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A look at the receivers and tight ends

Top five pass catchers return in 2007

MT Media Relations

A position that was young and inexperienced in 2006 should be much improved in 2007 as all three starters return along with the starting tight end and his principle backup.

"I thought we made some progress the first week of spring practice but I thought we took a step back on Monday," added head coach Rick Stockstill. "I didn't think Monday was one of the better practices. Last week I thought the effort of the receivers was good and I thought they were more consistent than they were last year, although we are not anywhere close to where we need to be."

The top five leading receivers from last year all return, including [Bobby Williams](#), [Taron Henry](#), [Jonathan Grigsby](#), and [Desmond Gee](#). Williams led the Blue Raiders with 36 receptions as a sophomore but suffered with inconsistency all season. The junior will be looked to for leadership and more consistency in 2007.

Henry, a local product from Murfreesboro, is ready for a breakout year in his final season in the blue and white. A 12-game starter during Middle Tennessee's championship season, Henry registered 16 receptions for 247 yards and a touchdown.

The most consistent receiver for the Blue Raiders in 2006 was Grigsby. The former walk-on enjoyed a career year with 24 catches for 319 yards to rank third on the team. The senior collected seven receptions at Maryland and ended the season with five grabs for a career-best 86 yards in the Motor City Bowl.

Gee, who will also see time at running back, was the playmaker of the group in 2006 with 27 receptions and three touchdowns. Over the final seven games of the season, Gee hauled in 25 catches, including a personal-best nine at the Motor City Bowl.

Also in the mix for playing time will be [Michael Cannon](#), [Patrick Honeycutt](#), and [Dale Galvin](#). Cannon played in seven games last year and had two receptions, but struggled with an injury in the middle of the season which cost him three games.

The biggest addition to the receiving corps could be Honeycutt. The sophomore missed the entire 2006 season with a knee injury after working his way into a starting job with a solid fall camp. The Pelham, Ala., native is a sure-handed receiver who runs great routes and will be a key ingredient in 2007.

"He's probably further ahead than I would have thought coming off an ACL and being a receiver when you have to run and cut as much as he does," said Stockstill. "I have been pleased with him. It looks like he struggles right now on back-to-back practices. We just have to be careful because it's only been eight months, but he is further ahead than I thought."

Another player who could figure into playing time that missed 2006 is Galvin. The sophomore has yet to play in a college game after being redshirted in 2005 and sitting out for academics last season. He has to become a lot more dependable before he sees any playing time.

All four tight ends return to the fold in 2006 to make it one of the most experienced positions on the team. The tight end spot accounted for 18 receptions and two touchdowns in 2006.

[Clinton Corder](#), a senior from nearby Brentwood, is the returning starter. In 2006, Corder registered a personal-best eight receptions after playing in all 13 games and earning nine starts.

Corder's backup and sometime starter is Chicola who has 52 career receptions in his three seasons. The Jacksonville, Fla., product led all tight ends last year with nine catches and two touchdowns. Chicola has good hands but needs to continue improvement as a blocker.

Redshirt freshman [Alvin Ingle](#) will push Corder and Chicola for playing time. Ingle played in two games last year before suffering a season ending injury. The Madison, Tenn., native had worked himself into a starting job in fall camp before another injury cost him miss valuable time. Unfortunately, Ingle is not participating in spring drills but expect him to be a factor when fall camp opens.

Junior [John Marc Stephens](#), a former offensive lineman and fullback, will also vie for playing time. Stephens saw action in 11 games last year and reeled in one reception.

"All these guys have played now so there is no excuse for inexperience," said Stockstill. "They have all been in games so it's time



Jonathan Grigsby enjoyed a career year in 2006 with 24 receptions. ()

for them to step up and assume more of not only a leadership role, but also a dependability role to make the coaches believe, 'Hey, you can count on me. If you call my number I am going to catch it.' It's time for them to put up or shut up so to speak but based on what they have done four of the first five days it has been encouraging."

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