

September 5, 2008

Blue Raiders to induct five into Hall of Fame Largest class in school history to be inducted Saturday

Athletic Communications

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Five former Middle Tennessee greats in their respective sport will become part of the largest Hall of Fame class in school history when they are inducted into the Blue Raider Hall of Fame prior to Saturday's kickoff.

Jerry Beck (basketball), Joe Campbell (football), John Doodoo (track and field), , Paul Goebel (tennis) and Kelly Holcomb (football) will be enshrined during Hall of Fame induction ceremonies prior to Middle Tennessee's football game against Maryland. The induction will take place at 3:30 PM at the Kennon Sports Hall of Fame lawn and the public is invited to attend.

Previous Hall of Fame classes have been limited to three inductees; however, this year's class was expanded to five due to the number of nominees and votes received by the Hall of Fame committee.

"We have an outstanding class this year but that is always the case," said Jim Simpson, director of the Blue Raider Varsity Club. "We have so many former greats out there that still deserve recognition and we believed this allows us to start moving forward on recognizing some of the deserving individuals."

Beck, who completed his playing days in 1982, was an outstanding power forward for the Blue Raiders during his playing career. The 6-foot-7 forward was a rebounding wizard and a scoring machine. He still ranks among the program's all-time leaders in scoring, rebounding and free-throw shooting.

The multi-talented and versatile Beck had many great moments and great seasons for the Blue Raiders; however, he also was part of what many Middle Tennessee fans still believe is the greatest win in school history, regardless of sport - the riveting upset of national-power Kentucky in the 1982 NCAA National Tournament. It not only was a monumental upset but also proved to be Middle Tennessee's first basketball win in the NCAA Tournament.

Beck registered a double double in the game with 14 points and 10 rebounds and former teammate and roommate Chris Harris vividly recalls the manner in which Beck dominated against the Wildcats.

"Jerry missed some shots early but he went on a string where he made four or five baskets in a row," Harris said. "He played good defense and really kept us in the game."

Beck, who generally played every position on the floor because of his versatility, was named the Ohio Valley Conference Player of the Year in 1981 and 1982, and he led the Blue Raiders to the OVC Tournament Championship in 1982. After leaving Middle Tennessee, Beck was drafted in the NBA. He instead opted to pursue a professional career overseas in the Netherlands, where he played professionally until the age of 42.



John DoDoo was a member of the famous "Grasshopper Gang" of nationally-known Blue Raider jumpers in the late 1970s. His record in the OVC outdoor triple jump of 54 feet ½ inch still stands today. ()

Campbell, who earned his degree from Middle Tennessee in 1992, was a highly-regarded high school football player at Stratford High School in Nashville and he also was highly sought after during the recruiting process.

Most college coaches wanted him to play defensive back but former Middle Tennessee football coach Boots Donnelly saw his potential as a stellar running back from the outset. Given the opportunity to play the position he so desperately desired at the college level, Campbell choose Middle Tennessee and eventually left his legacy as one of the greatest gridiron performers in school history.

"I never thought of playing (Campbell) anywhere else," Donnelly said. "I liked his vision, his movement, and he had a knack for seeing the field."

He also had a knack for dominating opponents once on the field. Campbell was named OVC Player of the year in 1990 and he was on named All-OVC in 1989, 90 and 91. Campbell, who was five-time All-American, left Middle Tennessee as the career leader in touchdowns and scoring and he remains the Blue Raiders' all-time leading rusher with 3,823 yards.

One of Campbell's greatest moments came against No. 1-ranked Florida State, at which time Middle Tennessee was ranked No. 1 in the I-AA poll (October, 1991). Campbell accounted for more than 100 yards rushing and receiving and averaged more than 6.5 yards per carry to go along with a touchdown. He certainly left an impression.

Following the game Florida State coach Bobby Bowden attended his postgame press conference and said, "Man, that 21 (Campbell) could really run."

Bowden realized what Donnelly and so many Blue Raiders fans already knew.

Goebel, who graduated in 1995, was one of the first great Blue Raider tennis players and he not only excelled on the court, but also off the court, as well.

"He represents what any coach would look for," said former Middle Tennessee tennis coach Dale Short. "He was the best student-athlete we had during my tenure."

Goebel had many great seasons for Middle Tennessee but perhaps the most memorable was the 1993-94 season when he teamed with Fred Niemeyer as a dominant doubles tandem. They were ranked as high as No. 5 nationally before finishing that season 15th.

One of the highlights of the season was beating the No. 1 doubles team in the nation at the O'Charley's Tournament in Knoxville. Goebel was became the first Blue Raider to play in the NCAA Tournament.

"He spearheaded all the great teams we had here at Middle Tennessee," Short said. "It was the start of the era for us to be in the national spotlight even though we didn't realize it at the time."

Upon completion of his playing career, Goebel became an assistant coach for the Blue Raiders and now works as the head coach at the University of Memphis. He is still heavily involved with tennis in Murfreesboro as he assists with the Pro-Am Tournament each year.

DoDoo, who graduated in 1979, hails from Ghana in Africa, became one of the great Middle Tennessee track athletes in the late 1970s. His hard work and superb talent was not only a reflection of him, but also on several Ghanaians who followed DoDoo to Murfreesboro shortly thereafter.

"Many of them looked at coming here as an opportunity to better themselves," said Middle Tennessee Head Track and Field Coach Dean Hayes.

Hayes discovered DoDoo after he was crowned the Ghanaian National long and triple jump

champion in 1974 and 75. After coming to Middle Tennessee, DoDoo became a part of the "Grasshopper Gang," a group of Blue Raider jumpers who were nationally known for their exploits in the long and triple jump. DoDoo's record leap of 54 feet-and-one-half inches in the OVC outdoor triple jump still stands.

Hayes recalls a meet at Illinois when DoDoo qualified for the NCAA Regionals.

"He told me afterward he had jumped off the wrong foot," Hayes said.

DoDoo excelled in many evens, doubling in long and triple jump in every meet, but he also was a member of the 4X100 relay team. He won the OVC Indoor triple jump in 1978 and 79, and the outdoor triple jump in 1977, 78 and 79. He was also named OVC Track Athlete of the Year in 1977.

After graduating from MTSU with undergraduate and master's degrees, DoDoo became a U.S. citizen in 1986 and joined the U.S. Army shortly thereafter. He served in combat missions in Somalia-Africa and Kosova. After 20 years of service, DoDoo retired from the Army in 2006.

Holcomb, who graduated in 1996, is arguably the greatest quarterback to ever don the Blue and White. While Holcomb, who spent 14 years in the NFL, proved his ability on the field, he was not heavily recruited as a quarterback out of Lincoln County High School.

Donnelly wanted him to be the Blue Raiders' signal-caller all along.

"We never recruited a kid to play on Sunday," said Donnelly, referring to the NFL. "We recruited them to play for us on Saturday. We had quite a few players who had that potential but we never really worried about it."

Starting from the time he walked through the doors at Middle Tennessee, Holcomb had quite a true freshman season. One of his most shining moments came as a freshman against No. 1-ranked Florida State in 1991 when he completed a school-record 13 consecutive completions and he completed 20-of-28 passes for 188 yards.

"Kelly was a competitor," Donnelly said. "You look for competitors. He couldn't stomach losing and pushed to get the job done."

He not only was a quality player but he was one of the toughest of all Blue Raiders. Donnelly recalls a time when Holcomb finished a game against Georgia Southern with a broken jaw.

"He broke his jaw against Georgia Southern on Saturday and finished the game," Donnelly said. "He had surgery on Sunday and was at practice Monday trying to put his helmet on."

Holcomb led the Blue Raiders to the OVC Championship in 1992 and gained All-OVC honors in 1992 and 94. He also had an exceptional game in the Blue-Gray game in Mobile, Ala., where he was named MVP.

Holcomb left Middle Tennessee as the career leader in passing yards, passing attempts, and total offense. He passed for more than 200 yards 12 times and he threw for more than 300 yards three times and he did all of this in a run-oriented offense. Holcomb completed 58 percent of his passes during his career, which still ranks fifth in Blue Raider history.

He also enjoyed a long and productive career in the NFL.