

# THE ORACLE

Tech's primary news source since 1924



PHOTO BY BRIAN CARPENTER

The Livingston Enterprise reopened Aug. 5 after being forced to abruptly close on Aug. 4. Just after two weeks of closure the newspaper was taken over by their saving-grace, Daniel Richardson.

## Rekindling a Spirit of Resilience

**Megan Reagan**  
REPORTER

“After almost 130 years, I literally just turned out the lights at the Livingston Enterprise. I’d like to say I didn’t see this coming, but that’d be a lie.”

Brian Wilmoth – the former editor of three of the four newspapers in the Upper Cumberland region of Middle Tennessee formerly operated by Holler Media, LLC – announced on Facebook on August 4, 2023. He said he was in the middle of designing the next week’s publication when he was told they were to cease operations immediately.

Included in the wave of newspaper closures across the Upper Cumberland region were longtime published titles such as the Livingston Enterprise, in Overton County, the Citizen-Statesman, in Clay County, Jackson County Sentinel in Jackson County, and the Fentress Courier in Fentress County. Some of these publications are the only printed news product serving their respective communities.

Just a day after the closures, he was not worried about finding work; however, Wilmoth was concerned about his co-workers, and most importantly, the communities that no longer had an outlet.

These narratives, once brought to life through the ink-stained pages of newspapers, are fading away as the printing presses across the nation come to a grinding halt. The closure of community newspapers is casting a long shadow over these regions, giving rise to what experts are calling “news deserts” – areas where the

flow of reliable information has dwindled to a mere trickle.

Research conducted in 2022 by Northwestern University indicates that approximately one-fifth of the nation’s population lives in a news desert – or in a community at risk of becoming one.

The closure of rural newspapers isn’t just a matter of nostalgia; it’s a crisis shaking the foundation of rural communities. The impact is multi-faceted, reaching far beyond the newspaper offices that have gone dark. Local businesses struggle to reach their audiences, civic organizations struggle to rally support, voter turnout is abysmal, and citizens are left grappling with an information void. One could make the argument that a well-functioning newspaper is an economic catalyst in small communities – and when they lose them they suffer greatly.

According to Linda McNew, a civically-minded Jackson County resident and newspaper subscriber, the content of the paper prior to the closure was minimal.

“We know the importance that comes with having a good local newspaper,” she said. “But that isn’t what we had.”

This, she said, was a wake-up call.

In the midst of the lingering silence left by the sudden closures of rural newspapers, an unexpected glimmer of hope emerged after only a week. Daniel Richardson, CEO of Magic Valley Publishing, stepped forward as a beacon of support, determined to prevent the complete fade-out of these essential community voices.

SEE RESILIENCE, PAGE 3

## Campus Cooldown: Sweet Opening of Poppies Ice Cream Shoppe

**Leigha Gregory**  
REPORTER

Poppie’s Ice Cream Shoppe is officially open for business! The new location is found in Swoops, within the Roaden University Center. With the motto, “Old Times, Good Times, Best Times,” Poppie’s Ice Cream Shoppe creates a nostalgic atmosphere decorated with images of Awesome Eagle.

Poppie’s serves a variety of different flavors of ice cream including: Orange Sherbert, Strawberry Cheesecake, Oreo, Cookie Dough, and eight more flavors! There are lots of toppings to choose from, including: sprinkles, hot fudge, bananas, marshmallows, and even fruit gummies.

Tech students are already happy about this new addition. Senior Zarria Clark said, “Poppie’s Ice Cream has the best strawberry cheesecake ice cream I’ve ever tasted.” She continues, “Their ice cream has such a bold flavor.”

Zarria isn’t the only student excited about this sweet spot. Sophomore Connor Graves mentions, “It is the perfect dessert after some Chick-Fil-A!” It joins Tu Taco, Starbucks, the Market and Chick-Fil-A as a prime location for students and faculty around campus. President Phil Oldham was even seen enjoying a scoop!

Jamie Sixbey is an employee at Poppie’s Ice Cream Shoppe. Sixbey mentioned her favorite part of working at Poppie’s was, “The students!” This retired nurse enjoys making students smile scoop after scoop!

Poppie’s Ice Cream Shoppe is open daily from 11 AM to 8 PM Monday through Thursday, 11 AM to 4 PM on Friday and 6 PM to 9 PM on Sunday and closed Saturday.



PHOTO BY BEE GOODMAN

Jamie Sixbey, an employee of Poppies, smiles with Poppies sign. The sweet addition to campus is sure to be cause for a few smiles during study breaks with twelve fun flavors.

## iDon’t Care: Apple’s newest iPhone 15 fails to make good impressions

**Bee Goodman**  
EDITOR

Apple Inc. has just announced the next iPhone, this being the 15th in the series since the phone was first released in 2007. While iPhones have been popular since the beginning, but this release doesn’t have many lining up to trade in for the newest thing.

Starting Sept. 22 the newest edition to the iPhone family will be available for purchase. In the past, long lines formed around stores, with customers dying to get their hands on the new tech. However many users have decided to hold on to their contracts and wait for more improvements. Sophomore educa-

tion major Ray Newcomb explains, “I love my phone, probably too much, but there’s not enough change to make it worth paying \$1,000 for.”

The most significant difference between the iPhone 15 and past models is the change from a Lightning Cable charger to a USB-C port. This change will always cross use from other products like Macbooks and iPads 2018 models and forward. The company has upset users in the past by changing charger ports, but this change will at least be compatible with other devices. More changes include new color variations and the improvement on the camera, a significant selling point for

buyers.

Freshman James Welkmen expresses his concern: “I feel like Apple is just rushing to put out new products every year rather than making smaller updates on their tech. It’s actually really wasteful for them to push out new tech every year so people are forced to throw out something they don’t care about anymore. It leaves a large carbon footprint.”

Similar to others, Walkmen plans to wait before updating his phone. He also expressed how similar textbook publishing is with the newest launch: “If you really look at it the updates on books just include smaller changes, barely anything new, or

SEE IPHONE, PAGE 3

### Editorial

Game developers face harsh fees that leave players concerned for outrageous prices for downloads.

### Editorial

Student Opinion: Mask Mandate returns as COVID numbers spike again.

### Sports

Tech’s 27-7 loss against Northern Alabama Lions. First home game of the 2023 season. Soccer takes a loss against Middle Tennessee State University.



## 2023 Research Funding Doubles

**Ben Wishart**  
REPORTER

Tech recently broke its highest record in history in funding received for external research for the fiscal year of 2023.

With its previous record resting at \$23.65 million, Tech surpassed it in the 2023 fiscal year ending June 30 by over 50%, totaling out to over \$36.3 million. The university's external funding was supported by 167 sponsored research activations which was a decrease in 22 activations from the 2022 fiscal year's total of 189.

Tech's external funding received for the 2023 fiscal year makes great strides toward accomplishing the university's goal of receiving \$40 million annually by the end of the 2025 fiscal year. Carl A. Pinkert, interim Vice President for research at Tech remarked, "This has been the largest amount of growth we've seen between any two given years before," specifically regarding the increase in funding between the 2022 and 2023 fiscal years.

A total of 38 faculty members gained funding of more than \$100,000 each and will therefore be inducted into what is known as the Wings Up 100, a group in which the university recognizes researchers who have obtained more than \$100,000 in external funding within a given year.

The Carnegie national classification system dictates that Tech is what is known as an R2 doctoral, high-research activity university, and has progressed on significant research progress in recent months, including a U.S. Department of Energy grant designated for clean energy research.

Micah Midgett, a master's student who works in a research position at Tech which is largely funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, said, "Lots of departments were able to get large grants this year due to the massive external funding the university received... It's brought in a lot of potential for projects we're working on."

Some of the top agencies and contributors for the donated funds in the 2023 fiscal year include the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Department of the Interior, the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.S. Department of Education and the State of Tennessee. In addition, the funds provided by the U.S. Department of Education included research dollars for the university's upcoming nuclear engineering program, which is set to launch in the fall of 2024.

## Gaming Developers Face Crippling Fees

**Lawson Tidwell**  
CONTRIBUTOR

On Tuesday, Sept. 12, game engine developer Unity Software Inc. announced through a small, unassuming blog post a change which could potentially bankrupt small, independent game developers in short order starting January 2024.

To clarify, modern day video games are programs built on an engine, a collection of programming tools designed to streamline the process of coding a video game. Unity provides this engine in a limited personal plan for free, with more extensive versions of the software being available for a subscription fee, the primary source of revenue for the company.

The change, innocuously introduced on their website as a "Runtime Fee that's based

on game installs," fundamentally seeks to feed the avarice of a board of executives that feel there is more money to be squeezed from an industry already found to be exceedingly profitable. This "runtime fee" applies specifically to when a video game is downloaded. The idea is already dystopian and ridiculous, made more so by the fact that Unity have stated that this fee will apply to reinstalls, too.

The proposed fee is especially harsh on independent developers, those not backed by the vast financial support of a publisher. These developers often use a version of the Unity game engine dubbed a "personal edition," touted as a free option for those who wish to independently create video games.

However, under these new fees, these users will be charged an

outrageous 20 cents per download, regardless of quantity of downloads. This stands in stark contrast to the best possible rates for Unity's subscription plans, taking two or even one cent per download once a video game surpasses 1,000,000 downloads.

A game can be installed, uninstalled, and reinstalled to a device an infinite number of times, and often will be for a variety of reasons, such as saving disk space on a personal computer, troubleshooting errors, or simply reinstalling a game to play it once more after uninstalling.

To put this into perspective, Hollow Knight is a popular independently developed game released in 2017. Two years after its release, the game sold 3,000,000 copies. If even 25% of customers installed the game once, and only once, it

would cost the developer \$150,000. This is, of course, under the completely incredulous premise that none of these customers ever uninstall and reinstall the game, as well as assuming that no copies of the game are acquired illegally, providing no revenue to the developer, and in fact costing them directly.

This change is abhorrent and has a variety of issues even beyond those discussed in this report. Many developers have already announced a departure from their usage of the Unity game engine, and many question whether this decision is even legal. One can only hope this decision is reversed before it causes irreparable damage to the industry at large.

## Student On The Street

**Noah Mears**  
PHOTOGRAPHER

With a recent increase in mandatory mask mandates, how would you feel if Tech adopted a similar policy?



**Braxton Westbrook**  
COMPUTER SCIENCE  
Senior

"If other universities are bringing back their mask mandates, and Tech were to do the same, I would be in support of it. Generally universities look at the data and what's being done regarding public health at state and federal levels and make the decisions based on the data. If Tech determines there is a need for a mask mandate, and that it is supported by science, I would support it."



**Shaylin Morgan**  
GRAPHIC DESIGN  
Senior

"I didn't enjoy it, but I would understand why they would have it and it doesn't bother me whether or not they do it. I will comply."



**Sammy Skinner**  
NURSING  
Freshman

"A no for me. Because when it was happening in high-school, I couldn't really focus on anything that the teachers were saying or teaching, and there is a few teachers here now who still wear them and it's hard for me to understand them."

## Your Campus Representatives

### STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

**Chance Hale**  
Student Body President  
SGAPresident@tntech.edu

**Claire Myers**  
Vice President  
SGAVicePres@tntech.edu

**Lindsey Taylor**  
Treasurer  
SGATreasurer@tntech.edu

**Jeb MacLennan**  
Secretary  
SGASecretary@tntech.edu

### FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

**President**  
Michael Allen  
Mathematics  
mallen@tntech.edu  
931-372-3594

**President-Elect**  
Mustafa Rajabali  
Mathematics  
mrajabali@tntech.edu  
931-372-3044

**Past President**  
Lori Maxwell  
Sociology & Political Science  
lmaxwell@tntech.edu  
931-372-3683

**Secretary**  
Holly Mills  
Library & Learning Assistance  
hcmills@tntech.edu  
931-372-3544

## The Oracle

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Newsroom:  
(931) 372-3285  
tntechoracle@gmail.com

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(931) 372-3031  
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### Voice Your Opinion

The Oracle encourages readers to write letters and commentaries on topics of interest. A few guidelines:

Letters should not exceed 300 words. Commentaries should not exceed 500 words and include a picture of the writer.

Originality is required, no plagiarism. For verification, letters and commentaries must include your name, email, hometown and classification or title.

Letters may not run every edition due to space. The Oracle reserves the right to edit for style, grammar, length and clarity.

Submissions must be sent to [tntechoracle@gmail.com](mailto:tntechoracle@gmail.com) and received by 3 p.m. the Wednesday before publication.

### Fall Publication Dates

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November 14



Find an error? Contact the editors:

**Bee Goodman** [bmgoodman43@tntech.edu](mailto:bmgoodman43@tntech.edu)

### Oracle Staff

Managing Editor.....Bee Goodman  
Copy Editor.....Gus Creter  
Sports Editor..... Callie Smith  
Social Media/Online Editor.....Harrison Conder  
Reporter.....Ben Wishart  
Photographer.....Brian Carpenter  
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# Culture

## Campus Events

### Tuesday, Sept. 19

Center for Career Development – Career Fair: Employer Expo and Internship Fair, 10:00 am, Marc L. Burnett Student Recreation and Fitness Center, Cookeville, TN.

School of Music – Faculty Recital: Josh Davis, piano, 7:30 p.m., Wattenbarger Auditorium, Bryan Fine Arts Building, Cookeville, Tennessee.

### Thursday, Sept 21

School of Music – Faculty Recital: Michael Adduci, oboe, 7:30 p.m., Wattenbarger Auditorium, Bryan Fine Arts Building, Cookeville, Tennessee.

### Friday, Sept. 21-23

New Student and Family Programs – Family Weekend 2023, Most events are free and open to all to attend (unless otherwise noted on the itinerary).

### Tuesday, Sept. 26

Department of Foreign Languages- Euro Cafe Opening, 11:00 a.m., Room 003, Henderson Hall, Cookeville, Tennessee.

School of Music – Concert: University Orchestra, 7:30 p.m., Wattenbarger Auditorium, Bryan Fine Arts Building, Cookeville, Tennessee.

### Wednesday, Sept. 27

School of Music – Recital: Flute Choir, 7:30 p.m., Wattenbarger Auditorium, Bryan Fine Arts Building, Cookeville, Tennessee.

### Friday, Sept. 29

School of Music – Concert: Festival of Voices, 7:30 p.m., Wattenbarger Auditorium, Bryan Fine Arts Building, Cookeville, Tennessee.

### Sunday, Oct. 1

School of Music – Concert: Bryan Symphony Orchestra, 3:00 p.m., Wattenbarger Auditorium, Bryan Fine Arts Building, Cookeville, Tennessee.

### Monday, Oct. 2

School of Music – Guest Artist, Kyle Hutchins and Charles Nichols, 7:30 p.m., Wattenbarger Auditorium, Bryan Fine Arts Building, Cookeville, Tennessee.

### Tuesday, Oct. 3

School of Music – Concert: Tech Student Jazz Ensembles, 7:30 p.m., Wattenbarger Auditorium, Bryan Fine Arts Building, Cookeville, Tennessee.

### Tuesday, Oct. 5

School of Music – Concert: Wind Ensemble, 7:30p.m., Wattenbarger Auditorium, Bryan Fine Arts Building

### Tuesday, Oct. 9 and 10

Fall Break  
No classes, Offices closed

### Tuesday, Oct. 11

School of Music – Guest Artist: Jerry Tachoir Quartet, 7:30 p.m., Wattenbarger Auditorium, Bryan Fine Arts Building

### Tuesday, Oct. 12

Center for Career Development – Gold Career Readiness Workshop: 11:00 p.m., Roaden University Center, Second Floor, Multipurpose Room

## iPhone: Newest addition isn't getting the desired traction

...just updating language from outdated wording, phones do the same thing...New emojis aren't a big deal, but they get wrapped in a special feature but really who cares? This phone, the iPhone 15, isn't a big deal."

That's the thing: not many care about the new launch when there's little progress being made. If Apple and other tech companies waited to launch a new product until they had more significant features with larger updates, customers would have more to be excited for and more willing to pay the expensive cost of newer Tech.

Walkmen made a good point about the increasing carbon footprint. The new iPhone 15 is labeled as carbon-neutral, but when it's considered outdated within two years of its release, it still stacks up with 'old' tech to make room for newer models. More carbon-neutral material is excellent, but too much of a good thing at the same time still makes a mess. The responsible choice for Apple is to pause launching new models of tech until they make more considerable changes.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY APPLE INC. The new iPhone 15 between a Macbook and iPad with USB-C charger. The new phone switches from the previous Lightning to USB-C, which is compatible with other devices.

## Resilience: Livingston Enterprise reopens with new hope



PHOTO PROVIDED BY PIXIBAY The Livingston Enterprise reopened after shortly closing in Aug. 2023. Since re-opening, they have taken on new reporters including volunteer reporter Linda McNew who stepped up to help. You can read the Enterprise by subscribing to the print and/or online edition.

Richardson said he's spent his life in the newspaper business and was greatly influenced by his father, Dennis. He served as the Tennessee Press Association president and is on the Board of Directors for the National Newspaper Association.

Recognizing the profound impact of the disappearing ink on these towns, Richardson has taken on the role of a lifeline, temporarily funding the operations of the fallen newspapers. His aspiration is to provide them with the breathing room they need to stand on their own feet once again, and perhaps even find a new custodian who values their role as much as he does. In this uncertain landscape, Richardson's intervention serves as a testament to the resilience of newspapers and their importance.

"A community newspaper is a critical core component of a community in the same way, or maybe in an even stronger way, than your community bank or city hall," he said. "All these things you have to have if you want to thrive. Most people don't think of a newspaper as an economic catalyst."

Richardson said newspapers keep people informed and are typically the watchful eye over the government, but it is so much more than that too.

"We drive a platform for businesses to advertise to people they would otherwise not be able to reach," he said. "A lot of people can, if you know what you're doing, advertise on social media. But they're often ineffective at doing that. And then there are a lot of people who are not engaged on those platforms at all."

Explaining how the newspapers serve a community, Richardson also said that a community newspaper can not survive without community support.

"For the first time, Jackson County was kind of faced with the possibility that they may not have a newspaper anymore," he said. "They had spent that time wondering what life after losing their newspaper would really be like... To be a community newspaper, you have to be a part of the community and the community has to be a part of the newspaper," he added.

One week after Brian Wilmoth made his post about the 130-year-old newspaper shutting its doors, a post was made on the Enterprise's Facebook.

"The Livingston Enterprise is looking for someone with a passion for news, community, and storytelling to help tell the story of Overton County, one article and photo at a time," the post read, also encouraging

amateur writers to join forces as freelancers.

This statement encapsulates more than a mere job advertisement; it is a testament to Daniel Richardson's approach to revitalizing these news outlets. In Richardson's vision, these newspapers are not just vehicles for information; they are the threads that weave the fabric of these communities. Each article, every photograph, contributes to a mosaic that captures the spirit, the struggles, and the triumphs of the people who call these places home.

McNew, who was critical of the newspaper prior to its closure, now sees this as an opportunity for the community to have a newspaper they deserve – so much so, she is volunteering to report for the Sentinel.

"What the paper didn't do is what the problem was," she said. "It never really had a lot of news in it, but it had some. And it definitely had more than when it became a vacuum. I thought 'this isn't right,' and I knew something had to happen, but no one knew how to make it happen."

Then when the paper closed in August of 2023, and unexpectedly reopened with the help of Richardson, she said when there was an initiative to work with some freelancers she saw that as an opening to help.

"That's why I stepped up. There's not enough news about our little community," she said.

Against the backdrop of a crisis that had threatened to plunge these towns into information darkness, a beacon of hope emerged in the form of Daniel Richardson and Magic Valley Publishing. In this era of online information deluge, these newspapers offer more than just news; they provide the true essence of community. They are aiming to capture the tales of quiet triumphs, the murmurs of concern, and the heartbeat of everyday life in these rural landscapes.

It isn't just the newsprint that had been revived; it was the very spirit of these towns. People like McNew, who had once criticized the newspaper, are now stepping up to be the change they wished to see.

From closure to rebirth, this event of closures encapsulates the larger battle to save community journalism across the nation. It is a stark reminder that newspapers were more than just words on a page; they are the heartbeat of towns, the glue that held neighbors together, and the torchbearers of shared identity.

Now, more than ever, newspapers need their community support.



# Sports

## Golden Eagles drown in a soggy mess, 27-7 loss against Lions

**Callie Smith**  
SPORTS EDITOR

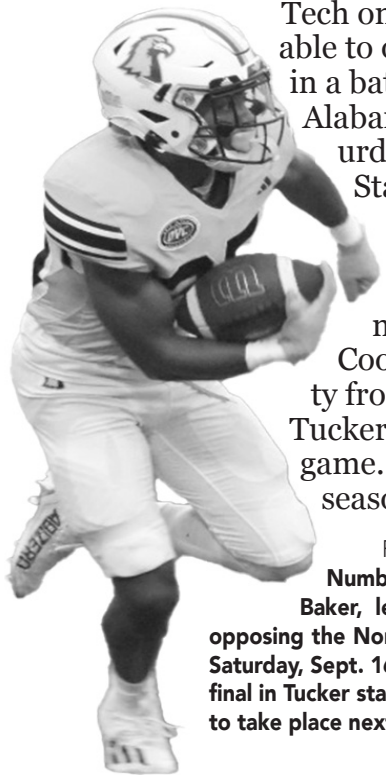


Photo by BEE GOODMAN  
Number 25, sophomore Torin Baker, leads the ball downfield opposing the Northern Alabama Lions on Saturday, Sept. 16. This season will be the final in Tucker stadium before renovations to take place next fall.

Tech once again was unable to overcome turnovers in a battle against North Alabama on a rainy Saturday night in Tucker Stadium.

A cool and rainy night did not stop Tech students and members of the Cookeville community from showing up for Tucker Stadium's opening game. The 2023 football season will be the last as

we know it at Tucker Stadium before renovations begin in 2024. With high hopes across the community, fans wondered if the Golden Eagles would be able to accomplish their first win of the season at the first home game of the season, but the Golden Eagle's score came up short.

The Golden Eagles walked into the beloved Tucker Stadium on Saturday, Sept. 16 with the hope of achieving the team's first win of the season over their opponent, the North Alabama Lions. Tech was able to come out with the win against NAU in the 2022 season, giving the team hope for a similar result on Saturday night. However, due to turnovers, the Golden Eagles continued to put the ball in the Lion's hands, keeping it out of their own offensively.

A quick pick six from the Tech number 47 sophomore linebacker, Jacquez McGowan, put the team on the board for some quick points in the first quarter, but these were the only points to be scored for the Golden Eagles the entire game.

The Golden Eagles offense had difficulty connecting. Tech's team was able to get the ball across the field, but never converted in the red zone. The North Alabama defense was able to put a stop to the Tech offense time and time again. The Golden Eagles were able to push 99 rushing yards and reach 197 passing yards but the team failed to be able to piece big plays together resulting in no points being scored by the offense.

Coach Dewayne Alexander holds onto hope for his team and believes in the potential of the Golden Eagles. The coach takes responsibility for his team and admits they are "competing, but not playing well." Coach Alexander assures his team will be on the field practicing and preparing for the upcoming game every moment of the week.

The Golden Eagles will return to Tucker Stadium this Saturday, September 23 for a family weekend special against Kennesaw State. This game will take flight at 6:00pm.

## Golden Eagle soccer takes flight before OVC season play

**Callie Smith**  
SPORTS EDITOR

The Tech Golden Eagles soccer team finally find some traction on the winning side as they prepare for OVC regular season play.

The 2023 season has started out slow for the reigning OVC champions. The team left the month of August with a 0-2-2 record and added two more losses within the first week of September. However, the Golden Eagles have finally seemed to find a groove and get on an uphill track before facing any OVC competitors.

The Golden Eagles were able

to snag their first win of the season against the Lipscomb Bisons on Sunday, September 10. The Tech team took the win 3-1 on their own home field. Freshman fielder Neve Renwick added to the scoreboard for the first time in her Tech career by scoring a pair of goals in the first half to put the Golden Eagles on top 2-0. Renwick was followed by senior fielder Bailey Taylor, who found her way to the net in the second half to secure a Golden Eagle win, 3-1.

The following Sunday, September 17, the Golden Eagles opened their field once again to in-state rivals, Middle Tennessee State University. The Tech

team was able to get a quick jump on the Blue Raiders, scoring two goals to put the home team ahead 2-0. Neve Renwick was once again able to connect to the net, scoring her third goal of the season, eight minutes after senior midfielder Yao Giada Zhou scored, putting the first point on the board.

However, the Blue Raiders were able to catch back up to the Tech team, scoring a pair of goals themselves to equal out the score, 2-2. The Golden Eagles were not able to answer, and the battle of the game came to a draw with a tie.

While the season record as of now might not shine with pride

for the Golden Eagles, head coach Steven Springthorpe puts his focus on preparing his team for OVC conference play. The Golden Eagles went 5-0-3 within the conference during the 2022 season with an overall record of 8-5-5. This shows there is still hope for this championship team.

The Golden Eagles will begin OVC play Thursday, Sept. 21 facing the Lindenwood Lions at Tech.

The Tech team will be entering the conference season with a 1-4-3 record, coming off of a win and a tie from the previous week.

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