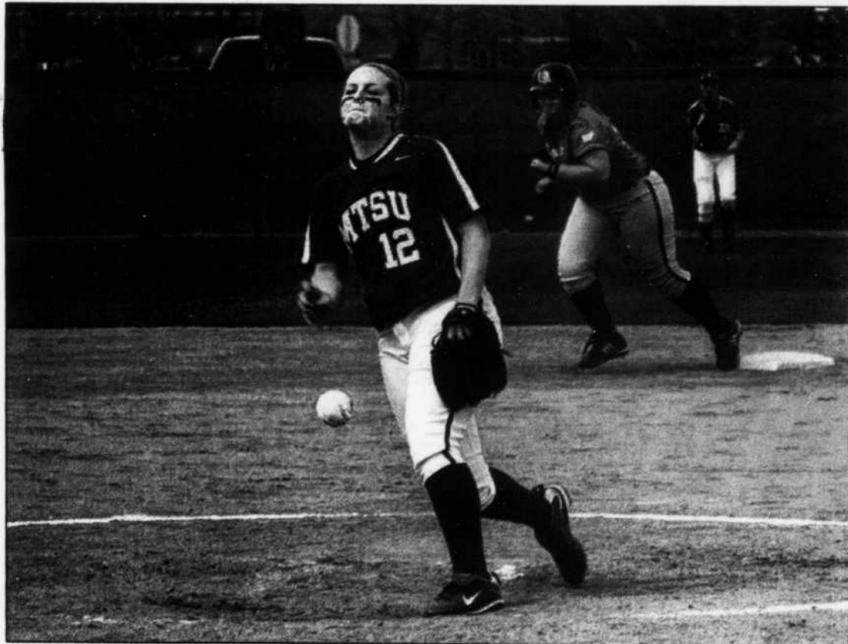


Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer

Sophomore pitcher Kellie Head serves up a strike during a home game. The Blue Raiders have fallen to an 8-28 record on the field with a 3-15 record in the Sun Belt Conference.

For the first inning, the Blue Raiders succeeded in keeping the home team off the board, with Vander Lugt striking out Jasmine Parra and Seldi Soberon to hold the Golden Panthers at bay.

MT remained scoreless in the second inning despite a great situation. After a throwing error, sophomore center fielder Kelsey Dortch was able to reach second base before stealing third. But she was unable to score.

However, the Blue Raider

defense held strong. MT was able to secure three crucial outs during the fourth inning after the Golden Panthers loaded the bases with three straight singles.

In the bottom of the ninth, MT fell 1-0 after FIU loaded the bases and secured a walk-off RBI single to bring the winning run home.

In game two of the doubleheader, the Blue Raiders remained scoreless until the sixth inning as the Golden Panthers claimed their sec-

ond victory of the day by the score of 5-1.

Freshman pitcher Katy Jutson (1-9) picked up the loss as she allowed three runs on eight hits during her five-inning appearance for the Raiders.

In the opening inning, Dortch and junior left fielder Caitlin McLure both walked before advancing a base with two outs on a passed ball by FIU. However, the Blue Raiders were unable to score as freshman first baseman Kay-

cee Popham struck out looking to close the inning.

In the bottom of the first, the Golden Panthers took a 1-0 lead after loading the bases and bringing a runner home on a wild pitch by Jutson.

The Golden Panthers increased their lead in the bottom of the second with an RBI single to left field. FIU then followed with another RBI single down the left field line to bring the score to 2-0 for the home team.

In the fourth, Martha Davis drew a leadoff walk and advanced to third two batters later, giving the Blue Raiders a scoring opportunity. However, MT hit into another ground out ending the inning and their chance of scoring a run.

FIU extended its lead in the bottom of the fifth to 3-0 after another RBI-single.

MT got on the board during the sixth inning as McLure walked to first before advancing to second and then stealing third. McLure then scored on a wild pitch, bringing the score to 3-1 and shortening FIU's lead.

The Golden Panthers added two more runs in the bottom of the sixth with a two-run homer, bringing the final score to 5-1 in favor of the home team.

After losing both games

of the doubleheader, the Blue Raiders dropped the final game 3-1 on Saturday afternoon.

Vander Lugt allowed two earned runs on six hits in the complete-game loss.

In the second inning, McLure walked and sophomore shortstop Brittney Bannania reached off catcher interference by FIU. But the scoring chances ended as the Blue Raiders struck out to end the inning.

To begin the third inning, Dortch lined a 2-1 pitch straight up the middle before advancing to second on a bunt by McLure. Davis then stepped up to slam the ball into short left field as Dortch raced for home.

The play was close at the plate, but the ball was dropped by FIU's catcher, allowing Dortch to score and claim a 1-0 lead for MT.

The Golden Panthers evened the score in the bottom of the third, with a sacrifice groundout.

In the bottom of the sixth, FIU clenched the lead and the game with back-to-back solo home runs to left field, bringing the final score to 3-1 for FIU.

With six games remaining, the Blue Raiders return to action this Tuesday to face No. 15 Louisville at Ulmer Field in Louisville, Ky. Opening pitch is set for 5 p.m.

Men's golf takes sixth place against stiff competition

By ZACH REVES
Assistant Sports Editor

The Blue Raider men's golf team overcame tough big-name competition and unfriendly weather to finish sixth at the Robert Kepler Intercollegiate over the weekend.

Sophomore Jason Millard led the Blue Raiders by finishing fifth overall out of the field of 75 golfers from such schools as Ohio State University, University of Iowa and the University of Notre Dame.

On Sunday, in the third and final round of competition, Millard shot a 71 on

the par-71 course, which was good enough for second place on the day. Millard also shot a 76 in round one and a 75 in round two to finish 9-over overall.

The Murfreesboro native helped move the Blue Raiders up two spots in the final day—from eighth to sixth overall with his strong day.

The five-player MT team finished at 62-over, shooting 914 over the three days of competition. The Blue Raiders were 22 strokes behind tournament winner Northwestern University.

Behind Millard was senior Chas Narramore, who

finished tied for 29th place, including a 79 in the final round. Narramore finished at 18-over overall, after shooting 77 in round one and a 79 in round two.

The course, which is located on the campus of Ohio State, was beset by harsh weather over the three rounds, inflating many of the player's scores.

"We came here to get a test for [NCAA] regionals, and that's what we got—a long, hard, windy, cold course," said head coach Whit Turnbow after round two. "It was a strong test of golf."

The Blue Raider team also received a strong effort from senior Rick Cochran who finished tied for 43rd place. Cochran steadily got better, shooting an 82 in round one and a 76 in the final round. The Paducah, Ky., native finished at 22-over.

Rounding out the team, juniors Craig Smith and Kent Bulle tied each other for 48th place shooting 23-over for the competition.

The MT men's golf team is scheduled to return to competition with the Sun Belt Championships in Houston on April 20-22.



MEN'S GOLF

Top Performers



Jason Millard so.
+9
finished in 5th



Chas Narramore sr.
+18
finished tied for 29th

Blue Raider track earns NCAA honors at meet

By ZACH REVES
Assistant Sports Editor

The Blue Raider outdoor track and field team continues to pile on individual accolades as MT earned two additional regional qualifying marks at the Sea Ray Relays in Knoxville this weekend.

Juniors Sarah Nambawa and Brittany Cox both earned a spot in May's NCAA regional meet after their outstanding performances despite the weather-shortened competition.

Nambawa placed second overall in the triple jump with a 12.8 meter leap that was long enough to garner her a spot in the regionals. She finished just .08 meters behind the event's winner, Jeomi Maduka of Cornell.

The honor is Nambawa's

second qualifying mark in the triple jump in the last two weeks. Last weekend at the Tiger Track Relays, Nambawa scored a 13.29m leap to earn her first regional invite.

Nambawa also finished fifth in the long jump with a leap of 5.91m, just missing the qualifying mark.

Cox also earned a regional score in the shot put as she scored a 15.18m toss, which was good enough for fourth place at the event. It was her second qualifying mark as Cox also earned an invite in the shot put at last weekend's meet when she threw a school-record 15.89m.

The Antioch, Tenn. native just missed earning her second qualifying mark in the discus with a fourth-place 46.46m toss.

In the men's events, Junior William Songock earned a fifth-place finish in the 10,000 meter. The long distance runner completed the race in 31 minutes and 14.24 seconds.

Freshman Roscoe Payne finished in seventh-place for the Blue Raiders in the 110m hurdles with a time of 14.49 seconds.

In the relay races, the women's 4x200m team finished second with a time of 1:38.77. The same team also ran a 46.34 in the 4x100m relay, which was good for fourth place.

The men's best relay team finished in sixth-place in the 4x1500m, with a time of 16:23.43.

The Blue Raiders will continue their outdoor season at the Georgia Invitational this Friday in Athens, Ga.



Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer

MT distance runners race around the Murphy Center's track. MT earned two NCAA invites this weekend.

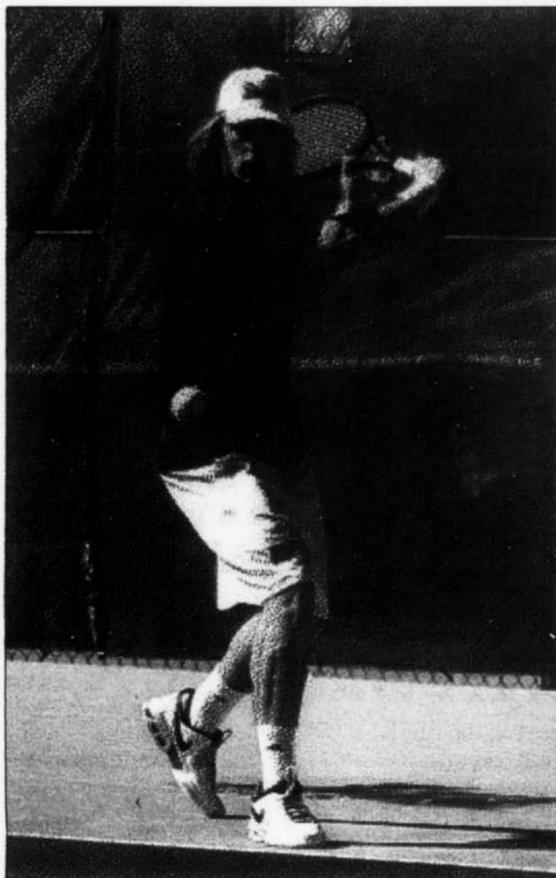


Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer

Junior Robert McKenzie looks to return a shot for the Blue Raiders.

Blue Raider tennis teams put on strong weekend show

By CHRIS WELCH
Sports Editor

The Middle Tennessee men's tennis team rounded out its regular season with a 4-3 win over Belmont on Saturday afternoon.

This most recent win gives MT a 13-9 overall record for the season, with a 2-0 conference record.

The match began with the Blue Raiders dominating the doubles competition. The team of senior Robert McKenzie and sophomore John Peers, currently ranked as the No. 29 doubles team in the nation, took their match against Belmont's Renato Antun and Fausto Rocha 8-1.

Senior Morgan Richard and freshman Matthew Langley teamed up for an 8-5 win over Joao Paoliello and Rodrigo Amaral.

McKenzie who is ranked 94th in the nation, spearheaded the singles play by besting Javier Rodriguez 6-2, 6-0. This put MT up by two.

Then, Belmont began its comeback effort, as Rafael Matos won his match against freshman Kyle Wishing 6-0, 6-1.

Belmont's Rocha continued the effort, as he bested Langley 6-3, 6-3.

Richard stopped the effort short, however, by taking his match over Amaral 6-3, 6-4, giving MT a 3-2 advantage.

Peers then finished the match by taking the match over Belmont's Paoliello 3-6, 6-2, 6-0.

The men's tennis team will compete in the Sun Belt Championships, hosted by the University of North Texas, on April 17-19 in Denton, Texas.

The women's team didn't have as much success in their match against the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

After an inclement weather delay postponed Friday's match, the Middle Tennessee women's tennis team fell to UAB, 4-1.

There was no doubles play due to the weather-shortened event as junior Anna Djananova started things off with her win over Ceylan Engin 6-1, 6-1. Djananova would be the sole scorer for MT.

UAB stole the show from there as junior Natalie Araya would lose her match against Georgia Romeo 6-3, 6-3.

Senior Andrea Herrera followed, falling to Paula Alvarez 6-3, 6-3. This gave the UAB Blazers a 2-1 lead.

Freshman Taylor Coffey fell in her match against Jenny Cape, and freshman Marietta Bigus followed, losing 7-6, (5), 6-3 to Brittany DeFelice.

MT will finish its regular season schedule when it plays Memphis Saturday, starting at 1 p.m. at the Buck Bouldin Tennis Center.

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