Blue Raiders suffer come-from-behind upset to Ragin' Cajuns

Middle Tennessee's four-game win streak comes to hal in 34-24 setback

November 10, 2007 · MT Media Relations

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Louisiana-Lafayette overcame an early 14-0 deficit in the second quarter to rally from behind and shock Middle Tennessee, 34-24, in front of 19,227 at Floyd Stadium Saturday.

The setback was a double disaster for the Blue Raiders (5-6, 4-2) as the loss spoiled Middle Tennessee's Homecoming and Senior Day as well as seriously damaged its Sun Belt Conference title hopes. The loss also ended Middle Tennessee's four-game winning streak.

The Blue Raiders were held to 256 yards total offense against a Ragin' Cajun defense that was allowing 491 yards per contest. Middle Tennessee picked up 138 yards on the ground, led by Desmond Gee's 71 yards on eight carries, and the Blue Raiders had 118 yards passing on a 13-of-22 passes. Middle Tennessee had just 33 yards total offense in the second half.

Starting quarterback Joe Craddock completed 8-of-11 passes for 89 yards and two touchdowns before giving way to freshman Dwight Dasher who was 5-of-11 for 29 yards and one interception. The Ragin' Cajuns finished with 528 yards total offense, including 376 on the ground.

Louisiana-Lafayette (2-8, 1-4) held Middle Tennessee to 24 points, the fewest an opponent had scored against the Cajuns this season; however, it looked good early as the Blue Raiders jumped out to a 14-0 lead early in the second quarter.

Jonathan Grigsby hauled in an 11-yard pass from Craddock to complete a nine-play, 55-yard drive with 8:18 remaining in the first quarter. David DeFatta's extra point provided a 7-0 lead.

The lead was extended to 14-0 with 13:59 remaining when Taron Henry hauled in a 32-yard pass from Craddock. The drive covered 73 yards in seven plays and everything appeared to be going the Blue Raiders' way.

UL-Lafayette came back with consecutive touchdowns on drives of 62 and 80 yards to even the score, but Middle Tennessee answered with a DeMarco McNair touchdown to extend the lead to 21-14 going into halftime.

After the Cajuns tied the score, 21-21, on their first drive of the second half, DeFatta nailed a 20-yard field goal to give the Blue Raiders a 24-21 edge with 6:40 remaining in the third quarter. It would be the final points for the Blue Raiders.

UL-Lafayette came back with an eight-play, 97-yard drive to go ahead, 28-24, with 10:57 remaining in the fourth quarter and Jason Chery put the finishing touches on the come-from-behind upset with a 31-yard run midway through the fourth quarter.

Middle Tennessee will conclude the season at Troy, Nov. 20.

POSTGAME NOTES:
CAREER DAY FOR DEFATTA: Sophomore punter David DeFatta enjoyed one of the best punting days in school history against ULL. DeFatta boomed seven punts for a career-best 53.0 yard average. DeFatta, who nailed two punts for over 60 yards including a personal-best 68 yarder, turned in the third best single-game average in school history.

DASHER RETURNS: After missing most of the North Texas game and all of the Louisiana-Monroe contest, freshman Dwight Dasher returned to the gridiron in the second quarter. Dasher, playing at less than 100 percent, completed 5 of 11 passes for 29 yards while rushing for ninr yards.

CAREER-HIGH FOR GEE: Sophomore Desmond Gee turned in his best rushing performance of his career against ULL. Gee carried eight times for a career-high 71 yards, which is the most by a Blue Raider running back this season. Gee's previous rushing high was 61 yards last year against Tennessee Tech.

MCNAIR MOVING UP SCORING LIST: Senior DeMarco McNair, the leading scorer in the Sun Belt Conference, notched his 13th touchdown of the season with his 1-yard score in the second quarter. McNair has 78 points on the season which ranks tied for 11th on Middle Tennessee's single-season list and needs just one more point to break into the top ten.

REGULAR SEASON FINALES: With Saturday's loss to ULL, Middle Tennessee dropped its record to 58-29-6 all-time in regular season home finales. The Blue Raiders are now 5-4 in home finales during the I-A (FBS) era and 0-2 under Rick Stockstill.

QUICK HITTERS: WR Jonathan Grigsby recorded his second TD reception in as many weeks which is also his career total ... Rod Issac recorded his first career interception when he picked one off in the first quarter against ULL ... P David DeFatta connected on a career-best 68-yard punt against ULL ... Desmond Gee's 39-yard run was the longest of his career ... Middle Tennessee dropped to 10-3 against Sun Belt Conference opponents under Rick Stockstill ... OT Franklin Dunbar made his team-best 29th straight start today while DT Trevor Jenkins made his 24th straight start.

Printed on May 25, 2013
Original URL: http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/28716