

Blue Raiders win exhibition vs. Lincoln Memorial, 93-68

Kanaskie leads way with 21; Hethington impressive in first action as Blue Raider

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee's only exhibition contest came with mixed reviews after the Blue Raiders built a huge first-half lead and coasted to a 93-68 win against Lincoln Memorial.

Blue Raider coach Kermit Davis was pleased with the performance in the first half, as well as some individual performances along the way, but the veteran coach was displeased with two eye-popping statistics by the end of the contest. One was the fact that Lincoln Memorial outscored Middle Tennessee 42-40 in the final 20 minutes and the visiting Railsplitters won the battle of the boards, 47-46.

"We still have work to do and we have things to get corrected before we open the season against San Jose State (Nov. 15)," Davis said.

"It is very disappointing that they were able to outrebound us and beat us in a 20-minute half. There were some

positives though. I thought we played well in the first half and that we had a good intensity level. I'm very encouraged by the continued progress of Uriah Hethington. He has made an impact earlier than I expected."



Junior guard Kevin Kanaskie led four Blue Raiders in double figures with 21 points and connected on 4-of-6 3-point attempts, while Hethington followed with 16 points on 8-of-12 shooting.

Sophomore Desmond Yates narrowly missed a double double with 14 points and nine rebounds, followed by Nigel Johnson with 11 points, Josh Sain with nine and Dino Hair with eight.

Terry Delaney led Lincoln Memorial with 19 points and 13 rebounds.

Middle Tennessee jumped out to a 53-26 halftime lead using strong defense and solid shooting to stymie the visitors. The Blue Raiders held Lincoln Memorial without a field goal for 11 possessions during one stretch and their press created havoc and led to 19 points off turnovers in the opening 20 minutes.

The Blue Raiders owned a 22-13 advantage with 10:47 remaining in the first half but they used a 31-13 run to break the game open heading into intermission.

Nine of the 11 Blue Raiders who dressed scored in the exhibition game and all but one player had at least one rebound.

Middle Tennessee will play host to San Jose State, Nov. 15, in its first game of the First Shot Tournament. Tipoff for the season opener is 7 p.m., followed by the tournament opener between Appalachian State and Lipscomb at 5 p.m.

POSTGAME QUOTES

MIDDLE TENNESSEE HEAD COACH KERMIT DAVIS

On tonight's game:

"Broderick Gilchrest was solid and I would like him to be a little more aggressive off the dribble. He can be one of our better defenders and he is very fast. Josh Sain, who right now is our eleventh guy, gets things done. Demetrius Green has a long way to go from a conditioning standpoint but he is going to be a real good player. Uriah Hethington was pretty good for his first collegiate game and he has a lot of energy and can jump."

On rebounding:

"Desmond [Yates] did a good job in the first half. He had seven rebounds but it's just not consistent. Darren Avery had 10 minutes and wouldn't rebound the ball. [Demetrius] Green is athletic and plays 18 minutes but gets one rebound. We've got to be a good rebounding guard team because we are going to play small. Calvin [O'Neil] and [Theryn Hudson] having really been are most consistent rebounders and it is hard for "T" to rebound when he is sitting over by me."

On his rotation:

"We played 11 guys the whole game and I told the guys in the locker room that the bench is going to get shorter. I would love to play nine or 10 but if we have to play eight or seven then I will. I would like to play nine guys and it will probably go down to which of those guys can rebound the ball."

On being ready for the season opener:

"I don't think you ever will think you are ready. We can sure play in a college game but we have a lot to do between now and Thursday."

Junior Guard Kevin Kanaskie

On tonight's game:

"I thought we played well in the first half. We moved the ball well and were unselfish. The second half we didn't play as well. We got outrebounded and are really disappointed."

On there being a difference between an exhibition game versus a regular season game:

"I don't think there is a difference because we have had a lot of practice time to get ready for the game."

On being ready for the season opener:

"I don't think we are ready. We need this week in practice. We play three really good teams next week in three days. We have more work to get done."

Junior forward Uriah Hethington

On finding his rhythm in the second half:

"I felt more comfortable in second half. The coaches talked to us and told us to come out with more intensity and that's what I tried to do."

On his role on the team:

"Just coming out and rebounding and blocking out. I like scoring around the basket. Overall I felt good about some things tonight but we can improve as a team."

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