Everyone gets into act as Blue Raiders beat Bisons, 68-62

10 different players score in victory

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee used a balanced attack with 10 different players getting into the scoring column as the Blue Raiders turned back Lipscomb, 68-62, in their second game of the First Shot Exempt Tournament at Murphy Center Friday. The Blue Raiders (1-1) were led by Kevin Kanaskie's 13 points and 11 from Desmond Yates, but it was a team effort that enabled them to secure victory in the first contest against the visiting Bisons since 1991. Theryn Hudson and freshman Josh Sain, making his Blue Raider debut, each scored nine points, followed by Demetrius Green with seven. Middle Tennessee trailed 31-30 at the half of a highly-competitive game that saw both teams battle back in the fourth during the first 20 minutes but the Blue Raiders tightened the defense in the second half and it led to a strong run that turned the game in their favor for good. Lipscomb provided the game's 10th tie at 37-37 when Adnan Hodgiz connected on a jumper in the paint with 16:49 remaining but the Blue Raiders went on a 17-1 run

over the next 7:47 to take their largest lead, 54-38 with 8:58 remaining on Kanaskie's jumper. "I thought our team got back to defending the way that hopefully we will continue to do," Middle Tennessee coach Kermit Davis said. "I thought Lipscomb played the best they have played all year. Their team challenged us and played at a high level. It was very encouraging to see our team bounce back and play the way it did after a tough (78-77) loss Thursday." Kanaskie scored seven of his 13 during the pivotal run in the second half but it was a run that featured the balance that was prevalent throughout the contest as five different Blue Raiders scored. Sain helped key the run with strong defense, nice play in transition, good ball movement and a clutch 3-pointer that extended the lead to 44-37 with 12:44 remaining. He would later find Yates open on the baseline for a 3-pointer that pushed the lead to 14. The Blue Raiders had to overcome foul trouble late as Nigel Johnson, Yates and Hair each fouled out and Hudson was on the court with four fouls at the end. Lipscomb (0-4) made a final run at the Blue Raiders, pulling to within five in the waning seconds but they could get no closer. Middle Tennessee will face Appalachian State in the final game of the First Shot Exempt Tournament Saturday at 7 p.m.

Postgame Notes:

O'NEIL NEWS NOT GOOD: Middle Tennessee junior guard Calvin O'Neil will miss the remainder of the 2007-08 season after suffering a knee injury in the second half of the team's game against San Jose State in the first game of the First Shot Exempt Tournament. O'Neil will be redshirted this season and still have two remaining at Middle Tennessee. **DAVIS CLIMBING WINS LIST:** Middle Tennessee Head Coach Kermit Davis notched his 84th win with the Blue Raiders against Lipscomb to move into a tie with Randy Wiel for third on the school's career wins list. He is also third all-time at Middle Tennessee for winning percentage with a 55 percent clip. **BALANCING ACT:** The Blue Raiders exhibited their deep bench with outstanding balance against Lipscomb as all 10 players who played scored and only two of those 10 players reached double figures (Kevin Kanaskie with 13 and Desmond Yates with 10). Nine of the 10 players who saw action had four points or more.

SMASHING DEBUT: Freshman standout Josh Sain made his Blue Raider debut Friday night and provided Middle Tennessee fans with a glimpse of what figures to be a promising future. Sain entered the game at the 11:54 mark of the first half and promptly knocked down a long 3-pointer at the 10:29 mark to tie the game 16-16. The talented player from Jackson, Tenn., finished with nine points and three rebounds in 13 minutes of action and helped key Middle Tennessee's game-changing run in the second half. **BACK ON TRACK:** Junior guard Kevin Kanaskie returned to form in the team's win against Lipscomb. He led Middle Tennessee with 13 points, dished out six assists and pulled four rebounds in the victory. It marks the 14th time Kanaskie has led the team in scoring it was his 23rd career double-figure scoring game. **YATES STARTING STRONG:**Sophomore forward Desmond Yates is picking up where he left off following a dynamic freshman season. Through two games, Yates is averaging a team-best 13.5 points, shooting 58 percent from the field and 67 percent from 3-pint range. He led the Blue Raiders in scoring for the 11th time against San Jose

State and he has collected 21 career double-figure scoring games in his first 34 at the collegiate level. **FAST BREAKS:** Kanaskie has hit at least one 3-pointer in 23 straight games ... Kanaskie made his 45th career start against Lipscomb ... Middle Tennessee has hit at least one 3-pointer in 338 consecutive games ... Every Blue Raider who has played has scored in the first two games ... Demetrius Green earned his first career start against Lipscomb. **Postgame Quotes**
Middle Tennessee Head Coach Kermit Davis:
On the victory over Lipscomb:
"I thought our team got back to defending the way that hopefully we will continue to do. It's disappointing that we got outrebounded. I thought Lipscomb, like Scott [Sanderson] said, played the best they have played all year. I think their team challenged us. All of these in-state games are like this whether we play Lipscomb, Belmont, Austin Peay or Tennessee State - you get each other's best shots. I think their team played at a high level. I was really encouraged we were up 16, but we got in some foul trouble. We had a miss-matched lineup towards the end." **On defense leading to an up-tempo offense:**
"We have to create some turnovers to be able to get into the open floor. We still haven't done all of our pressing yet. A lot of that was predicated on Calvin [O'Neil]. We have to get back, maybe not tomorrow night and maybe not against Tennessee, and get some practice time to get in some zone pressing to try to give teams different looks." **On the performance of freshman guard/forward Josh Sain:**
"I was really encouraged with Josh Sain. He needs minutes and I have to be patient with him and live through a couple of things young guys are going to do. Some of the things that get him into trouble also make him good. I thought tonight that 13 minutes, nine points, three rebounds was very encouraging." **Junior Guard Kevin Kanaskie:**
On what the team did differently tonight:
"The effort of the bench was great. Josh [Sain] and Dino [Hair] really gave us a lift with their effort. Even Uriah [Hethington] was great. It was definitely the bench." **On all 10 players scoring:**
"Honestly, Calvin's shoes are big to fill with not just points but everything. It will take a group effort."
On a fast start in the second half:
"We wanted to come out [fast]. I think we got consecutive stops on the defensive end which led the transition. It's a lot easier to score when you stop them on the defensive end." **Freshman guard/forward Josh Sain:**
On his role with the team:
"I feel very comfortable with Kevin's passes and being on the floor. I just went out and played hard with the rest of my teammates. My role is playing defense." **Lipscomb Coach Scott Sanderson**
On Middle Tennessee's run early in the second half:
"The first 11 minutes of the second half we scored seven points and didn't guard. That was the game. We played for 29 minutes and you can't play a team like Middle for 29 minutes and expect a win on their home court. When we go 11 minutes and don't guard, and score seven points then you are going to get beat. That's what happened." **Did Middle Tennessee change anything up?**
"We didn't make shots. Sometimes the inability to make shots affects your effort and energy defensively. For an 11 minute span we did not defend people and make shots. When you're not making shots you have to dig your heels in deeper and play harder. That's been a trademark of our team for a long time. I thought we competed, but 29 minutes will not get it on the road." **On Lipscomb's defense in the second half:**
"I don't know if it early in the season or what but a lot of it with us is that we have a lot of young kids out on the floor. Sometimes up to three freshmen are out on the floor. We've got good shots at the basket and just didn't sustain. We got tired a little bit down in the stretch of the first part of the

second half. I don't know if that has anything to do with it or not, I really don't. You dig your heals in defensively and get a little bit more pride and passion about defending people. That has to happen over a 40 minute period against good basketball teams. You're going to get beat if they shoot 50 percent."

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