

August 9, 2007

## Thursday's football camp notebook

### Blue Raiders have solid day despite heat

MT Media Relations

- **Audio:** [Practice Report](#)
- **Photos:** [Practice Gallery](#)

**STOCKSTILL ON TODAY'S PRACTICE:** "We had a pretty good practice today. I thought Monday's was good, Tuesday's was average and inconsistent, the team responded on Wednesday, and had another solid day on Thursday. After four days the legs are getting a little heavy, but we competed and fought through it."

"I also saw a lot of improvement in the leadership department today, but we still have a long way to go. Overall, I like the way this team is working and their attitude is awesome."

**STOCKSTILL ON STANDOUT POSITIONS:** "I really think the running back position with [DeMarco McNair](#), [Phillip Tanner](#), and [Desmond Gee](#) has responded well. They have been very consistent all week and continue to make plays. I like that group.

"Quarterback [Joe Craddock](#) is also having a nice camp. He is making good decisions and only has one or two throws during a practice you would want to have back. He just has a great grasp of the offense and is doing good job leading the offense.

"I am also very pleased with the defensive front. They just come to work everyday and I like what they are doing."

**FEELING THE HEAT:** The Blue Raiders hit the field today with the temperature at 107.9 and a heat index of 112 for their fourth practice of the fall. The team had two extra waterbreaks for a total of six, which was about one every 15 minutes.

"I don't think I have ever practiced in temperatures like that," added Stockstill. "It's hard to get much hotter than that."

**SOME BATTLES BREWING:** While Middle Tennessee's defense would figure to be the backbone of the team early in camp if for no reason other than the number of experienced lettermen returning on that side of the pigskin.

Seven starters return to the Blue Raider defense and most players have a gauge of where they are playing, but the battle at strong safety should heat up as [Anthony Glover](#) and [Dana Stewart](#) look to earn the spot played by the graduated Jonathan Harris a year ago.

Freshmen [Kevin Brown](#) and [Jeremy Kellem](#) should also battle for playing time as the Blue Raider fall camp unfolds.

"No one has really come to the forefront at the strong safety spot to this point," said defensive coordinator Manny Diaz. "It is really (Glover and Stewart) working there now and we are trying to rep the two freshmen but it's not a position where you want to play freshmen. It's a tough position for a freshman to play but we will do whatever it takes."

Glover (6-2, 218) is a converted linebacker who did not play last season due to academic restrictions but he did see action primarily on special teams in 2004 and 2005. The redshirt junior has the ability to cover well in the passing game, while Stewart (6-0, 198) enjoyed a strong 2006 season and brings a physical, hard-nosed approach to the position.

"Those two guys are the more experienced players there and each brings something different to the table," Diaz said. "Both of those players will work hard and give us options."

**LEARNING TO COMPETE:** Four days into the Middle Tennessee fall camp players indicate maturity is evident based on the approach to practice and how they have worked through tough, hot conditions prevalent throughout the week.

"Overall, this has been a good first week but it's not complete," said quarterback [Joe Craddock](#). "We've had some ups and downs but I like the concentration and commitment to working through the hard times. It shows early on that we have a team that can be a mature group and approach our work the right way."

**BLENDING TOGETHER:** Craddock also likes the way the Blue Raider offensive line is blending together and becoming a



Joe-Joe Petrone and his staff were busy on Thursday with the extreme heat. Here, Petrone provides a cold towel to cool off a player. ()

unit. Middle Tennessee returns three starters on the offensive line - [Franklin Dunbar](#), [Brandon Nix](#), and [Mark Thompson](#) - but developing additional starters and depth remains a key.

"We have to face the challenge head on and those guys are doing that," Craddock said. "Our offensive line is going to be good and will allow us to do the things it is going to take for our offense to be successful. I continue to see improvement each day, and I hope I'm doing the same at my position."

**TIDBITS:** [Anthony Glover](#) recorded an interception during 7-on-7 ... Former quarterback Clint Marks was at practice today ... The catch of the day went to [Patrick Honeycutt](#), who hauled in a diving one-hander, literally, scooping the ball from the air before the ball hit the turf ... Middle Tennessee will put on full pads for Friday's practice ... Coach Stockstill is known for thinking of everything and today was no exception. The second-year coach provided water for the fans who were there observing practice today. "They get hot too and we need to take care of our fans," said Stockstill.

**NEXT PRACTICE:** The Blue Raiders will hold their fifth practice of fall camp on Friday from 5:25 PM to 7:30 PM.

**BLUE RAIDER BLAST:** The final "Blue Raider Blast" will be held in Downtown Murfreesboro on the square, Thursday, August 23, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. This event is geared toward Blue Raider fans, alumni, and supporters in Rutherford County and surrounding areas and all interested parties are encouraged to attend and meet Middle Tennessee players, coaches, athletic administrators and University administrators as the athletic department gears up for the start of the 2007-08 school year. Admission to the "Blue Raider Blast" is free; however, food provided by Whitt's Barbecue will be available for \$5 per plate. The blast will include music, inflatables, face painting and a special guest appearance by Middle Tennessee mascot, "Lightning," to entertain the youngsters.

**FAN/MEDIA DAY:** Middle Tennessee's annual Fan/Media Day is scheduled for August 12 at 2:30 PM in Murphy Center. There will be free hot dogs and cokes given away while supplies last, and games for the kids. Also, tickets will be on sale as well as this year's football media guide. As always, fans can get player autographs and photos so make plans now to check out this year's team as they prepare for the season-opener on Sept. 1.

**FENTON PAYNE AND FRED 5K:** On Saturday morning, Aug. 18, the fourth annual Fenton Payne and Fred 5K Run/Walk to take place on the campus of Middle Tennessee with Director of Athletics Chris Massaro firing the starting gun. The event will get underway at 7:00 AM with registration at Peck Hall. The cost is \$25 with cash prizes going to the winning male and female and the overall masters (40 years and over). There will also be awards to the top three finishers in all divisions, male and female, 9 and under, then 5 year age groups through 80 and over. For more information, contact Mark Hardison at 615-848-9063.

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