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The Blue Raider Nickname

In the early days of athletics at Middle Tennessee State University, the teams were known by several nicknames. Among these were Teachers, Normalites, and Pedagogues. In 1934, it was decided that the school needed a specific nickname.

During football season that year, the Murfreesboro *Daily News Journal* held a contest to name the team. The late Charles Sarver, then a Middle Tennessee football player and later principal at White County High School in Sparta, Tenn., won the \$5 prize for his entry of "Blue Raiders."

Sarver later indicated he had "borrowed" the nickname of the Colgate Red Raiders, but substituted MTSU Blue for Colgate Red. Ever since then, Middle Tennessee athletic teams have been known as the Blue Raiders.

For a time, the "unofficial" mascot for the Blue Raiders was a costumed, cartoonlike dog. A reasonable facsimile of a bluetick hound, the affable character was dubbed "Ole Blue."

On January 17, 1998, the current mascot, "Lightning," was born. The mascot was unveiled, along with an attractive eye-catching logo, at a basketball game in Murphy Center. The introduction of Lightning gave a new identity to the nickname Blue Raiders.

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