

Pippen Leads Blue Raiders to 72-69 Win

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WINNING RECORD

ASSURED: The Blue Raiders' thrilling win over South Alabama on Sunday night gives the team a 15-13 overall record and assures the team of a winning record for the 2002-03 season. The winning mark is the first for the Blue Raiders since posting a 15-13 mark in 1999-2000. The win total for the season is also the most for MT since that same season.

FIRST TIME PARTICIPANT:

The Blue Raiders will play a semifinal game in the Sun Belt Tournament for the first time since joining the league. The team made the quarterfinals a year ago before falling to New Mexico State. The Blue Raiders' all-time record in SBC Tournament play now stands at 2-2.

ROBINSON STRONG OFF THE BENCH: Junior guard Marcus Robinson had an outstanding night off the bench for the Blue Raiders on Sunday night. The Newnan, Ga., native scored 10 points, just one off of his career high of 11, which he established earlier in the year against Murray State. Robinson was 4-of-6 from the floor, including 2-of-3 from behind the 3-point arc. Robinson dished out three assists, blocked one shot, and grabbed one steal without committing a turnover. Robinson also tag-teamed with Tommy Gunn in guarding long-range threat Chris Young. The duo held Young to 4-of-15 shooting on the night.

PIPPEN CONTINUES STRONG SEASON: Senior William Pippen is continuing his year-long tear with his performance against the Jags on Sunday. Pippen led the Blue Raiders with 21 points and eight rebounds. Pippen has now eclipsed the 20-point mark in three of his past four games. The Hamburg, Ark., native has led the team in scoring and rebounding 14 times this year. He has also amassed seven games with 20 or more points on the year.

BIG BLUE CROWD: Middle Tennessee fans dominated the crowd on Sunday night, helping steer the Blue Raiders to victory. An estimated 350 Blue Raider fans lined the stands to cheer on their team this evening. The fans got their money's worth today, as a majority of those fans were on hand for the Lady Raiders' quarterfinal win this morning.

NEXT UP: The Blue Raiders will face Denver in Monday evening's Sun Belt semifinal game beginning at 5:30. The Blue Raiders defeated the Pioneers 80-68 in their only meeting this season. The Blue Raiders own a two-game win streak over Denver heading into Monday's play. The game will be telecast on ESPN Regional and can be seen locally on Comcast Sports Southeast Ch. 27.

THIS AND THAT: Middle Tennessee has faced South Alabama in two of the three Sun Belt Tournaments in which it has participated ... Junior Tommy Gunn was held below 10 points for the first time in two games ... Senior John Humphrey was limited to a season-low 11 minutes in the game ... MT has now made at least one trey in 215 straight games ... Gunn has now scored 1,034 points, surpassing Leroy Coleman for 24th all-time.

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