

MT Routs New Orleans 77-60

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -

Tommy Gunn scored a career-high 30 points in leading Middle Tennessee (7-10; 3-2) to a 77-60 win over New Orleans (9-7; 2-3) on Saturday night.

The Blue Raiders started slow, falling behind 8-2 in the first three minutes of the contest before going on a 13-2 run and taking a 15-10 lead at the 11:51 mark of the opening frame. The Blue Raiders never trailed again.

Middle Tennessee, which led 34-26 at the half, built a lead as large as 26 in the second half, held New Orleans to only 39.1 percent from the field while scorching the nets at a 50.8 percent clip themselves.

Aside from Gunn's outstanding night, William Pippen added 17 points and Eric Parham scored 12.

The Privateers were led by Hector Romero's 20-point night, while Victor Brown netted 12.

The Blue Raiders return to the road next week, visiting New Mexico State on Thursday evening and Louisiana-Lafayette on Saturday night.

CAREER-HIGH FOR GUNN: Junior Tommy Gunn sparked Middle Tennessee's SBC win over visiting New Orleans on Saturday by pouring in a career-high 30 points on 12-for-15 shooting. Gunn, who scored in double figures for the 46th time in his career, also set a personal best with his 12 made field goals. The Syracuse, NY, native, who also connected on four three-pointers, topped the 20-point mark for the eighth time in his three-year career.

TAKING CARE OF THE ROCK: The Blue Raiders committed a season-low 10 turnovers to key tonight's win over New Orleans. It marks the fewest turnovers by the Blue Raiders since giving it away nine times against Arkansas State on Feb. 10, 2001 - a span of 51 games.

TAKING ADANTAGE OF TURNOVERS: The Blue Raiders only committed 10 turnovers against the

Privateers, but they forced 26 and won the points off of turnovers battle by a score of 31-10.

DEFENSE REMAINS TOUGH IN SBC: Since opening Sun Belt Conference play five games ago, the Blue Raiders have stepped up the intensity and pressure on defense. During that span, the Blue Raiders have held the opposition to 39.2 percent shooting (102-260) from the field. Also in the last five games, no opponent has shot better than 44 percent against Middle Tennessee.

PIPPEN SOLID: Senior William Pippen, who is enjoying his best year as a collegian, turned in another great effort against New Orleans. The forward from Hamburg, AR, had 17 points on 8-for-16 shooting, while grabbing seven rebounds and equaled his career-best with three blocks. Pippen has now scored in double figures 13 times this year and 23 times in his career.

THIS 'N' THAT: The Blue Raiders outscored the Privateers in the paint, 38-18 ... Point guard Eric Parham, who had a solid game with 12 points on 6 of 10 shooting and dished out four assists, equaled his career-high with six rebounds ... The Blue Raiders are now 6-1 when shooting 50 percent or better from the field ... Walk-on Adam Osborne, from nearby Riverdale High School, saw his first collegiate action when he entered the game for the final two minutes ... The Blue Raiders hit 15 more field goals than New Orleans, but the Privateers made 15 more free throws than MT ... With three dunks tonight, including a 360 degree slam, Tommy Gunn now has a team-best 14 dunks on the season ... The Blue Raiders have now hit at least one three-pointer in 204 straight games.

QUOTES

Blue Raider Head Coach Kermit Davis: "The biggest thing I saw was that we got good guard play. [Tommy] Gunn had a great night and Eric Parham had a good night, too. We had a great assist-to-turnover ratio in the game."

"I could just kind of tell on Friday that we would play well. Our energy level was good on Friday and again in our game-day practice today. The guys had a no-nonsense approach. It's good to bounce back after a league loss."

Privateer Head Coach Monte Towe: "[Tommy] Gunn was outstanding tonight. It was maybe one of the best individual performances against us this year. I am worried about our team and their capacity to compete. Our leadership isn't good, and I guess that starts with me."

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