

Tech Rallies to Down MT 70-66

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BENCH HELP: For the first time this year, senior William Pippen came off the bench for the Blue Raiders and ended up giving the team a spark. Pippen added 15 points on 5-12 shooting to help the Middle Tennessee bench outscored Tennessee Tech's 22-7. In the first half, MT's bench held a 12-0 advantage over the Golden Eagles' reserves.

SCORING LEADERS: For the fifth time in five games, the Blue Raiders were led in scoring by a different player. Senior William Pippen paced the Blue Raiders with 15 points in the loss to Tennessee Tech to join John Humphrey, Steven Jackson, Tommy Gunn and Napoleon Rhodes as the players to lead MT in scoring this season.

FIRST DOUBLE-DOUBLE:

Senior John Humphrey recorded his first career double-double against Tennessee Tech. Humphrey registered a career-best 12

rebounds to go along with 14 points. Over his last three games, Humphrey is averaging 8.0 caroms a game.

MITCHELL STEPS UP: Senior Bryant Mitchell, who made his first start of the year, entered tonight's game with no points and just one rebound in four appearances. But the Lawrenceburg, TN, native responded with a season-best 11 points and six rebounds. It was Mitchell's 12th career double figure scoring game.

REBOUNDING SETBACK: After out-rebounding three of their first four opponents, the Blue Raiders



suffered their worst rebounding deficit of the season against Tennessee Tech. The Golden Eagles registered a 41-34 advantage on the boards.

NEXT UP: The Blue Raiders will hit the road for a tournament at Purdue University. Middle Tennessee will face the host Boilermakers on Friday, and then face either IUPUI or San Diego on Saturday.

NOTABLES: The Blue Raiders will not play at home again until Dec. 16 against Murray State ... The Blue Raiders have now hit at least one three-pointer in 192 consecutive games ... Bryant Mitchell made his first start of the season tonight ... Tommy Gunn failed to score in double figures for the first time this year when he was held to five points against TTU ... Center Napoleon Rhodes registered his second straight double figure scoring game with 12 points against the Golden Eagles ... The Blue Raiders matched their season-high percentage at the free throw line tonight by connecting on 20-25 attempts (.800) ... MT's 24 turnovers were a season-high, while the 22 it forced was also a season-high ... The Blue Raider starters tonight made 15 of 18 free throws.

QUOTES

MT Head Coach Kermit Davis: "I thought that for 35 minutes our team played with a great deal of toughness. We guarded very well. You have to give a good Tennessee Tech team credit at the end. Their two players, Crisp and Kinloch, just took over the game from an outside point and an inside point. They made tough shots and big shots. They played like a team that won two championships down the stretch. We played like a team trying to find its way at the end of a game. I was proud of our effort. I was really disappointed with how we handled game management in the last four minutes of the game."

MT Forward William Pippen: "They just outplayed us. They wanted it more than we did. We knew they had a run in them and they just caught us at an unexpected time. That is no excuse. They just point blank outplayed us towards the end of the game."

"We outplayed them for the first 35 minutes. They just got the best of us in the final five minutes. We have to learn how to finish a game. That is the bottom line."

MT Forward Bryant Mitchell: "I had a previous knee injury and it has been bothering me a little bit. It is getting better. I am playing better in practice, so Coach Davis has more faith in me. I just have to keep working hard and do what I have to do."

"Every time I came to MTSU, the fans always talked about beating Tech. It was a tough loss knowing we lost a rivalry game tonight."

TTU Head Coach Mike Sutton: "It was a typical Tennessee Tech and Middle Tennessee game from what we hear. Coach Davis and I are very interested in starting the series again. We know it is a big game and a big rivalry, and we would like to play it at the end of the first semester. It was a tough game. It was as close as they come."

"We finished strong. You have to play for 40 minutes and we did that. They won the first half and we won the second. We had a big enough margin to get by. I am proud of the way our kids fought. We still have a lot of work to do. This is not an easy place to play. This is only their fourth loss in two

years at home."

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