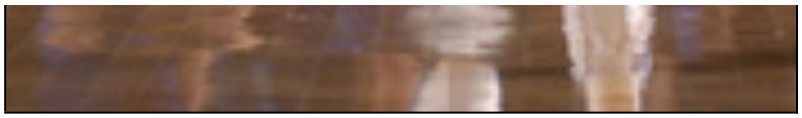
Kanaskie shines as Blue Raiders notch third-straight SBC road win

Point guard dishes out 12 assists, scores 19 points in 72-68 win at FAU

January 10, 2007 · MT Media Relations

BOCA RATON, Fla. - Kevin Kanaskie has been a steady, consistent force for Middle Tennessee all season. The sophomore point guard took his game to an even higher level in the Blue Raiders' 72-68 road win against Florida Atlantic in front of 1,004 at FAU Arena here Tuesday night. Kanaskie, who entered the game ranked No. 14 nationally in assists per game (6.0), dished out a career-high 12 assists and tallied a game-high 19 points to account for 43 of the team's 72 points. The 12 assists were the most in a game since former great Gerald Harris dished out 13, Feb. 13, 1989 - a span of 475 games - and they are the 11th most in a single-game in program history. "Kyle Young was 6-for-6 and Theryn Hudson played great (going 4-for-4). It's easy to get assists when you are throwing it to those guys and (Hudson) is just dunking around the goal," Kanaskie said. Middle Tennessee coach Kermit Davis, who notched his 75th career win at Middle Tennessee and is one win shy of moving into fourth place on



the career wins list, said his prized point guard was showing humility when downplaying the tremendous performance. "I thought that was one of the best point guard games I've coached in a long time," Davis said. "He accounted for (43) points and maybe more than that if some of those assists led to 3-pointers. That's outstanding. He was cramping up at the end and showed tons of leadership and toughness. He's been solid all season and he was great tonight." Middle Tennessee (7-9, 3-3) won its third straight SBC road game and its 18th under Davis, which is most of any league member since 2002-03 to even its league slate heading into a pivotal contest at West Division leader New Orleans Saturday afternoon. The Blue Raiders became the first Middle Tennessee team to start 3-0 on the road in 20 years. The 1986-87 Blue Raiders opened league play 3-0 before dropping their first road venture. Blue Raider senior Kyle Young, who scored 13 points on 6-of-6 shooting from the field, credited toughness, along with facing one of the nation's toughest schedules, with the team's ability to win away from home. Middle Tennessee's strength of schedule is No. 18 nationally in the latest RPI Report, which is the highest it has ever been at this point in the season. "We are use to playing tough teams on the road and we have faced a tough schedule so we are prepared for the tough league games. There are not too many teams that can say they are 3-0 on the road but our team has been practicing very tough and we try to work and emulate what we are going to have to face on the road in our practices," Young said. "We try to go hard every day and develop toughness and that's where you win on the road." The Blue Raiders scored a season-high 72 points and had four players in double figures. In addition to Kanaskie's 19 points, Young tallied 13, Nigel Johnson finished with 12, and Hudson contributed 10 while earning his fifth start of the season. Middle Tennessee shot a season-high 62 percent (26-42), including a sizzling 68 percent in the second half when it connected on 15-of-22 attempts. While the offense was clicking the defense continued to buckle down, limiting the high-scoring Owls (7-9, 3-3) to 68 points which equals their low in SBC contests. Florida Atlantic entered the game averaging 82 points in SBC games. FAU was also shooting 51 percent against league foes but managed just 39.6 against a Blue Raider team leading the league in defense. "Winning on the road is huge. We had toughness and I think that helped us," Kanaskie said. "We didn't play great down the stretch but we did the right things at the right times and it's great to get a win. I thought we started slow on offense but we worked the ball around and we were tough with the ball. We ran our offense and got good shots and that was the key. When you run your offense and get high percentage shots odds are you are going to shoot a high percentage and have a chance to win." Middle Tennessee trailed 32-29 at the half but the Blue Raiders' efficient offensive performance, coupled with another rugged defensive effort, keyed a 17-4 run to start the second half and helped them build a 46-36 lead when Kanaskie buried a long 3-pointer with 14:26 remaining. The Blue Raiders maintained a double-figure lead until the final 2:26 when the Owls sandwiched two 3-pointers around a pair of turnovers to cut into the lead and keep it interesting. Carlos Monroe, who led the Owls with 17 points, cut the lead to 64-59 with 1:10 remaining but Calvin O'Neil's layup extended the Blue Raider lead. Brent Crews' 3-pointer with 15 seconds remaining cut the lead to 68-65 and gave his team hope; however, Johnson - the SBC's leading free-throw shooter, nailed four straight free-throw attempts down the stretch to curtail the futile comeback bid and keep the Blue Raiders in contention in the tight SBC East Division race. The Blue Raiders will look to remain perfect on the road in SBC games when it travels to New Orleans Saturday. Tipoff is 1:30 p.m. **NOTES:** Middle Tennessee's win at FAU was Head Coach Kermit Davis' 75th leading the Blue Raiders. He is one win shy of moving into a tie for fourth on the career wins list at Middle Tennessee ...Middle Tennessee's strength of schedule was No. 18 nationally in the latest RPI

Report, which is the highest of any SBC member ... Kevin Kanaskie's 12 assists were not only a career high, but they also were the most by a Blue Raider since former standout Gerald Harris dished out 13, Feb. 13, 1989, in a 111-105 overtime win against Austin Peay - span of 475 games ... Kanaskie's 6.4 assists average per game is currently third best on the Middle Tennessee single-season list ... Kanaskie has led Middle Tennessee in assists in all 16 games and he has led the team in scoring nine times, producing 11 double-figure scoring games. He has had two other games with nine points scored ... Kanaskie is averaging a team-best 12.3 points per game ... With two blocked shots against Florida Atlantic, Kyle Young now has 50 for his career, which ties Dwayne Rainey for fifth on the career blocks list. Young is one of six players in program history with 50 or more blocked shots ... Young went 6-of-6 from the field against FAU to raise his field goal percentage to .629 (56-89), which is second in the SBC ... Kanaskie had a streak of 26 consecutive free throws made snapped against FAU when he missed on his fourth attempt after hitting his first three against the Owls. He was 7-of-8 from the line against the Owls, as was sophomore Nigel Johnson, who leads the SBC in free-throw percentage with a .867 (39-45) clip. Kanaskie is shooting 81.4 percent from the charity stripe (57-70) in all game, as well as 28-of-29 (97 percent) in SBC games ... Sophomore center Theryn Hudson earned his fifth start of the season against FAU and responded by going 4-of-4 from the field and pulling four rebounds in 17 minutes. He finished with 10 points, his second-highest scoring output of the season ... Middle Tennessee earned its 18th SBC road win under Head Coach Kermit Davis, which is the most of any league member since the start of the 2002-03 season - Davis' first at Middle Tennessee ... The Blue Raiders shot a season-high 61.9 percent (26-of-42) against FAU and they topped 70 points (72) for the first time this season ...The No. 21-ranked Middle Tennessee women's basketball team, along with a strong contingent of supporters, were on hand to cheer the Blue Raiders to victory at FAU. Middle Tennessee's women played at Florida International Tuesday and face Florida Atlantic Thursday before making the trek to New Orleans for their third game in five days.

Printed on July 28, 2014
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/23439