

December 18, 2006

Blue Raiders conduct 40-play scrimmage

Coaches pleased with effort

MT Media Relations

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee conducted its fifth bowl practice Monday at Floyd Stadium and ended the two-and-a-half hour workout with a 40-play scrimmage. It marked the first scrimmage of the bowl season that was not situational.

"I thought the scrimmage went well because we were able to extend our offense and defense to about eight or nine plays per drive," said Head Coach Rick Stockstill. "Everything was live and the guys had to make game-like decisions. We tackled very well, which was a bit of a surprise, and I thought [Clint Marks](#) threw the ball good today and [Desmond Gee](#) made a few nice plays."

The first-team offense matched up against the first-team defense for two different series. [Eugene Gross](#) had a touchdown run on the first series and the number one unit held on the second drive.

The second-team offense scored on both of its possessions with quarterback [Joe Craddock](#) tossing a pair of touchdowns. Craddock hit [Luke Paschall](#) for one score and ended the scrimmage by connecting with [John Marc Stephens](#) for the second touchdown.

The Blue Raiders will return to the practice field on Tuesday and will have another scrimmage, but this time it will include referees.

Middle Tennessee will take on Central Michigan in the Motor City Bowl on Dec. 26 at 6:30 PM. The game will be shown nationally on ESPN.

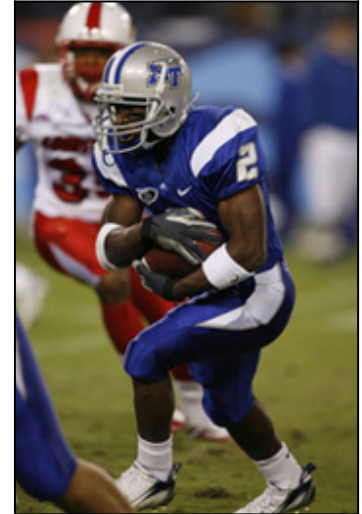
ONE-DAY EXTENSION: The Middle Tennessee ticket office held back a limited number of bowl tickets so fans could have one more day to purchase the first postseason ticket in the I-A era. By close of business on Tuesday, all unsold tickets have to be returned to the Motor City Bowl.

ELITE COMPANY: A key to Middle Tennessee's success in 2006 was its ability to win conference games on the road. The Blue Raiders went a perfect 4-0 in Sun Belt road games and were one of just 10 teams nationally who won at least four conference games away from home in 2006. The other teams to win four conference road games were Wake Forest, Oklahoma, Texas A&M, BYU, Boise State, Ohio State, Ohio, Arkansas, and Auburn. The four road wins mark the first time the Blue Raiders have won as many away from home since 1994 when they also posted a 4-0 league ledger. Ironically, that season is also the last time Middle Tennessee participated in postseason play.

WEATHER NOT FRIGHTFUL: Middle Tennessee players worked out in 70-degree temperatures once again Monday as the unseasonable weather continued to shine on the Blue Raiders. Middle Tennessee has practiced in temperatures of 65 degrees or higher in each of their five bowl workouts.

Stockstill says the weather has aided an already good overall attitude during bowl preparation workouts.

"We have been fortunate in that respect," Stockstill said. "You don't have to worry about (the players) coming out to practice and complaining about how cold it is. It's nice to be out here practicing in good weather and not fighting the elements." The 2006 Motor City Bowl will be played in ideal weather conditions inside Ford Field on December 26 as the dome will be a comfortable 72 degrees.



Freshman Desmond Gee and his Blue Raider teammates went through a 40-play scrimmage on Monday and will do the same Tuesday. ()

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