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Blue Raiders suffer 64-56 setback to CofC

Team goes 0-3 in Paradise Jam

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ST. THOMAS, Virgin Islands - Middle Tennessee's men's basketball team showed improvement through its three games of the Paradise Jam Tournament here this week; however, the Blue Raiders left the Virgin Islands without a win to show for their efforts.

The Blue Raiders (1-4) suffered a 64-56 setback to College of Charleston in its third game of the tournament and finished the event with a nine-point loss to No. 10 Alabama, a six-point overtime loss to Toledo, and the setback to the Cougars Monday.

[Kyle Young](#) was solid for Middle Tennessee, scoring on season-high 16 points on 7-of-10 shooting from the field, while [Kevin Kanaskie](#) finished with 12 points and four assists. [Nigel Johnson](#) tallied nine points and [Desmond Yates](#) scored a career-high eight points.

The effort was enough, though, as College of Charleston found a way to turn the close, competitive game in its favor for good late in the second half.

College of Charleston used a 7-2 run over a two-minute stretch to take its largest lead, 42-35 with 8:16 remaining on Dontaye Draper's layup; however, the Blue Raiders would not go away so easily.

[Kevin Kanaskie](#)'s long 3-pointer with 7:45 remaining cut the deficit to 42-38, and Young's dunk off a perfect pass from Kanaskie kept it a four-point game, 46-42, with 6:08 to play.

Middle Tennessee; however, could not get stops with any consistency inside the final five minutes and it proved to be the deciding factor in the game. Draper's long 3-pointer with the shot clock at 1 proved to be the big dagger as it put the Cougars on top 57-47 - their largest lead of the game - with 2:31 remaining.

The Blue Raiders battled back and cut the deficit to 59-54 with 1:34 remaining on [Nigel Johnson](#)'s trey with 1:34 remaining and they had two other opportunities to cut deeper into the deficit but a missed field goal and a turnover prevented that.

Draper, who led College of Charleston with 31 points, was the difference for the Cougars throughout the game and down the stretch as he proved to be automatic from the free-throw line, canning all 10 charity tosses. He was 8-for-8 from the line in the final three minutes.

The first half was competitive from the outset and the largest lead for either team was four, while there were six lead changes and the score was tied two times.

Not only was the score virtually even through the first half but the stats were identical as the teams each displayed strong defense. Middle Tennessee and College of Charleston each shot 36 percent in the first half.

Middle Tennessee will return to action next Monday when it plays host to Belmont.



Kyle Young scored a season-high 16 points on 7-of-10 shooting against College of Charleston in the Paradise Jam. (Bradley Lambert)

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