Blue Raiders Drop Exhibition 80-73

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Terrell Taylor and Damon Flint combined for 40 points to lead Global Sports (1-1) to a 80-73 victory over Middle Tennessee in exhibition action on Tuesday night. However, the final tally didn't tell the entire story. The Blue Raiders (0-1) led in every statistical category in the contest except for one telling area: free throws. Global Sports made 33-of-42 shots from the charity stripe while the Blue Raiders shot 8-of-18 from the line. Both teams combined for 47 fouls in the game. William Pippen led the way for new Blue Raider head coach Kermit Davis' squad with a 20-point and eight rebound performance. Tommy Gunn added 16 points and John Humphrey tallied 15. The Blue Raiders will return to action on Nov. 14 against VASDA as the team will close out the exhibition series. ***NOTES AND QUOTES*** **Long Distance Calls:** The Blue Raiders turned in an excellent performance from behind the 3-point arc against Global Sports. Middle Tennessee was 11-of-27 from 3-point land in the game. Tommy Gunn led the charge from behind the line with a 4-of-8. Despite the good final numbers, the Blue Raiders did cool off a bit in the second half. The team made 6-of-13 in the first stanza. **Rebounding Looking Good:** Rebounding was one of the Blue Raiders' weaknesses a year ago, so it bodes well for the team that they were able to outrebound Global Sports tonight. The Blue Raiders won the battle of the boards 35-32, but the biggest story was that Middle Tennessee had a commanding 18-7 advantage on the offensive glass. William Pippen led the Blue Raiders with eight boards in the contest. **Injuries Play a Factor:** The Blue Raiders have been regular residents in the training room so far this season and tonight's lineup showed the effects of the injury bug. Guard Marcus Robinson, who is expected to

play a major role this year at the shooting guard spot, was limited to only one minute tonight after pulling a rib cage muscle during practice last week. Forward Bryant Mitchell played only seven minutes after battling a recurring knee injury. However, one positive from the game is that center Napoleon Rhodes played six minutes tonight after returning to the floor last week after missing most of the preseason with a back injury. Rhodes is slowly being worked back into the lineup. **Coach Kermit Davis:** "I'm not disappointed, just a little discouraged about our undisciplined guarding. We put them at the line 42 times. We put them in one-and-one too early. We had no physical presence around the goal, perimeter or post, and they did. I thought that was really it. I understand. We took some shots we didn't need to take, but that is just part of the team growing in special situations. We spent a lot of time rebounding the ball. I thought we were active on the offensive boards. We had 18 offensive rebounds, so that is good. With as much time as we have spent defensively, the team shoots 50 percent against us. If you give up 42 free throws, you are not going to win at home or away." **MT Guard Tommy Gunn:** "We do have to work on some key areas, such as defense and rebounding. We worked out a few kinks and we did have some positive aspects in tonight's game. I feel like we do need a lot of work to get where we need to be, and where Coach Davis wants us to be. We have to work on key possessions. We have to preserve and protect the ball within the closing minutes of the game. I feel we need to focus more mentally in those areas during the last minutes of the game so we can preserve a win, or come out on top in close situations."

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