# Blue Raiders get offensive in 89-86 OT win at Arkansas State

## Team captures third-straight win and sixth in eight outings

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**JONESBORO, Ark.** - Middle Tennessee worked overtime for the third time this season but no one was complaining after the streaking Blue Raiders captured an 89-86 overtime decision at Arkansas State for their third straight win and sixth triumph in eight games. The Blue Raiders (10-11, 7-4) moved into sole possession of third in the overall league standings and had four players in double figures, led by sophomore standout Desmond Yates. The forward continued his superb season with a game-high 28 points and shared game-high honors for rebounds with eight. While Yates continued to as solid as a rock, his play was supported by the continued superlative contributions of junior guard Nigel Johnson, who established a career high for the second straight game with 22 points and added five rebounds. Demetrius Green added 13 points and center Theryn Hudson powered in 11 points and tied Yates with eight caroms as the Blue Raiders improved to 2-1 in overtime games this season. "I am so proud of our team and how hard they worked for this win," Middle Tennessee coach Kermit Davis said. "We had several players step up and play key roles and we had to shoot a high percentage to win this game because Arkansas State is one of the best teams we played in our league this year. Coach (Dickey) Nutt's team was very well prepared and they played extremely well. When they get their team fully healthy they will be a big factor in the league race." Middle Tennessee's recent run has made it a factor in the race and the Blue Raiders

have done it with their trademark play on the road. Middle Tennessee won for the third time in four Sun Belt road games and they did so with one of the top 3-point shooting displays in program history. Johnson tied his career high with three 3-pointers and Darren Avery (2-for-2) and Yates (2-of-3) added a pair each. Kevin Kanaskie also buried a 3-pointer as the Blue Raiders knocked down 10-of-16 treys for a 62.5 percentage, which is third best in school history. The 10 3-pointers are the most in a game since Middle Tennessee connected for 10 against Troy last season. The Blue Raiders also shot a season-high 60.7 percent (34-of-56) from the field overall. The hot-hand was necessary as the Indians (9-13, 4-7) had four players in double figures, led by 27 from Adrian Banks and 20 from Yima Chia-Kur. "This was one of those games were every possession was crucial and we really had to dig deep and put it all together," Johnson said. "Our team has really come together and we are playing for one another. It's a great feeling to be in this conference race and the good thing is we know there is still room for improvement." Johnson's game has been outstanding of late and he not only keyed victory with his offense, but also with steady defense on Ryan Wedel. Banks scored 13 points in the first 10 minutes but Green's defense helped control him thereafter. The intense battle featured 12 ties and 17 lead changes and the largest lead for either team was Middle Tennessee's 54-47 advantage with 11:42 remaining in regulation. The Blue Raiders led 39-36 at intermission and the game remained tight throughout the second half. Middle Tennessee almost claimed the win in regulation and led 74-70 following Johnson's second made free throw with 40 seconds remaining; however, Banks nailed a clutch 3-pointer with 30 seconds remaining in regulation to slice the Blue Raider lead to 74-73. Johnson hit one of two free throws with 29 seconds remaining to extend the lead to 75-73 but Shawn Morgan's layup with 21 seconds remaining forced the game's ninth tie. Johnson's jumper was off the mark as time expired, forcing overtime. The Blue Raiders never trailed in overtime but the game was tied three times in the extra period. Yates' 3-pointer from the wing with 37 seconds remaining broke an 83-83 tie and gave the Blue Raiders the lead, 86-83, for good. Middle Tennessee will seek its season-high fourth-straight win when it plays host to UALR, the Sun Belt's West Division leader, Thursday at 7 p.m.

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