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Mixed reviews for final full-scale scrimmage

Offense, defense, kicking game each have moments

MT Media Relations

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

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee went through its second full-scale scrimmage of fall camp on Saturday inside Floyd Stadium in what was the Blue Raiders' final game-like simulation before the season opener on Sept. 1.

The Blue Raiders had a 90-play scrimmage before going to a six-play goal line scrimmage and finishing with a nine-play two-minute drill.

"The purpose of the scrimmage is to make it as game-like situations as possible and find out who are the guys we can take to Florida Atlantic and who can line up and play," said Stockstill. "We will grade the film hard, look at it, evaluate it and find out who did the best."

The first half of the scrimmage saw the defense dominate the offense by keeping them out of the endzone on 10 straight possessions. During that stretch, the defense collected seven tackles for loss and two sacks by freshman [Antwan Davis](#) and sophomore [Chris McCoy](#).

"We got off to a good start on defense. We had momentum and we put together several stops in a row," said [Damon Nickson](#), a senior safety. "The problem is we did not do as well toward the end and one of the things we pride ourselves on is finishing. It could have been a much better day for us if we had finished."

The offense got on the scoreboard when [DeMarco McNair](#) ran one in from 10 yards out and [Matt King](#) added the extra point. McNair carried the ball on the final three plays of the drive for 33 yards and finished the scrimmage with seven rushes for 68 yards.

"The play starts with the offensive line and if the line blocks effectively then we are able to run the football effectively," said McNair. "It was a little sluggish early but I thought the o-line stepped up and blocked well. Overall today was a good day. We can build on this."

The defense buckled down again to stop the offense's next three possessions with a sack by McCoy on one third down play and a tackle for loss by [Wes Hofacker](#) on another third down attempt.

The offense's last possession before intermission resulted in points when kicker [David DeFatta](#) nailed a 40-yard field goal. The highlight of the drive was a 21-yard completion from [Salin Simpson](#) to [Rod Taylor](#).

"It was disappointing the way we started out offensively because we couldn't get a snap," Stockstill added. "I think maybe the first 20 plays or so we have 5 or 6 bad snaps and that kind of put a damper on the start of it. "We finally got some consistency there and started to move the ball a little better the second half of the scrimmage."

After the break, the offense started possessions on the defenses 30-yard line which helped them turn things around by scoring on six of seven possessions. King connected on a 27-yard field goal on the initial drive and DeFatta made a 29 yarder to end the next possession.

Freshman quarterback [Dwight Dasher](#) led the offense to a touchdown on the following drive and then it was quarterback [Gene Delle Donne](#)'s turn. Delle Donne lofted a pass in the corner of the endzone to [Michael Cannon](#) who made a miraculous catch after the ball hit two different defenders.

The defense held on the next possession before [Desmond Gee](#) found paydirt on a five-yard run to put the offense back in the scoring column. The final possession of the scrimmage saw freshman [Marquise Branton](#) score on a 1-yard run.

Following a brief goal line situation, the Blue Raiders concluded the scrimmage with a two-minute drill. Under the direction of signal-caller [Patrick Jackson](#), the Blue Raiders started at their own 35-yard line and advanced to the defenses 33-yard line before attempting a field goal. With three seconds remaining, King made good on a 50-yard attempt.

On the day, Blue Raider kickers made all four field goals and every extra point.



Freshman Marquise Branton looks for room on the outside against the Blue Raider defense. ()

"We kicked well today," said Stockstill. "Yesterday and today was probably the best they have kicked since camp started. They were more consistent during the scrimmage."

Offensively, Delle Donne led all passers with 54 yards on a perfect 5-for-5 throwing while Dasher went 3-for-6 for 33 yards. Jackson was 5-for-11, while Simpson and [Andrew Banks](#) were both 2-for-3.

Cannon and [Bobby Williams](#) led all receivers with three receptions each while Gee, Tanner, and Branton added two catches.

Behind McNair in the rushing game was Tanner with 34 yards on 10 attempts and Gee with two carries for 18 yards. Branton added 16 yards.

The Blue Raiders will return to the practice field on Sunday before going through their final two-a-day practice on Monday.

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