Blue Raiders rout Tech, 44-0

Starts 2-0 at home for first time since 2001

September 14, 2006 · Chuck Morris

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee exploded for 41 second-half points to rout former Ohio Valley Conference foe Tennessee Tech 44-0. The Blue Raiders (2-1) took advantage of three second-half turnovers to blow open a 3-0 game. Middle Tennessee took advantage of a 61-yard kickoff return by Phillip Tanner to start the second half. Eugene Gross capped a 29-yard drive with a 1-yard touchdown run. Reggie Doucet's second interception set up a 7-yard scoring drive. Clint Marks connected with Luke Paschall for a 9-yard touchdown to expand the Middle Tennessee lead to 16-0. Marks completed 10-of-20 passes for 106 yards and a pair of touchdowns. Marks also rushed for 50 yards, including a career-long 45 yard run that set up a DeMarco McNair 16-yard touchdown run with 13 seconds left in the third quarter. Roy Polite's interception of Tech's Lee Sweeney set up a Blue Raider score in the fourth quarter. Marks connected with Taron Henry for a 13-yard touchdown with 11:58 remaining in the game. The Blue Raiders defense, which held Tennessee Tech (0-3) to 135 yards of total offense, added a touchdown. Lonnie Clemmons picked up a fumble and returned it 40 yards for a score with 8:17 remaining. Freshman Desmond Gee led Middle Tennessee in rushing with 61 yards, all in the fourth quarter. He capped the scoring with a 15-yard touchdown run with 1:40 left in the game. Middle Tennessee held Tech to 10 yards rushing, the fewest yards allowed since allowing 11 yards in the 2002 season to Utah State. Both teams struggled offensively in the first half. Tennessee Tech was held to 33 yards offensively and three first

downs. Middle Tennessee picked up 103 yards - 55 on a Marks to Bobby Williams pass which set up a 24-yard Colby Smith field goal and four first downs. Tech's Sweeney completed 13-of-27 passes for 125 yards and three interceptions. **WALDEN TIES SCANDRETT:** Junior Erik Walden recorded two quarterback sacks (all in the first half) to run his season total to a team-best three sacks. For his career, Walden now has 12 career sacks, which ties Devarick Scandrett for second place all-time at Middle Tennessee. Walden needs just three more sacks to tie Anthony McCord as the all-time leader. **FIRST AND SECOND PICK:** The first interception of the Rick Stockstill era came late in the second quarter when Reggie Doucet stepped in front of his man and ended a Golden Eagle drive. It marked the first interception of Doucet's career and then the senior added his second interception midway through the third quarter. The Blue Raiders picked off three passes in the contest. **STREAK ENDS FOR SMITH:** Placekicker Colby Smith saw his streak of consecutive made extra points come to an end during the third quarter against Tennessee Tech. Smith was a perfect 60-for-60 on point after attempts before missing wide left following the Blue Raiders' first touchdown of the game. **DEFENSE TURNS IN STELLAR EFFORT:** The Middle Tennessee defense produced its best effort of the I-A era, limiting Tennessee Tech to just 135 total yards from scrimmage, including only 10 yards rushing. The previous least yards allowed was 156 to Utah State on October 30, 2004. The shutout was the first for the Blue Raiders since October 30, 2004 (21-0, Utah State). The defense allowed only 11 rushing yards to Utah State on November 30, 2002. The unit also intercepted three passes in the contest, the first three-INT game for the Blue Raiders since getting three picks versus Akron on September 17, 2005. **CLEMONS GETS TD:** Sophomore Lonnie Clemons returned a fumble 40 yards for a touchdown in the fourth quarter, his first career touchdown and the first returned fumble for a TD by a Blue Raider since Dennis Burke (61 yards) on November 30, 2002, versus Utah State. It was the first defensive touchdown by Middle Tennessee since Michael Woods (89 yards) on October 11, 2003, versus New Mexico State. **PASCHALL HAS FIRST TD:** Senior wide receiver Luke Paschall had a game to remember in the win over Tennessee Tech. Paschall equaled his career-high with two receptions for 20 yards, including the first touchdown catch of his career. Paschall got on the board for the first time in his career when he hauled in a 9-yard strike from Clint Marks. The Dickson, Tenn., native nearly had another touchdown grab, as his first catch of the night came up just inches shy of the goal line. **GROSS OVER 200:** Middle Tennessee scoring machine Eugene Gross became just the eighth player in school history to top the 200-point mark when he dove in from 1-yard out in the third quarter for his third touchdown of the season. Gross ran his scoring total to 204 points and needs just 11 more to take over seventh place on the all-time scoring list from Keegan Ray. **MARKS MOVES PAST WALKER:** QB Clint Marks passed Billy Walker for fifth place on the all-time list when he completed a 9-yard strike to Luke Paschall in the third quarter. The Fort Myers, Fla., native tossed a second touchdown in the contest, a 13-yard strike to Taron Henry, passing Billy Walker (1964-67) for fifth place on the all-time list. Marks needs just two more passing touchdowns to tie Mickey Corwin (1983-84) for fourth on the career list. **QUICK HITTERS:** Middle Tennessee has now started 2-0 at home for the first time since 2001 ... OL Germayle Franklin has now started in 31 straight games ... MT is now 4-2 all-time on Thursday night ... Walk-on Brandon Gantt played in his first collegiate game as a member of the kickoff team and then later forced a fumble against TTU ... Freshman running back Phillip Tanner played his first collegiate snaps on defense against TTU ... WR Bobby Williams' 55-yard catch in the first quarter was the longest of his career and the longest play from scrimmage for the Blue Raiders this serason ... Michael Cannon made his first reception of the season late in the first quarter ... Phillip Tanner returned his first career kickoff to start the second half and returned it 61 yards ... QB Clint Marks registered a career-long run of 45 yards late in the third quarter ... Junior Roy Polite picked up the third interception of his career early in the fourth quarter ... WR Rod Taylor made his first career

reception late in the fourth quarter, tallying two catches for 21 yards in the contest ... Middle Tennessee quarterbacks completed just 12 passes in the contest, with eight different receivers catching at least one pass.

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