

# Weekes Breaks Out in 70-56 Win

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## **MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -**

Middle Tennessee (5-3) used a breakout performance from freshman forward Alex Weekes and an outstanding effort from point guard and fellow freshman Bryan Smithson to defeat Austin Peay (3-6) 70-56 on Tuesday night.

The Blue Raiders shot the ball poorly in the opening minutes of the game, but rallied to end the opening frame shooting 38.9 percent. By comparison, the Govs shot 52.6 percent. However, the scoreboard told a different story as the Blue Raiders took a 35-25 advantage into the intermission.

The Blue Raiders upped the offensive production and the defensive intensity in the second frame. Weekes netted 11 of his 13 in the final period in leading the Blue Raider attack in the second period.

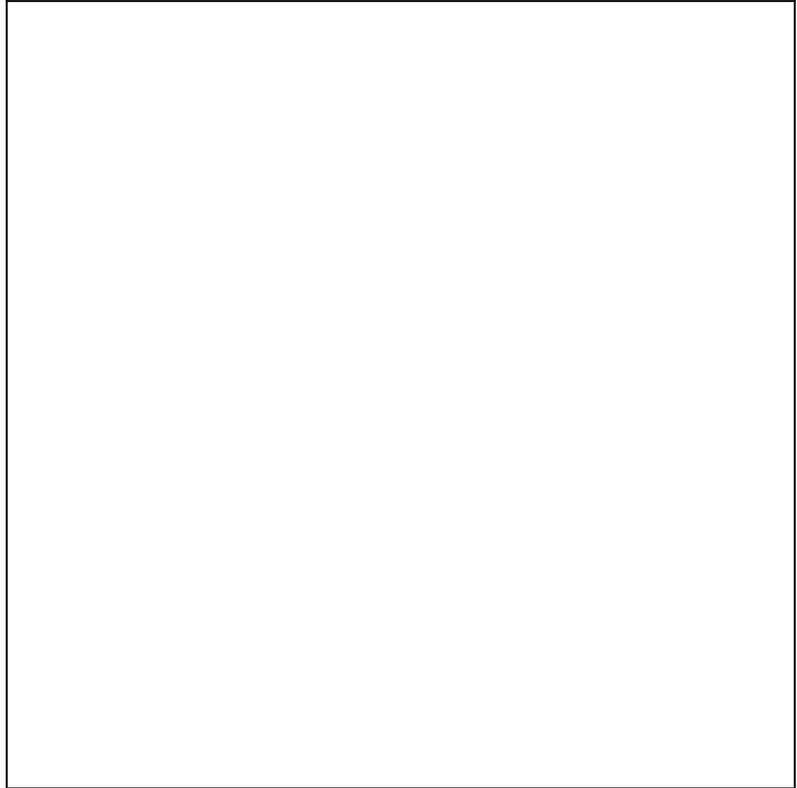
Smithson, who has played well all season, turned in perhaps his best overall performance against the Govs. He netted five points while dishing out six assists and swiping five steals to direct the team's offense.

MT led by as many as 19 in the game, but the Govs made a run to cut it to 12 at 55-43 with 9:49 left. APSU would cut the lead to 10 at 49-49 with 6:01 remaining, but the Blue Raiders closed out the game by outscoring the Govs 11-7 to seal the victory.

Tommy Gunn and Michael Cuffee paced the Blue Raiders with 14 points each. Weekes' eight boards led the team in that category.

Anthony Davis led Austin Peay with 13 points and six rebounds.

Middle Tennessee will take a short break for the holidays before taking on Chattanooga in the Dr. Pepper Classic Tournament in Chattanooga on Dec. 29 at 7 PM. The team will conclude the tournament against an undetermined opponent on Dec. 30



**NOTES**

**PERSONAL-BEST FOR SMITHSON:** Freshman Bryan Smithson, who played a team-high 33 minutes in the win over APSU, collected a personal-best five steals in the contest. The Kennesaw, Ga., native now has 13 on the season to rank second on the team behind Tommy Gunn's 14.

**PLAYER OF THE GAME:** Members of the media voted freshman Alex Weekes as the Alexander Automotive Family Player of the Game. Weekes came off the bench to score a career-high 13 points on 6-for-8 shooting to go along with eight rebounds. The Atlanta, Ga., native also had three dunks in the contest.

**HOT AT THE STRIPE:** The difference in the basketball game tonight against the Governor's was at the free throw line where Middle Tennessee made 11 more than APSU. The Blue Raiders shot a season-high 86.4 percent from the charity stripe as Tommy Gunn, Mike Dean and Michael Cuffee combined to go a perfect 14-for-14. The 86.4 percent shooting in the win over APSU is the best single-game effort under Kermit Davis and the best by the Blue Raiders since making 86.7 percent of their free throws against Arkansas-Little Rock on Feb. 9, 2002 - a span of 43 games.

**SHOOTING WOES:** For the second straight game, Middle Tennessee struggled putting the ball in the basket. The Blue Raiders shot just 43.6 percent from the field against APSU, which was their worst shooting effort of the year at home. However, the Blue Raiders stepped it up in the second half by making 52.6 percent of their shots.

**PERFECT AT HOME:** The Blue Raiders ran their Murphy Center record to 4-0 this season with the win over APSU. Under Kermit Davis, the Blue Raiders are now 13-5 at the glass house.

**TIDBITS:** The Blue Raiders have hit at least one three-pointer now in 225 straight games ... Tonight's win over APSU broke a three-game losing streak against the Governor's ... MT's bench outscored APSU, 24-15 ... After eight games a year ago, the Blue Raiders were 2-6, and this year they have turned it around to 5-3 following eight contests ... The Blue Raiders are now 18-2 all-time under Kermit Davis when leading at the half ... Tonight's game marked the first time Mike Dean has been held under 10 points in his Blue Raider career ... MT outrebounded the Governor's, 34-32, and ran its record to 5-0 this year when winning the board battle.

**NEXT UP:** The Blue Raiders will be off until Dec. 29 when they head to Chattanooga for the UTC Tournament. MT will open against host Chattanooga on Monday night then will take on either LaSalle or South Carolina State on Tuesday. The team will not return home until Jan. 6 when the Blue Raiders host IPFW.

**QUOTES**

**MT Head Coach Kermit Davis:** "I thought one thing was positive. We did learn something at Cincinnati, and was stronger tonight with the ball than we were at Cincinnati. I was really pleased with our bench play in the first half. I thought our bench play was good. Marcus Robinson came off the bench in the first half and played very good ending up with eight points. We got 24 points off of the bench in not a real high scoring game. I thought that was a real positive for us."

"I thought Monday was our very best practice of the year. We were competitive with a lot of energy. I just thought that our guys responded well. Austin Peay is a very good team. They are just subject to

playing the most difficult schedule in college basketball. You get on the road so much and lose some confidence. They are a very physical team. So, I was real pleased tonight."

**MT Guard Bryan Smithson:** "It was all about the practice. Yesterday, we had a really hard practice. We got into it defensively, and this time we were able to put it into the game. We give Coach Davis a lot of credit for getting us ready. The whole team had a lot of enthusiasm about defense tonight."

"The crowd was great. Coming in, we expected maybe 1,000 people tonight. School is out, so many of our student fans aren't here. It seems the crowd has a lot of confidence in us, and the harder we play the more people we see. That sparks us. We definitely fed off of that tonight. If you have a crowd behind you, you definitely play better."

**MT Forward Alex Weekes:** "I have just been working extra with Coach Tyndall and some of the other coaches. They have just been working on offensive skills and just playing stronger. Once you do that, you just play stronger physically and mentally. I was able to put it into the game tonight."

"I knew coming here that Coach Davis had high expectations for the posts. It is a growing process. Everyday and every game you have to get better and better."

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