Blue Raiders Ink Six Mid-Term Football Signees

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MURFREESBORO, TN - Middle Tennessee head football coach Andy McCollum announced today the signing of six players as mid-term signees. The Blue Raiders fulfilled some immediate needs by bringing in an offensive lineman, two receivers, and three defensive backs who will all enroll in school this January and be available for spring practice in March.

Junior College All-American Danny Tolbert (Coffeyville Community College), all-conference lineman Joe Evilsizer (NE Oklahoma A&M), speedsters Tommy Manus (Ft. Scott Community College) and Pedro Holiday (Southwest Mississippi JC), along with defensive backs Tyrone Hicks (Lee High School) and LaRue Beck (Marietta High School) are the newest members to the Blue Raider football family.

"These six players are quality athletes who will make immediate impacts on our football program," said McCollum. "They will be here in January and begin working in our offseason program. We have addressed some needs and we're excited about them being in our program."

Tolbert, who led Coffeyville to a 9-3 record in 2002, ranked second in the KJCCC in interceptions with four. The Okeechobee, FL, native, also ranked seventh in the KJCCC in punt returns with a 7.7-yard average. Tolbert (5-10, 170), who previously committed to East Carolina, was a second team NJCAA All-American this past season and earned all-conference honors as a freshman and sophomore. "Tolbert is a highly-recruited player who possesses good speed and is an excellent cover corner," recruiting coordinator Kevin Fouquier said.

Evilsizer, who played offensive guard in junior college, is coming off a solid season where he earned

SWJCFC all-conference honors and helped guide NE OK A&M to an 11-1 record and a No. 2 national ranking. "Evilsizer is a strong, tough kid who will bring an attitude to our group of linemen," Fouquier noted. "He has the ability to play guard or center."

Manus and Holiday are expected to make immediate contributions to the receiving corps. The athletic Manus (6-4, 215) hauled in 30 catches for 570 yards and five touchdowns this past season despite missing half of the year due to a severly bruised sternum. Manus, out of Dallas, TX, picked the Blue Raiders over California, TCU, and Texas A&M. "Manus is another highly sought-after player who has great speed and size," said Fouquier.

Holiday (6-1, 185), a Georgia state champion in the 100 and 200 meters coming out of high school, was a first team all-state performer last year for coach Dom Green. "Holiday has good speed, hands and comes from a great background," added Fouquier.

Hicks, the brother of former standout running back Dwone Hicks, was a two-time Class 5A All-State pick who set an Alabama state record with 12 interceptions as a senior. The *Birmingham News* and *Huntsville Times* Super All-Metro selection, chose the Blue Raiders over Ole Miss, Louisville, Southern Miss, and Memphis.

Beck, who originally signed with MT in 2001, was rated the No. 30 safety in the South coming out of Marietta High School. Beck (6-2, 218) is already enrolled at Middle Tennessee.

PLAYER BIOS:

LARUE BECK (6-2, 218, So., FS, Marietta, GA/Marietta HS)

Noteworthy: Chose MT over Mississippi and Tulane ... Has three years to play three ... Attended Life College from June 2001 - December 2001.

High School: Rated the No. 30 safety in the south and the No. 30 prospect nationally by Rivals100.com ... Honorable mention Class 5A all-State by the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* ... He missed three games his senior year due to injury, but still managed 68 tackles and an interception ... Recorded 112 tackles as a junior to go along with three interceptions and two blocked kicks ... Selected a three-time all-County and all-Region player ... Voted Marietta's best defensive back three years in a row ... Run a 4.4 40 ... Also played basketball and ran track.

Personal: Parents: Quincy and Crystal Young ... Born: 8/4/82.

JOE EVILSIZER (6-1, 302, Jr., OL, Broken Arrow, OK/NE Oklahoma JC)

Noteworthy: Chose Middle Tennessee over Houston, Tulsa, Louisiana Tech, and Arkansas State ... Has great strength and toughness.

NE Oklahoma JC: Named to the SWJCFC All-Conference Team after helping lead NEO to an 11-1 record and a league championship ... Was a candidate for all-American honors ... NEO finished second in the final national rankings ... Played offensive guard for the Golden Norsemen and coach Dale Patterson as a sophomore and was the center his freshman season.

High School: Played at Broken Arrow High School ... Voted all-district as a senior in leading Broken Arrow to a 9-3 record and a spot in the state playoffs.

Personal: Parents: Rick and Louann Evilsizer ... Born: 1/2/82.

TYRONE HICKS (5-10, 175, Fr., DB, Huntsville, AL/Lee HS)

Noteworthy: Chose Middle Tennessee over Ole Miss, Louisville, Southern Miss, and Memphis ... Runs a 4.4 40 ... Is the brother of former Blue Raider star Dwone Hicks.

High School: A two-time Class 5A All-State selection for coach Don Thomas at Lee High School ... Led Lee to a 9-3 mark his senior year and a second round showing in the playoffs ... Set an Alabama state record with 12 interceptions his senior year and totaled 24 for his high school career ... Also recorded 1,000 yards rushing, 450 yards receiving, and had 83 tackles on defense ... In a game against Huntsville High School, Hicks had an 85-yard touchdown run, a kickoff return for a score, a punt return for a score and two interceptions (all totaling 250 all-purpose yards) ... Named to *Huntsville Times* Super All-Metro team in 2000 and 2001 ... Named to *Birmingham News* Super Senior team ... Was all-city his junior and senior seasons ... Also lettered in basketball and track.

Personal: Parents: Tommy and Gloria Hicks ... Born: 6/27/83.

PEDRO HOLIDAY (6-1, 185, Jr., WR, Rome, GA/SW Mississippi JC)

Noteworthy: Chose Middle Tennessee over Louisville, Troy State, East Carolina and West Virginia ... Originally visited the Blue Raiders coming out of high school, but signed with Auburn.

SW Mississippi JC: Played for coach Dom Green at SMCC ... Voted first team all-state in 2002 after collecting 15 catches for 235 yards and four touchdowns ... Team went 3-6 his freshman and sophomore seasons.

High School: Attended Pepperell High School ... First team all-state as a senior and competed in the Georgia-Florida All-Star game ... Registered over 4,000 career all-purpose yards during his high school career ... Received the Herman J. Stegeman Trophy for being a state finalist in Track and Field ... Earned the Buddy Fowlkes Stanley Floyd Trophy for winning the 100-meter dash in 2001 (10.39) and also won the 200 meters at the state event ... Lettered in football, basketball and track.

Personal: Parents: Jackie and Debra Ware ... Born: 3/1/82.

TOMMY MANUS (6-4, 215, Jr., WR, Dallas, TX/Ft. Scott CC)

Noteworthy: Chose Middle Tennessee over Cal, TCU, and Texas A&M ... Drew interest out of high school from UCLA, LSU, Georgia Tech, and TCU ... Runs a 4.41 40 ... A great athlete with sure

hands and excellent speed.

Ft. Scott (KS) CC: Reeled in 30 receptions for 570 yards and five touchdowns in 2002 ... Recorded six passes for 123 yards and one touchdown against Dodge City ... Played for coach Kevin Verdugo at Ft. Scott ... Missed half of season due to a sternum injury.

High School: Named second team all-state as a senior for H. Grady Spruce High School (Dallas, TX) after hauling in 65 catches for 875 yards and seven touchdowns ... Finished third in the 400 meters at the Texas State track meet (45.7).

Personal: Parents: Brenda Lewis ... Born: 10/10/80.

DANNY TOLBERT (5-10, 170, Jr., DB, Okeechobee, FL/Coffeyville CC)

Noteworthy: Chose Middle Tennessee over East Carolina, UCF, Utah, Arizona, and Louisiana-Lafayette ... Runs the 40 in 4.4 ... Wants to get into the recording and music industry.

Coffeyville CC: Voted a second team NJCAA all-American in 2002 and also earned all-conference honors ... Helped lead Coffeyville to a 9-3 record and a win in the inaugural Dalton Defenders Bowl in 2002 ... Led Coffeyville and ranked tied for second in the KJCCC with four interceptions in 2002, while returning one for a touchdown ... Also ranked seventh in the KJCCC in punt returns with a 7.7 yard average and brought one back for a score ... Named second team all-conference as a freshman after registering three interceptions.

High School: Played for Okeechobee High School for coach Cary McKee ... Voted Athlete of the Month three times his senior year ... Named the team's Most Valuable Player in 2000 and 2001 ... Tallied six interceptions as a senior and had a total of 13 during his career ... Registered three touchdowns in a win over Cocoa Beach High School (2 INT and 1 punt return) ...Lettered in football and track.

Personal: Parents: Danny and Mary Tolbert ... Born: 1/3/83.

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