Defense shines in 77-play scrimmage

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The Middle Tennessee defense continued to show their improvement today during the team's 77-play scrimmage. The defense did not allow a point, collected six sacks, eight pass breakups and four tackles for loss during the scrimmage. The offense only threatened on one occasion and that resulted in a missed 47-yard field goal.

"The defense played with a lot of intensity today," Head Coach Andy McCollum said. "They were flying around,



making plays and were very competitive. I thought the secondary did a good job of keeping everything in front of them and I liked the tenacity we showed up front."

Safety Jonathan Harris set the tone early when he leveled wide receiver Linnie Yarbrough right when the ball arrived. "That was a big time hit and really got the scrimmage going," McCollum noted.

Other than the usual playmakers, freshman Antoine Owens probably opened the most eyes on Saturday. The Antioch, Tenn., native registered a sack and two pass breakups, and was really flying around for the defense.

"I am really seeing some good things out of Antoine," McCollum said. "It was not just today, he has been doing it all camp."

The defensive highlights included quarterback sacks by Jeff Littlejohn (2), Sean Mosley (2), Devarick Scandrett and Owens. Jonathan Bonner had two tackles for loss, while Quinton Staton added one. Alvin Fite and Littlejohn shared a TFL. Along with Owens' two pass breakups, newcomer Jeremiah Weaver also added two to go with one each from Fite, Kevin Copeland, Danny Tolbert, and Keon Raymond.

Offensively, Clint Marks led the way by completing 10 of 15 passes for 61 yards and receiver Kerry Wright led all pass catchers with six grabs for 29 yards. On the ground, Eugene Gross rushed four times for 13 yards, while Kelvin German and Terry Jackson gained nine yards each on five and four carries, respectively.

"The defense had a lot to do with the play of the offense today, but the bottom line was that we just did not make plays when we had opportunities," McCollum said. "The receiving corps is our strength and they had too many drops today. But there isn't anything that happened out there that cannot be corrected. We still have two more good weeks of work."

MCCOLLUM ON QB JOE CRADDOCK: "Joe Craddock stepped up today and probably got himself into the mix at quarterback."

MCCOLLUM ON CB KEON RAYMOND: Keon has done a good job for us. He is the type player we needed to have in the secondary. He still needs to work on his technique, but I like what I see. He played real well today in the scrimmage, but before I can give a thorough evaluation I will have to see the film."

LITTLEJOHN ON DEFENSE: "We really like the new defense and I believe it is starting to show. We have a lot of depth up front, have great linebackers and our corners are much better. We've really improved, but there is still a lot more work to do. This was just one scrimmage."

SCRIMMAGE STATS: Passing: Josh Harris (5-8, 34 yds.), Clint Marks (10-15, 61 yds), Sam Hunt (8-13, 57 yds), Joe Craddock (5-12, 59 yds) ... Receiving: Kerry Wright (6-29), C. Henry (5-38), Walt Bell (4-36), Cleannord Saintil (3-18), T. Henry (2-33), Pedro Holiday (2-14) ... Stephen Chicola (1-4) ... Rushing: Eugene Gross (4-13), Kelvin German (5-9), Terry Jackson (4-9) ... DEFENSE: Sacks - Littlejohn (2), Mosley (2), Scandrett, Owens ... Pass Breakups: Owens (2), Weaver (2), Tolbert, Fite, Copeland, Raymond.

GOAL LINE SCRIMMAGE STATS: The Blue Raiders followed their 77-play scrimmage with a nine-play goal line scrimmage. The offense scored three times in nine attempts with two coming on the ground and one through the air when Clint Marks hit Pedro Holiday in the right corner of the endzone. Terry Jackson ran one in from four yards out, while freshman quarterback Joe Craddock capitalized on a one-yard run. Linebacker Dennis Burke thwarted one attempt when he broke up a Josh Harris pass at the two-yard line.

FREE YARD SIGNS: The Middle Tennessee athletic department is issuing free yard signs to all Blue Raider football season ticket holders. The sign is two-sided and has the phrase "Blue Raider Neighbor Season Ticket Holder" in bold letters along with the Middle Tennessee logo. "This is a great way for fans to show their support of Blue Raider football and help us with our attendance goals," said Athletic Director Boots Donnelly. The signs can be picked up at the Middle Tennessee Ticket Office or at the BRAA office in the Murphy Center. If a person has a problem picking up the sign, then call the ticket office (898-2103) or the BRAA office (898-2210) and a member of the athletic department will work out a time for delivery.

ANDY MAC "LIVE": Andy Mac "Live", the weekly radio show with Blue Raider head football coach Andy McCollum, will be broadcast live on Thursday's from the Bunganut Pig in Murfreesboro for the entire 11-week schedule from 7:00 to 8:00 PM. The first show of the season will air Thursday, September 2. Following is a list of the 19 stations that carry Andy Mac "Live": WQSV (Ashland City), WKRM (Columbia), WDKN (Dickson), WEKR (Fayetteville), WAKM (Franklin), WHIN (Gallatin), WANT (Lebanon), WAXO (Lewisburg), WLIV (Livingston), WMSR (Manchester), WBMC (McMinnville), WBOZ (Murfreesboro), WGNS (Murfreesboro), WAMB (Nashville), WKSR (Pulaski),

WZNG (Shelbyville), WJLE (Smithville), WJIG (Tullahoma), and WCDT (Winchester).

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